

Creating a Teacher Induction Program

Prepared by

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About InSites

InSites, a ten-year old Colorado-based non-profit 501(c)3 organization, engages in research, evaluation, and technical assistance for educational and social institutions and policymakers engaged in major change within their social systems. In recent years, InSites has conducted a number of evaluations related to teachers' professional development, including an evaluation of a multi-year initiative of the NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE) entitled A Change of Course. This paper builds on the perspective on teachers' professional development presented in NFIE's report entitled Teachers Take Charge of Their Learning.

NFIE's work is rooted in the belief that teachers' professional development is a cornerstone of reforms that heighten student achievement. NFIE funds A Change of Course to learn more about how to make high quality professional development the norm for all teachers.

This paper draws in part on information gathered through the evaluation of A Change of Course. However, the information and opinions provided herein are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not represent agreement or positions of NFIE, the project participants, or funding agents.

The paper outlines many of the issues and questions for school districts, teacher associations, and universities to consider when developing new or improving existing induction programs. The paper begins with a look at the usefulness of teacher induction programs. It then presents an overview of the current state of teacher induction in the nation and addresses how the NFIE vision for professional development is aligned with effective teacher induction. It provides examples of programs in a variety of locations that are moving toward the new vision and concludes with ideas for consideration in creating programs that will improve the quality and availability of induction programs for public school teachers nationwide.

The Usefulness of Induction

Do you remember how you felt starting your first teaching job? Did you know what to expect? Were you enthusiastic or anxious? Did you feel prepared or overwhelmed? A good part of how you felt was probably determined by the type of induction you'd received at your school, on how well you understood how to fit into this new working environment.

"An effective induction process is based upon exemplary teaching practices, an understanding of adult and student learning, and a professional environment that supports collaboration and inquiry."

Consider a scenario where you're a teacher newly assigned to a teaching job in a suburban school. The most basic information presents challenges: How do I access the school's computers? How do I order supplies? On your first day, you're surprised to find that even in this suburban school district, you are faced with a diverse classroom of children. Of the 30 students in the class, twelve are English language learners; they speak six different native languages, including Farsi, Spanish, and Cantonese. Many qualify for free or reduced lunches. From last year's standardized test scores you discover that a significant number are one or two grade levels behind in reading and math. You quickly realize that you must create a curriculum and instructional strategy that meets the needs of your diverse learners at the same time that you're learning how to navigate your new work environment.

Easing the Transition

Over the next few years, as veteran teachers retire, there will be a lot of new teachers coping with these feelings of disorientation. And every year when veteran teachers change districts, classrooms or schools, they deal with some of these same frustrations.

The transition to a new teaching assignment can feel overwhelming and discouraging. For too many teachers, it's sink or swim. For too many, they leave at the end of the day feeling that they're close to drowning. Until recently, disorientation was the norm rather than the exception in the vast majority of schools. Individualism and isolation were ordinary features of school culture and practice. Most teachers were left to "figure it out" for themselves.

Fortunately, teacher induction programs are working to change the social realities of the day-to-day life of teachers in a variety of school districts—suburban, rural, and especially in urban settings. School districts are looking for ways to "introduce teachers to the profession humanely, in ways that engender self-esteem, competence, collegiality and professionalism."¹

Reducing Attrition and Turnover

In the next ten years, districts will need to hire upwards of 2.2 million teachers.²

These new hires are necessary because of teacher retirements, increases in student enrollments, and the popularity of class-size reduction.

For most districts a greater challenge than hiring the teachers will be keeping them. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), a third of public school teachers leave the profession in their first three years.³ The same study reports that almost 10 percent exit teaching as a career before completing their first year of public school teaching.

Veteran teachers who have moved to a new school setting or an assignment can suffer a kind of "reality shock." Especially prone to attrition are those new to secondary school structures or urban school environments with large numbers of low income and minority students. According to the

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Education Trust, the situation is exacerbated by the common practice of hiring less qualified teachers in low-performing schools where minority enrollment is 20 percent or greater.⁴ Fred Chesek of *Teachers for Chicago* poses the problem faced by his urban district: "Because 40 to 70 percent of new teachers never begin teaching or leave according to how high risk their students are, how do we support new teachers coming into the [urban] district ... and ... stop the flight of new teachers from the field of teaching?"⁵

Most studies conclude that quality induction programs significantly reduce teacher turnover. These findings offer hope to school districts all around the country, but particularly to large urban districts. A Recruiting New Teachers'

Schools with well-crafted induction programs have begun to improve their retention rates.

national study reports that, increasingly, many large urban school districts are meeting the needs of teachers during the first three years in the classroom through effective induction programs.⁶ Similarly, schools with well-crafted induction programs have begun to improve their retention rates: "During the last two years we have done a couple of different studies primarily on the retention issue. In 1997-

98, our retention rate overall was 86 percent. The following year, in 1998-99, it was 93 percent of all first- and second-year teachers. This is important because 26 percent of our teaching staff are first- and second-year teachers. Thirty percent of those are within their first year," says Lisa Isbell, Assistance Director of Professional Development for Long Beach Unified School District, a grantee partner in the NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education's (NFIE) *A Change of Course* initiative.

Improving the Quality of Teaching

While teacher retention and orientation are goals of induction programs, most do not stop there. Not surprisingly, studies show that students with better teachers learn more. Programs that offer teachers ways to develop their skills and knowledge recognize the critical link between student performance and teaching. Ones designed to support teacher development in

urban schools offer critical assistance to national efforts to close the achievement gap between minority students and white students.

According to educational researchers such as Linda Darling-Hammond, teacher quality is central to improving student achievement.⁷ Yet, studies

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show that nearly a quarter of newly hired American teachers lack the qualifications for their jobs. More than 40 states allow districts to hire teachers who have not met basic requirements as part of emergency credentialing programs. Traditionally, high poverty, high minority urban schools get the least qualified and prepared teachers.⁸ Induction has become a way for state policy makers and school districts to invest in quality teaching.

Quality induction programs focus on improving the instructional practice of new teachers, emergency credentialed teachers, and veteran teachers new to an assignment. In districts where the induction program includes master teachers who serve as peer mentors, added benefits result. Mentor teachers themselves experience valuable professional growth as they engage their protégés in reflection on practice and demonstrations of quality teaching.

Meeting the Needs of Students in Urban and Urban-Like Schools

Most U.S. teachers in urban and rural areas start their careers in disadvantaged schools where turnover is highest.⁹ These schools draw the most educationally needy students, those whom no one else wants to teach. Routinely new teachers are assigned the most demanding teaching loads and saddled with the greatest number of extra duties. In performing these tasks, they often receive few curriculum materials and, more often than not, no mentoring or support. Yet they face a myriad of challenges not traditionally found in suburban or rural schools. In urban schools these challenges include poverty and cultural and linguistic diversity.¹⁰

Changing demographics require changing teacher induction strategies. As the school population becomes more diverse, preparing teachers becomes more complex. In 1998, 80 percent of the teaching force was white while approximately 40 percent of all public school students came from minority groups. In large cities, minority students represented almost 69 percent of the student population.¹¹ Yet new teachers who have received their field experience in suburban schools arrive at these multicultural, inner city schools with little preparation to serve these children and their families.

The challenges will only get more complex in the future.¹² "Urban" and "suburban" are geographic descriptors that fail to reflect the complex and changing nature of schools today. There appear to be degrees of "urbanness" that schools fit into, depending on the nature and degree of characteristics

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All teachers need to be able to connect with students and to understand the differences that arise from culture, family experiences, developed intelligences, and varied approaches to learning. They need to be able to inquire sensitively, listen carefully, and look thoughtfully at student work. They need to know how to structure meaningful learning experiences for low-performing students who

traditionally have not been successful. All teachers need these skills, but as we progress from the "low" end of the urbanness continuum to the "high" end of the continuum, the development and refinement of these skills becomes more critical for teachers and students.

Managing a Teacher Induction Program

State Accountability Policies

Because of new state accountability policies aimed at improving student performance, teacher performance, and school accountability, more states like California and Texas are funding induction programs. In 1997, the state of California allocated \$17 million for teacher induction programs. Two years later, the legislature budgeted nearly \$67 million for its Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment program.¹³ Currently, 28 states mandate or fund induction programs and nine additional states have programs scheduled to start in the future. Of the states with induction initiatives, 18 states have laws requiring districts to provide induction programs and 19 states provide

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funding.¹⁴ Most state departments of education establish requirements and criteria for induction programs. Programs are usually designed locally and managed at the district level as well as through county offices of education, colleges, universities, and other professional organizations.¹⁵ There are a growing number of university-based "teacher

centers" that administer induction programs such as the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

School-University Partnerships

School-university partnerships are a growing trend. This popular method of developing and managing induction programs enables schools to offer a continuum of professional development from pre-service through induction. Lisa Isbell from Long Beach sees the university as a key player: "It has been very important that they [California State University, Long Beach] have been partners with us as we have gone through and created our teaching standards. We have a shared vision for what it is we want teachers to know and be able to get at various points in their careers. This relationship has given us the impetus to now know what it is we can refer teachers back to the university for [as part of on-going professional development]."

Liz Kally from the Phoenix's Classroom Teachers' Association also speaks about developing a shared definition of quality teaching and continuum of professional development: "Our next step in teacher induction has to do with revising the curriculum of the program to align it with the university's teacher education program."

Funding

Although state regulation and financial support for induction are common, funding levels are often limited. "Our biggest challenge with teacher induction program development right now isn't that we haven't got the ideas or that we're not on the right path. It's that we haven't got the resources to implement and support the program we would really like to offer," according to Nancy

Murphy of the Edmonds Education Association, an NFIE *A Change of Course* grantee. The quality of induction programs varies depending on funding levels and whether or not there is adequate support for such programs beyond the local level. In recent years, over 30 percent of programs have had to cut back due to lack of funding.¹⁶

Induction Programs

Evolution of Induction Programs

Since their inception in the early 1980s, teacher induction programs have continued to evolve.¹⁷ Early supplementary-style programs concentrated on getting teachers familiar with the "nuts and bolts" of first teaching assignments. Now they are becoming a critical component of most districts' strategy to ensure teacher quality.

Twenty years ago, few teachers (14 percent) participated in an induction program as a novice teacher; now 65 percent do, according to one U. S. Department of Education study.¹⁸ Similarly, a recent staffing survey by the National Center for Education Statistics reported that 60 percent of public school teachers had participated in a formal teacher induction program.¹⁹

Traditionally induction programs were targeted only for new teachers. Unlike the earlier programs, current leading induction programs are designed for a wider audience. Today's ideal induction program addresses both the needs of new teachers and the needs of veteran teachers who have changed grade levels or disciplines, or moved to a new school, district, or state. Other

candidates for induction are those emergency credentialed teachers hired to ease teacher shortages. Many districts now require teachers new to the district to undergo induction regardless of the length of their teaching experience.

NEA Teacher Induction Policy

The National Education Association believes that teacher induction is a process that facilitates the transition of new teachers into the profession and provides a system of collegial support for veteran teachers experiencing a change in grade level, type of assignments, site, or cultural environment. The Association also believes that an effective induction process is based upon exemplary teaching practices, an understanding of adult and student learning, and a professional environment that supports collaboration and inquiry.

The Association further believes that the induction process enhances teaching skills and promotes professional development. The induction process for new teachers must be mandatory, be at least one year in duration, and include a mentoring program. The induction process for veteran teachers must be flexible and provide support based upon changes in their professional assignments.

The Association encourages its affiliates to be involved in the development of standards for teacher induction and in the design and implementation of the process.

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The organization and features of teacher induction programs vary in scope and duration. At one end of the continuum are school-level orientations for new teachers that occur at the beginning of the school year and have a limited duration. At the other end of the continuum are multi-year programs that offer all teachers on-going orientation, networking, mentoring, and in-service workshops. NEA's induction policy, revised in July 2000, states that an effective induction process is based upon exemplary teaching practices, an understanding of adult and student learning, and a professional environment that supports collaboration and inquiry.

Current Induction Models

There are three basic models of induction.²⁰ Most programs seem to be some combination or variation of these models. The specific structure and content of a program depend in large part on the purpose the induction, that is, how it is intended to serve novice teachers and those new to an assignment. A focus on novice teachers only runs counter to the NEA's new policy which envisions induction as a process for both new and veteran teachers.

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The three models are:

- Basic Orientation Model
- Beginning Teacher Development Model
- Transformative Induction Model

BASIC ORIENTATION MODEL

The basic orientation model of induction focuses on getting new teachers and veteran teachers who are new to an assignment or district acclimated to the school's procedures and culture.

The purpose of this model is to help new employees settle into their environment and understand their responsibilities. The content usually deals with issues of classroom management, district policies, and school

procedures. Usually structured around individual participation in a series of workshops, the program provides teachers with information about the school and gives them an opportunity to meet their colleagues.

The workshops may start before the beginning of the school year and continue during specific district-designated professional development days throughout the first year. The workshops focus on explaining to new teachers how the school wants them to handle issues such as parent conferences, holidays, and report cards. Traditionally little attention is given to the teacher's instructional skills or professional development plan.

In this approach, an inductee may or may not be appointed a mentor for the first academic year. Usually a mentor serves as a point of contact when issues arise rather than as a role model for instructional practice. Mentoring is often an informal, one-on-one relationship between a new teacher and a veteran teacher at the same school site.

The lack of formal mentoring may be a common occurrence—but a serious inadequacy—in programs that use this model. In its January 1999 *Teacher Quality* study, NCES found that only 19 percent of teachers surveyed reported receiving mentoring. However, 70 percent of those who did receive mentoring at least once a week said it improved their teaching skills "a lot."

BEGINNING TEACHER DEVELOPMENT MODEL

This model is becoming the most popular one across the country according to a survey several years ago.²¹ Its popularity may be linked to the increasing number of emergency credentialed and underqualified teachers that districts have hired. Its aim, similar to that of the basic orientation model, is to help the new teacher get acculturated. But the primary purpose is to

increase teacher effectiveness by helping novice teachers bridge their knowledge of theory and practice.

Districts may provide mentors to help new teachers with their first-year orientation and to help them understand a school's approach to effective instruction. To that end, mentors are very helpful, if not essential, in providing the opportunity and structure for a new teacher to reflect upon his or her experiences and compare his or her own practice to district or state teaching standards. Also mentoring is crucial for successful application of learning and implementation of new practices into the classroom.

Programs using this approach are usually three to five years in duration. They offer sustained learning opportunities and are often intense. Due to the greater amount of out-of-classroom instruction, these programs require a greater time commitment on the part of the district, school administrators, and teachers. Often, in order to build in more social and professional support, this model organizes teachers in "cohorts" that move through the induction process together. The cohort model is founded on the idea that "teachers learn best by studying, doing, collaborating, and reflecting together with other teachers."²² Teachers use case studies and problem solving around issues facing real teachers in real situations. Teacher research and other inquiry methods are also used to help teachers better understand and improve their current teaching practice.

TRANSFORMATIVE INDUCTION MODEL

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have been able to implement this model of induction fully.

Going beyond mere orientation, the transformative model helps new teachers become part of a school culture that is actively engaged in school reform efforts and that connects quality professional growth to improved student learning. It recognizes that teachers need not only knowledge and skills but also the ability to influence the

conditions in which they can teach well. Professional development schools often use this model of induction.

Many schools are engaged in whole-school change or school restructuring. Consequently, teachers need skills in effective collaboration, data-driven decision making, action research, authentic assessment, and community participation. In this model, teachers are expected to be more than instructors. They are expected to become teacher leaders and to promote equity as part of a larger professional learning community.

The transformative induction model focuses on the development of teachers as a "community of learners" that is based on high standards for teacher professionalism. At its core the transformative model has a new paradigm that counters the isolation typical of teaching by encouraging collegiality. Where the beginning teacher development model has new

Where the beginning teacher development model has new teachers in a learning cohort for the duration of the induction period, the transformative model aims to transform the school into a site for state-of-the-art practice and for continuous teacher learning among all faculty members, not just new teachers.

teachers in a learning cohort for the duration of the induction period, this model aims to transform the school into a site for state-of-the-art practice and for continuous teacher learning among all faculty members, not just new teachers. Senior teachers deepen their knowledge by serving as mentors, adjunct faculty, co-researchers, and teacher leaders. The structures and ways time is used are reorganized to support professional development.

In this model, effective professional development approaches for new teachers are sustained, intensive, experiential, collaborative, and connected

to other aspects of school change. Teachers are expected to "take charge of their learning" in active ways. Mentors are usually a feature of this approach. New teachers are teamed with veteran teachers. However, all faculty are expected to take an active role in a new teacher's acculturation and transition. In addition, mutually beneficial mentoring relationships are the norm among faculty and accessible to all, whether novice or veteran. Teachers involved in this model say their mentor relationships seem authentic.

The transformative model incorporates the most advanced stage of mentoring along a continuum of types of mentoring, i.e., from orientation mentor to development mentor, that involves increasing levels of complexity and commitment and increasing benefits. The more developed stages of

mentoring are a coaching relationship that is mutually beneficial. At the transformation stage, mentor and protégé are interdependent and the protégé is building learning links with other staff members, creating a broader team concept and supporting others.²³

The interaction of new and experienced teachers is facilitated by structural mechanisms at the school site. Group planning, grade-level team meetings, and curriculum-group meetings provide a forum for new teachers to offer their contributions to the group and to the school.

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There is growing research that suggests that the transformative approach to induction within current reform efforts is having a positive impact on teacher retention and teacher quality.²⁴ Some programs, like Design for Excellence: Linking Teaching and Achievement or DELTA in Southern California, are specifically designed to couple school reform and teacher development along the entire continuum from pre-service, induction, and in-service. DELTA is part of the Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project.²⁵

Characteristics of Effective Induction Programs

Induction programs come in a variety of models and employ a variety of strategies. Every induction program is unique in that it addresses the specific context of the school or district and the particular needs of the teachers and students. Improving teacher development requires empowering educators to develop new models for integrating learning into all aspects of the school. Nonetheless, research studies have found that several elements common to high-quality professional development are also present in each of these differing approaches.²⁶ These elements are closely aligned with the characteristics of high-quality professional development that have been identified by NFIE²⁷ and the National Staff Development Council.²⁸

There is good reason for the close match. Good induction programs are, in essence, good professional development programs because they contain the same key elements. A vision of high-quality professional development such as that of NFIE can be instrumental in enhancing teacher induction programs.

Effective induction programs are:

- results-driven and job-embedded
- directed toward teachers' professional and intellectual development
- focused on enhancing teacher's immersion in subject matter and pedagogy
- designed and directed by teachers

Results-Driven and Job-Embedded

Effective induction programs are context sensitive.

Finding time for professional development is always the challenge for educators. Job-embedded professional development for new teachers helps them to see teacher learning as the norm rather than the exception. To encourage formal and informal learning, developers of site-based programs are rethinking how they use time and how they structure opportunities for teacher collaboration. Many schools are experimenting with block scheduling and minimum release days in which students go home early or are engaged in enrichment activities. These give teachers time to plan and learn together.

The focus on accountability, high expectations, and results are particularly important for teachers in urban settings where students traditionally have been under-served.

The most effective induction process is likely to be that which is most closely linked to student needs. In addition to being job-embedded, it is results-driven with increased accountability for student learning. Effective programs set clear and high standards for students. They help teachers make the changes in practice that will enable students to reach the standards. The focus on accountability, high expectations, and results are particularly important for teachers in urban settings where students traditionally have been under-served.

Effective induction programs are context sensitive. This means that in high-poverty, high- minority schools, teachers' professional development also

includes information about anti-racist teaching, multicultural curricula, and accelerated learning strategies. In another school context with a different student population, there may be other skills and dispositions that teachers need to develop.

Directed toward Teachers' Intellectual and Professional Development

Effective programs are directed toward teachers' intellectual development, leadership, and expanded professional roles. They are not designed to "wash out" teachers. The goal is to support teachers through the most difficult early years. Continued intellectual development and capacity building leads to increased expertise and confidence. As a result, teachers will be able to make larger contributions to students and to their colleagues in expanded professional roles.

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In programs emphasizing continued learning, teachers are encouraged to take responsibility for their own professional development. A platform of support builds when teachers get help from mentors; peer assistance and review; and observations of others' teaching.

Focused on Enhancing Teachers' Immersion in Subject Matter and Pedagogy

Teachers must be able to teach students from

diverse backgrounds by drawing on a large repertoire of teaching strategies and curriculum materials. Effective programs foster a deepening of subject-matter knowledge, a greater understanding of learning, and a greater appreciation of students' needs. In good programs, teachers acquire on-going information about cognitive development, learning styles, and effective pedagogy in key areas such as reading or math. In addition, teachers develop strategies to help students develop socially, morally, and ethically.

Designed and Directed by Teachers

Effective programs are designed and directed by teachers and involve shared decisions designed to improve the school. These programs mine the expertise of teachers—both novice and veteran educators—to build an effective program that meets the district's or school's needs. Shared decision making allows for shared accountability among staff.

Examples of Promising Programs

This section contains a few examples that illustrate forward-looking teacher induction programs. They are building on many of the features of high-quality professional development.

Alaska: Two-Pronged Approach to Deal with Significant Turnover

The Ketchikan School District is experiencing significant teacher turnover due in part to retirement incentives coming from the state. Currently about 30-40 percent of Ketchikan's teachers are within their first three years of teaching. To address the high need for supporting these teachers, the Alaska Education Association Uniserve Director and local association are using a dual approach: (a) building a mentor program and (b) designing college courses geared specifically to new teacher concerns and needs.

In the past few years, Ketchikan's mentor program has grown from a one-year assistance program to a three-year induction program that offers learning in a "hierarchy of skills." A key element has new teachers work with multiple colleagues in a variety of activities such as projects, research, and tutoring. New teachers benefit by learning from mentors who are strong in the specific skills they wish to acquire or refine. The result is a growing reliance on peers as resources and a movement toward an on-going learning community. The program, which has become known to the community via

press and radio coverage, has been primarily teacher-driven and has had to overcome some administrative and community opposition.

Teacher induction is one piece of the Quality Schools Initiative, a comprehensive education reform movement in Alaska that involves licensure, teacher education, professional development, and standards and accountability.

In Ketchikan, 45 of 190 teachers volunteered to be mentors for new teachers and participated in a one-day weekend training session. Every school in the district was represented. A school board member, the superintendent, some principals, and parent leaders of PTA also attended. The district provided release days for mentors who volunteered for the second phase of training. This second phase focused on the concerns and needs of teachers on improvement plans.

The second induction strategy in Ketchikan is teacher-designed courses that offer credit through the local university. All teachers can participate, but some courses are geared specifically to new teachers. For example, one induction course focused on classroom management but also included sessions on general education issues in the state such as the role of the association in the district; school board policy and procedures; and collective bargaining and strikes. Another course focused on safe schools issues. Teachers attend these after-school courses over a 10-12 week period. In the future, action research may be incorporated into later phases of the induction program and as a professional development option. Teachers would

collaboratively study real classroom situations or concerns and then share their findings with colleagues in the district.

Teacher induction is one piece of the Quality Schools Initiative, a comprehensive education reform movement in Alaska that involves licensure, teacher education, professional development, and standards and accountability. Alaska's state teacher association, the Alaska Education Association, is a key player in educational reform including work on beginning teacher assistance programs. The state association is supporting local associations in developing strategies to deal proactively with these reform issues.

Mark Jones, the Alaska Education Association Uniserve Director, has taken the lead in several districts to help local associations develop induction mentoring programs.²⁹ He is also working with the Anchorage school district on teacher induction. In Anchorage, the mentoring program is supported by grants that pay for release time and stipends for mentors. Mentors must go through an application and selection process. Of the 60-70 mentors, about half are retired teachers. They spend a good deal of their time working directly in the classrooms of new teachers.

Olathe, Kansas: Career Development within a Policy

Framework

The Olathe Unified School District, a suburban Kansas district serving 19,000 students, has spent the past few years looking at teacher induction from a policy perspective. The district is collaborating with the state and local NEA affiliates to build a results-oriented professional growth system for all certified educators. The new system, which is grounded in a district-level policy framework, links evaluation, staff development, and school improvement. Olathe's work was supported in part by funding from NFIE's *A Change of Course* initiative.

The Olathe Professional Growth Process differentiates three levels of career development:

- New Olathe Educator (Years 1, 2, 3)
- Early Career Educator (Years 4, 5), and
- Career Educator (Years 6 plus).

Olathe's professional growth system is anchored by a policy that sets new professional standards for all district educators. These standards went through an extensive design and review process in which administrators, university faculty, state and local association leaders, and teachers were involved. The standards were approved by the Olathe school board in March 2000.

In the new professional growth system, they use standards to guide both administrator observations and collaborative conferences with new educators

The focus in Olathe on induction of educators new to an assignment is particularly important because support for these educators is often overlooked in induction programs.

and educators in new assignments. At each stage (induction, early career, or career), educators assess their skills. They write down their assessment of their skills in relation to professional standards; to the district mission, vision, beliefs, and guiding principles; to school improvement; and to staff development plans. They summarize their strengths and areas for potential growth. For early-career and

career-level educators, the individual professional analysis of various data (e.g., observations, written, reflections, student assessment results) becomes the basis for setting 2-3 year target goals for individual professional growth action plans. For new educators the evaluation process shapes the content of induction mentoring and other staff development support.

The "New Olathe Educator" stage of the system warrants a closer look. In this phase, a specific process supports the transition of veteran educators to new grade levels or content areas within the district. This focus on induction of educators new to an assignment is particularly important because support for these educators is often overlooked in induction programs.

The induction process for the "New Olathe Educator" stage is further differentiated for three types of new educator:

- A new educator who has never had due process rights³⁰

- An educator new to Olathe who has had due process rights in another Kansas district
- District educator new to an assignment

A new educator who has never had due process rights goes through three phases of a three-year induction process. This includes observations,

Still in the pilot stage, Olathe's professional growth process is a continuum that begins with the induction of new educators and extends throughout the individual's career. The ultimate goal is to create an on-going, collaborative learning community—the essence of a transformative induction model.

conferences, guided growth plans, and mid-year and summative evaluations. An educator new to Olathe who has had due process rights in another Kansas district can move through the same induction phases in two or three years. District educators new to an assignment go through a similar, but streamlined induction process. After completing one to two years in new educator evaluation phases, they move up to their previous evaluation status (i.e., new career or career). Their induction process is designed to insure competency in the new assignment and provide professional development to help make the transition.

Still in the pilot stage, Olathe's professional growth process is a continuum that begins with the induction of new educators and extends throughout the individual's career. The ultimate goal is to create an on-going, collaborative learning community—the essence of a transformative induction model.

Chicago, Illinois: Graduate Level Preparation to Keep Teachers in Urban Schools

Teachers for Chicago is a graduate-level teacher preparation and induction program. Since its founding in 1991, it has placed over 900 graduates in Chicago's urban schools. Every year *Teachers for Chicago* works with 100 new teachers in 25 schools.³¹

Teachers for Chicago is a local partnership among the Chicago Board of Education, the Chicago Teachers Union [check if this is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers], a consortium of nine local colleges and universities, and the Golden Apple Foundation for Excellence in Education. The purpose of the program is to recruit, educate, develop, and prepare effective, professional teachers for the Chicago public schools. Initiated by the teachers' union, *Teachers for Chicago* is attempting to answer the questions:

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Teachers for Chicago functions as a graduate-level, alternative route to teacher certification. The program is significant in its ability to recruit minority teacher candidates and male candidates, both scarce in teaching today. The program attracts 60 percent minorities. Many candidates are over 33 years old.

The selection process for program participants is rigorous. Applicants are carefully screened for their level of commitment and characteristics that describe effective urban teachers. Candidates must have a Bachelors degree. After three summers and two years of graduate study and classroom experience they earn a Masters degree and teacher certification. Since the program began, 1,000 participants have been selected from 6,000 applicants.

Teachers at the school sites are involved in the selection process. Administrators and the local school councils must fully commit to supporting the teacher candidates and their mentors.

After the first summer of university coursework, the new teachers are placed in Chicago public school classrooms as teachers, working under the guidance of experienced mentor teachers. At each school, four new teachers work with one master teacher who is released full-time from that site. During the first two years of teaching (and three consecutive summers), new teachers continue to take university course work. The new teachers fill actual teaching vacancies in elementary, secondary, and special education classrooms, a practice that is not supported by the NEA check this. However, more and more non-credentialed teachers are in classrooms in a number of states.

Teachers for Chicago is a complex and rigorous program. Its curriculum is shaped by the needs and circumstances of urban schools. By placing non-credentialed teacher candidates in their own classrooms, *Teachers for Chicago* roots them in the urban reality. The first-year interns and second-

year residents, as they are called, are brought together regularly to examine urban issues impacting students: the complexity of working within a large city school system; the conditions and lack of resources at some schools; and the disadvantages many urban students face in their lives. Professional development for teachers is embedded in their daily work. The program employs inquiry methods that facilitate reflection on their practice.

Mentor teachers are critical to the success of *Teachers for Chicago*. The mentor teacher is released from teaching for two years and also receives opportunities for continued professional development through free university classes. Mentors may also become adjunct faculty at one of nine participating colleges and universities. New teachers make a commitment to teach in Chicago Public Schools for two years upon completion.

Ninety percent of *Teachers for Chicago* graduates are still teaching in Chicago Public Schools and a record 80 percent are in their original placements.

Silicon Valley/Santa Cruz, California: New Teacher Center Initiative for Evolving High-Tech Community

The New Teacher Center is a national resource center dedicated to teacher development. This first-of-its-kind center is housed at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and serves the larger Bay Area. With twelve years of experience supporting new teachers, the New Teacher Center offers

research in teacher induction and mentoring in addition to programs designed to build mentor capacity.

The Center operates the Leadership and Coaching Project. Started in 1990, this program offers monthly seminars and release time to develop teacher partnerships for veteran teachers interested in mentoring. In addition to research and mentor development, the New Teacher Center offers a two-year induction program that works with 450 new teachers in a consortium of

Although the districts within Silicon Valley are mostly made up of suburban schools, an interesting dynamic is the number of low-performing schools. Large numbers of poor children of color are hidden in under-served "urban-like" school districts such as East Palo Alto.

16 districts in Northern California. Teachers in its induction program attend monthly seminars designed to build a support network and on-going professional dialogue among beginning teachers. The seminars emphasize K-12 literacy and assistance to teachers in meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Each seminar provides teachers with an opportunity to learn standards and teaching strategies along with time to reflect on what they are learning.

The Center's newest initiative is focused on supporting school districts in California's burgeoning Silicon Valley. Although the districts within Silicon Valley are mostly made up of suburban schools, an interesting dynamic is the number of low-performing schools. Large numbers of poor children of color are hidden in under-served "urban-like" school districts such as East Palo Alto. The New Teacher Center's Silicon Valley

Initiative will be working with teachers who teach in this evolving high-tech community.

Mentors teach formal and informal lessons, bring in resources and curriculum, meet one to two hours per week with each inductee, and mediate between inductee and principal. They also lead teach summer seminars for new teachers. By their third year, the mentors assume leadership roles in the design and implementation of curriculum.

The program releases exemplary teachers full-time to mentor 13 to 15 new teachers. Mentors or "advisors" are on loan to the university for staggered rotations of two to three years. Mentors teach formal and informal lessons, bring in resources and curriculum, meet one to two hours per week with each inductee, and mediate between inductee and principal. They also lead-teach summer seminars for new teachers. By their third year, the mentors assume leadership roles in the design and implementation of curriculum. In the past eight years, 94 percent of the New Teacher Center's inductees have remained in education and 90 percent are still teaching.

The New Teacher Center has developed in-depth "training" modules for their mentors. All mentors attend a three-day retreat before the academic term and attend meetings every Friday throughout the semester. The New Teacher Center also boasts an impressive return rate for mentors. Only one mentor has left teaching. After their terms, mentors have stayed active in teacher support and development. A major evaluation has shown that as a

result of the Center's approach to induction, their first-year teachers look like second-year teachers.

Because of New Teacher Center's high-quality programs and impressive results, the Center is helping develop teacher induction programs across the state and nation, working with districts to provide training, and offering research and policy information. The New Teacher Center exemplifies NFIE's characteristics of high-quality professional development in the ways that it makes teachers leaders in the development and administration of its induction programs. There is an emphasis on teachers' intellectual development as it strives to include teachers in its research efforts. It also employs current technology to facilitate teacher collaboration via online support and networks.

Conclusions

All the programs featured above have worked hard to keep up with the evolving awareness of how to provide high-quality professional development for their staff — from their newest to their most experienced teachers and administrators. These programs all address the general characteristics of induction programs discussed earlier: focusing on on-going orientation; supportive mentoring; structured time for reflection; and structured time for training in effective teaching according to district standards.

Quality induction programs are essential to producing a quality teaching force in the 21st century. If teachers are to radically change student outcomes and begin to narrow the achievement gap, they must have the tools, support,

and training to radically change their practice. At the core of quality induction programs are effective strategies for professional development that create lifelong learning among teachers throughout their careers. Policymakers and educators must ensure that induction programs embody the characteristics of high-quality professional development by insisting on rigorous, sustained, and long-term learning opportunities for all teachers.

Considerations When Designing An Induction Program

To determine if your induction program is developing into one that embodies high-quality professional development and builds the teaching profession, ask yourself these questions:

1. Are all teachers new to an assignment experiencing a quality induction program?
2. Are all teachers new to the profession experiencing a quality induction program?
3. Is our induction program:
 - results-driven?
 - job-embedded?
 - directed toward teachers' intellectual development, leadership, and expanded professional roles?
 - helping teachers become deeply immersed in subject matter and pedagogy?

- designed and directed by teachers?
 - involving shared decisionmaking designed to improve the school?
4. Are we moving from a basic orientation model of induction and/or beginning teacher development model to a transformative induction model, i.e., a model that is based on teacher standards and focuses on the development of teachers as a "community of learners"?
 5. Are adequate resources devoted to teacher induction?
 6. What additional groups need to support induction?
 7. Do we have mechanisms in place to track changes in teacher retention as we develop our induction program?
 8. Do we have mechanisms in place to track the impact of teacher induction on student learning?

Resources

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4. US Department of Education, www.ed.gov/offices
5. National Staff Development Council, www.nsd.org

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End Notes

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- ²⁸ See www.nsd.org.
- ²⁹ AEA is a partner in one of the NFIE *A Change of Course* grants. Data in this section was obtained from the AEA UniServ director.
- ³⁰ Kansas law states that people get due process rights (similar to what some groups refer to as tenure) when they receive their fourth contract UNLESS they had previously had due process rights in another Kansas district, then they get that status in their new district upon issuance of the third contract. The impact on Olathe is that with the first group, they anticipate working closely with that teacher for their first 3 years. With the second group, the close supervision will have a 2-year duration.
- ³¹ Despite the similarity in name, it is not associated with Teach for America.