

Issue in Brief: Teacher Induction



Overview

While many agree that the classroom teacher is the single most important in-school factor influencing student learning, there is much debate about the structures, experiences, and policies that best nurture teacher growth. In recent years, however, it has become increasingly clear that early career induction and mentoring are critical leverage points for beginning teacher development. Intensive professional supports during a teacher's first few years in the classroom have been linked to positive effects on job satisfaction, retention, and overall effectiveness. A recent review of the literature found that students of beginning teachers who participated in early career induction programs had higher gains on academic achievement tests. In this policy brief, the Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy explores potential strategies for enhancing teacher induction and mentoring by:

- Synthesizing the literature on effective induction and mentoring practices;
- Describing successful induction programs and teacher residency models^a; and
- Presenting a cost analysis of resources needed to support evidence-based practice.

The Massachusetts Context

Since 2000, Massachusetts regulations have required that all public school teachers in the Commonwealth complete a year-long induction program prior to obtaining their professional license. In 2001, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) issued guidelines that provided districts with examples of research-supported approaches to assist in the development of effective induction activities. More recently, in June 2011, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approved a new evaluation framework for public K-12 educators. The purpose of the evaluation framework is to enhance educator quality and practice to promote increased student learning and achievement. Yet, despite significant attention given to promoting professional development and ensuring effective practice, translating state guidelines into practice remains a challenge. This is particularly true for beginning teachers. Many districts simply do not have the capacity or resources to pursue a comprehensive vision for providing additional supports to most staff to improve classroom practice, including beginning teachers.

The Evidence: Induction Supports Benefit Teachers

This document presents findings from the research study *From Learning to Leadership: A Cost Study of Early Career Supports for Teachers* featured as part of the project *Roadmap to Expanding Opportunity: Evidence on What Works in Education*. Findings present the cost of promising practices based on a review of the literature base and original research into four programs serving beginning teachers – two in-district induction programs (Chelsea Public Schools; Arlington Public Schools) and two partnership-based teacher residency programs (Boston Teacher Residency, referred to as BTR below; University of Chicago Urban Teacher Education Program, referred to as UTEP below). Key program features include:

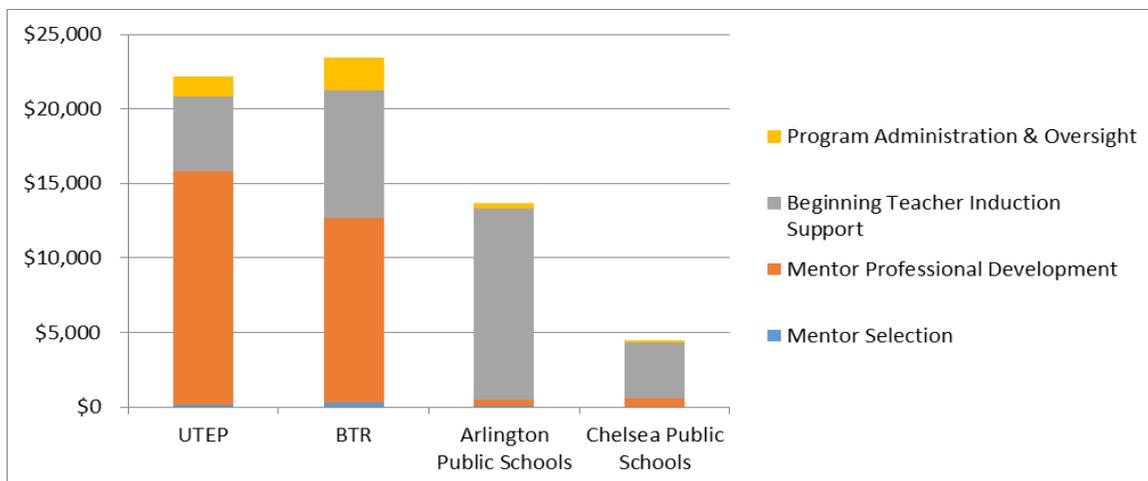
- Orientation provides an overview of induction and mentoring program elements.
- Supports include at least a half-day of mentoring per week for the full school year; some program models include peer cohorts as an effective set of supports for new teachers.
- Mentors are carefully selected and assigned.
- Mentors are well-trained and offered release time.

^a Residency programs are designed to provide teacher candidates the opportunity to meet coursework requirements for teacher licensure, gain clinical experience, and successfully transition into the classroom. These models have a specific focus on supporting beginning teachers in their first position as a teacher of record.

Table 1. Per Pupil Costs

For the 2013-14 academic year, total per participant costs for the four programs ranged from \$4,477 to \$23,413. These costs are driven both by

the amount and frequency of program activities and the number of enrolled participants. Table 1 at left shows total costs, and program component costs.



Policy Considerations

For State Policymakers

Update Massachusetts' Guidelines for Induction Programs. ESE's guidelines offer districts research-based strategies for developing induction programs. The changing landscape of educator licensure, supervision, and evaluation creates an opportunity to revisit these guidelines.

Publish information about district induction programs. Per state regulations, ESE collects data annually about districts' induction programs. These data can help districts and teacher preparation programs identify areas of need and gaps in services, as well as exemplary practices prime for replication.

Provide incentives for collaboration between institutions of higher education and districts. Grant funding is one way to support this work; another is to broker introductions between potential partners through convenings and networking sessions.

For District Leaders

Utilize existing resources for training mentors. Educational collaboratives or regional Readiness Centers can facilitate opportunities for districts to share ideas and learn from one another in order to create efficiencies and reduce the need for districts to build programs from scratch.

Explore the feasibility of a summer residency for beginning teachers. "Mini-residencies" conducted over the summer could provide many of the benefits of a full residency on a condensed scale and shortened timeline.

Create facilitated cohorts for the first two years of teaching. Formalizing relationships among beginning teachers in a school or district in a cohort model led by veteran teachers can help incorporate effective induction strategies into their first years in the classroom.

For the full report, *From Learning to Leadership* and other research, visit the Roadmap to Expanding Opportunity website at:

ExpandingOpportunity.org