PART I

Supporting New Teachers to Accelerate Their Effectiveness and Keep Them in the Profession

Comprehensive Mentoring Programs for New Teachers is a way to help you get started on planning or revising a program of support for new teachers. It responds to a question many practitioners ask as they face the "revolving door" dynamic of hiring new teachers and replacing exiting teachers year after year: "What programs are out there that effectively support new teachers?"

A total of 18 programs of support for new teachers are presented in this second edition. These programs demonstrate a wide variety of ways school districts, educational collaboratives, institutions of higher education, and state departments of education are supporting new teachers. Readers will gain nuts-and-bolts information about different approaches to support new teachers that affect hiring, orientation, teacher effectiveness, school climate, and teacher retention. All of the programs are described in the same format, making for easy review and comparison. In just a few hours, you may begin to imagine which of these programs might work well in your school, district, or region, or how particular components of programs could be woven together to best serve your setting.

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Addressing the Needs of New Teachers and Supporting Their Learning

When this book was first published in 2002, teacher supply and demand were already critical issues. In 2007, there were a projected 3.7 million elementary and secondary school teachers in public and private schools, which was 17 percent higher than in 1997 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). Recruiting and hiring well-prepared teachers is more a concern than ever. The current projections call for 2.2 million new teachers in the next decade, or 210,000 new teachers per year for the next 10 years (National Center for Education Information, n.d.). Shortages of teachers are reported throughout the country, especially in rural and urban districts. After they graduate, only about 60 percent of students trained as teachers actually enter the profession (Chaika, 2006). It is not clear whether a sufficient number of mathematics and science teachers are being prepared, given the critical shortages of teachers in these content areas throughout the United States.

MAJOR CAUSES OF THE SHORTAGE OF TEACHERS

Teacher retention has been a serious issue for the past two decades. On average, 30 to 50 percent of teachers leave the profession altogether within their first five years (National Conference of State Legislatures, n.d.). This is not a new problem, yet it remains a continual challenge. Richard Ingersoll, who has done considerable research and writing on teacher

supply, turnover, and shortage, has contributed to our understanding of the issues and how we must solve them. Ingersoll (2001) charted the cumulative percentage of K–12 public school teachers in the United States who left teaching:

Of teachers with one year of experience or less, 14 percent left teaching

Of teachers with two years of experience or less, 24 percent left teaching

Of teachers with three years of experience or less, 33 percent left teaching

Of teachers with four years of experience or less, 40 percent left teaching

Of teachers with five years of experience or less, 46 percent left teaching

While the aging population of current teachers had caused many to think there would be a teacher shortage due to retirement, Ingersoll (2006) found that only 14 percent of surveyed teachers stated retirement was a reason for leaving. Instead, 50 percent of teachers cited job dissatisfaction as a reason for departure, and 36 percent cited pursuit of another job, family considerations, or personal reasons. Sources of dissatisfaction for teachers who left their schools included too little preparation time, too heavy a teaching load, poor salary or benefits, too large classes, student behavioral problems, lack of faculty influence, too little parental support, no opportunities for professional advancement, and too little collaboration time. Many of these reasons reflect poor working conditions, which we can and must address. In fact, research from the Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, headed by Susan Moore Johnson at Harvard University, found that 56 percent of new teachers reported that no extra assistance was available to them as new teachers (*Harvard University Gazette*, 2003). Susan M. Kardos, researcher in the Next Generation project, advises,

> Once they arrive for their first day in the classroom, new teachers need their schools to support them in an ongoing way. Without the necessary school site support, they will not have success with their students, and they will be frustrated and dissatisfied in their jobs. (Implications section, para. 2)

Studies have suggested that teachers considered the most talented—those who score highest on the SAT, the national teacher exam, and teacher certification tests—are among those who leave (Ingersoll, 2006). It is very disturbing to find that the teaching profession is losing many of its most promising prospects soon after they begin.

How teachers are prepared also matters. The trend toward alternative teacher certification routes is producing a significant number of teachers who have strong content-specific preparation and often lack pedagogical expertise and teaching practicum experience. The intention of alternative teacher preparation routes is to increase the number of teachers who enter the educator pipeline to respond to the high attrition rates and increasing need for new teachers.

There are many reasons why state departments of education have included these alternative paths to teaching. Critical shortages of teachers in the areas of mathematics and science, for example, have made it seemingly necessary to lure mathematicians and scientists into teaching, in the belief that they have the content knowledge and can learn to teach. Some of these career changers are highly effective at teaching, and others are not, which confirms that subject matter knowledge alone does not ensure either good teaching or job satisfaction. Perhaps some teachers who have pursued an alternative certification path are surprised and saddened to realize that their students are not always ready or willing to learn what they want to teach them. Perhaps others were not

prepared for the rigors of teaching. All could certainly have benefited from comprehensive mentoring programs to support their unique entry into the profession.

Research findings conflict regarding the risk of leaving for those who are prepared through alternative teacher certification routes. Linda Darling-Hammond, a prolific researcher and author on teacher quality, has written that teachers who begin their career via alternative certification routes have far lower retention rates than colleagues prepared in four- or five-year teacher preparation programs (Darling-Hammond, 2000). In her study of different pathways into teaching, she found that the retention rate after three years for teachers from a five-year teacher preparation program was 84 percent, compared with a retention rate of 53 percent for teachers from a four-year program. Teachers who pursued an alternative route to certification had a 34-percent retention rate. On the other hand, a 2003 report by the Education Commission of the States (ECS) revealed that alternative programs graduate high percentages of effective new teachers with average or higher-than-average rates of teacher retention. Given the increasing number of people seeking alternative certification, we need more research on their rate of retention.

THE IMPACT OF HIGH TEACHER TURNOVER ON STUDENTS

Ingersoll notes that approximately a third of the nation's teachers are entering or leaving their schools each year. This is an astounding realization. Ironically, underserved populations suffer the most. Ingersoll (2006) states that "poverty, size, and urbanicity were among the factors most correlated with teacher turnover" (p. 23).

The instability of the teacher workforce results in many students' not having teachers who are best able to teach them, since we may hypothesize that new teachers are often less effective than teachers who have had several years of experience (Strong, 2006, p. 16). Having less effective teachers several years in a row threatens the achievement of students in devastating ways. William Sanders, whose research on "value added" has impacted the way we measure schools' and teachers' effectiveness, found that students who had less effective teachers three years in a row made achievement gains 54 percent lower than students who had the most effective teachers three years in a row (Sanders & Rivers, 1996).

Compounding the problem of teacher turnover, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES; as cited in Gewertz, 2002) reported in 2002 that more than half of the nation's middle school students and a quarter of its high school students are learning core academic subjects from teachers who lack certification in those subjects and who did not major in them in college. Frequent teacher turnover, low retention rates, and lack of subject matter knowledge are often crippling blows to struggling students.

Urban and rural districts have the highest percentages of teachers unqualified to teach subjects that they are assigned, and rural schools often don't have the resources to compete with the salaries and benefits of urban districts. Therefore, rural districts often have higher levels of out-of-field teachers than urban districts (Hull, 2004).

THE FINANCIAL COST OF HIGH TEACHER TURNOVER

The cost of teacher attrition, while significant, is difficult to calculate because it depends on many factors. The Texas State Board of Educator Certification commissioned a study entitled *The Cost of Teacher Turnover* (Texas Center for Educational Research, 2000) and found that, using one employee turnover model, the cost could be conservatively

estimated to be 20 percent of the leaving teacher's annual salary; using another model, the cost was found to be as high as 200 percent of the leaver's salary. For example, if one third-year teacher earns a salary of $35,000, the cost associated with her leaving the district is estimated at between $7,000 and $70,000, depending on the level of resources the district has invested.

Reasons for differences in estimates of the cost of turnover include the expense incurred for recruiting teachers, the amount of teacher and administrator time devoted to orienting and supporting new teachers, and the amount of professional development new teachers were provided before departing. A principal in a rural district where I consulted remarked that she was doing a great deal of professional development for neighboring districts; her new teachers were highly trained during their first three years in her district before they left for higher salaries elsewhere. Obviously, if one third of the staff turned over in a given year, this represents a significant loss in financial and human capital.

INDUCTION AND MENTORING PROGRAMS IMPROVE TEACHER RETENTION

Many of the induction and mentoring programs presented in the first edition of this book raised teacher retention significantly, sometimes after only one year (Villani, 2002). Retention rates in many of the programs studied continued to be high in the ensuing years. For example, in Glendale, Arizona, teacher retention before 1991 was 47 percent. After the program was implemented, it ranged from 53 to 80 percent, and the average retention rate between 2005 and 2008 was 79 percent. In Rochester City, New York, the retention rate before 1986 (i.e., before the teachers association' and the administration worked together to promote heightened teacher effectiveness and retention) was 65 percent. In the ensuing 15 years, the average retention rate was 87 percent. The retention rate for the 22 years after the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program was implemented has averaged 88 percent.

In this second edition, there are other examples of the impact of mentoring programs on teacher retention. For example, the retention rate for special education teachers hired between 2005 and 2008 in Special School District, Saint Louis, Missouri, was 91 percent. These findings are particularly noteworthy because attrition rates for special education, mathematics, and science teachers are approaching 20 percent a year (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future & NCTAF State Partners, 2002). In Stockton Unified, California, an urban district, the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program averaged an 89-percent retention rate between 2003 and 2008. The program in Muscatine, Iowa, a rural district, has averaged 89-percent retention for teachers hired between 2004 and 2007.

While retention is important, it is only part of the broader goal of raising student achievement. That goal is much more difficult to measure because there are so many variables that impact student learning. Retaining teachers is a first step. Enhancing teacher efficacy while maintaining a stable teacher workforce moves us closer to impacting student learning and achievement.

DEFINING INDUCTION, MENTORING, AND COMPREHENSIVE MENTORING PROGRAMS

Induction is a multi-year, systemic process specifically designed to orient newly recruited people to their work and support them through ongoing professional development (Public Education Network, 2004). While mentoring is usually part of an induction program, this is not always the case.

Mentoring is historically defined as a relationship between colleagues, usually one to one, often in which an experienced practitioner works to help a novice enter a profession or place of work and become highly proficient. Many districts have formalized mentoring to ensure that it moves beyond a one-to-one relationship and provides new teachers with the comprehensive support and professional development they need. Such *comprehensive mentoring programs* include the practices often identified in induction programs and emphasize the importance of dialogue among colleagues to promote reflection, heightened performance, and retention. One way to think about comprehensive mentoring programs is to understand that they have the following components:

1. Involvement of key shareholders and members of the school community
2. Administrator commitment and support
3. A selection process and criteria for mentor teachers
4. A new teacher and mentor matching method
5. Training and support for new teachers and their mentors
6. Sustaining policies and procedures
7. Evaluation of the mentoring program (Dunne & Villani, 2007)

In this book, I will use the term "comprehensive mentoring program" when referring to an organized approach to providing all of these practices.

Chapter 9 includes a deeper discussion of comprehensive mentoring programs and a rubric to help you assess your own setting and set goals for developing or enhancing a program of support for new teachers that accelerates their effectiveness and heightens their retention in the profession. Whatever the program, and whatever it is named by its planners, it needs to be grounded in the needs and experiences of new teachers.

THE NEEDS OF NEW TEACHERS

We need new teachers to be as effective as possible in their teaching assignments because they have students who are counting on them as soon as classes begin. We also need effective new teachers to remain in their positions so that there isn't a revolving door effect in our schools, particularly in urban and rural districts. Understanding the needs of new teachers is an important first step in providing the support they require and deserve.

"Reality shock" is what Simon Veenman (1984) called the state of mind new teachers often enter when they first deal with the demands of teaching. In an older and still important study of students in teacher education programs, Veenman found that students believed they would experience less difficulty than the "average first year teacher" on a number of different tasks. You can imagine their distress at finding that they, too, felt overwhelmed by all that they were expected to accomplish. It is not surprising that any new teacher would feel inadequate. Parents, principals, and the entire school community expect teachers in their first year to perform as well as teachers with multiple years of experience. This expectation is unrealistic and weighs heavily on any new teacher. Knowledge about reality shock and the likely experiences of new teachers is useful to mentors and other colleagues who work to support them.

Stephen Gordon and Susan Maxey, who write about programmatic ways to support new teachers (2000, p. 6), have identified the following high-priority needs of beginning teachers:

- Managing the classroom
- Acquiring information about the school system

- Obtaining instructional resources and materials
- Planning, organizing, and managing instruction, as well as other professional responsibilities
- Assessing students and evaluating student progress
- Motivating students
- Using effective teaching methods
- Dealing with individual students' needs, interests, abilities, and problems
- Communicating with colleagues, including administrators, supervisors, and other teachers
- Communicating with parents
- Adjusting to the teaching environment and role
- Receiving emotional support

With all of these needs and more, there clearly is a necessity for a well-planned approach to new teacher induction.

FIVE PHASES EXPERIENCED BY FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS

Ellen Moir, executive director of the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and her colleagues (Moir, 1999) identified five phases (listed below) that teachers experience in their first year. Knowledge of these phases is important for new teachers to help reduce their feelings of isolation. These phases are also useful for mentors, administrators, and other colleagues to consider while contemplating individual and systemic efforts to support new teachers.

Anticipation Phase

Before teachers start their first assignment, they are idealistic, excited, and anxious.

Survival Phase

During the first month of school, the new teacher is bombarded with a variety of problems and situations he or she had not anticipated. Besides planning and preparing lessons, the new teacher is responsible for organizational tasks like taking lunch counts, announcing PTA fundraising drives, and establishing classroom routines and procedures.

Disillusionment Phase

Around November, new teachers begin to question their commitment and their competence. They are faced with back-to-school night, parent conferences, and observations by their principals. Just when they are running fast to keep pace with all the varied obligations, they need to run even faster to keep up. It is a time of distress. Surviving this phase may be the toughest challenge for new teachers.

Rejuvenation Phase

After winter break, teachers feel rested and rejuvenated. There is a slow rise in their attitude. They come back with renewed hope and a better understanding of the job. They are relieved they have survived the first half of the year.