

SPOTLIGHT ON
COMPREHENSIVE
INDUCTION

RTTT Pilot Project Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 4

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Seven Levers of Reform

- Recruitment, Hiring, and Placement
- Induction
- Professional Development
- Supervision and Evaluation
- Teacher Leadership
- Organizational Structure
- Adult Professional Culture

Inside this issue:

An Interview with Susan Freedman	1
The Impact of Induction on Student Achievement	4
Revere's Instructional Focus on Induction	5
Connecting Policy and Practice in Malden	6
Higher Education Collaboration in Worcester	7
A Beginning Teacher's Perspective	9
International Induction Programs	10
Key Findings and Goals of Induction Programs	10

Comprehensive Induction Programs

When framing the questions to drive this newsletter, we were guided by the Working Group for Educator Excellence criteria for successful comprehensive inductions programs, as defined in our Race to the Top Human Resource Pilot Project (RTTT HRPP). The mission of the RTTT HRPP is to “create a personnel pipeline that delivers high expertise teaching and leading.” Induction is one of the ten interconnected levers that influence the development of teachers and leaders. A district with a successful induction program “provides comprehensive, systematic supports to make the transition from novice to ac-

complished educator more effective and professionally rewarding.” All of the districts and research highlighted in this newsletter reflect characteristics of a successful induction program. Each perspective in this newsletter provides different insights into comprehensive induction programs. Educator Susan Freedman discusses core components of a comprehensive induction program, as well as planning and implementation lessons. Revere’s induction program has an instructional focus, and utilizes administrator expertise to develop a culture of support for beginning teachers. In

Malden, the induction program is part of school committee policy and the school budget. Worcester collaborates with local institutes of higher education to provide novice teachers with systematic learning opportunities during their first three years. Teacher Deborah Opar reflects on her experiences participating in her district’s induction program. Two research reviews highlight the impact of induction programs on student achievement and how international best practices surrounding induction can inform US policy and practice, respectively.

An Interview with Susan Freedman

Susan Freedman is an expert in the field of comprehensive induction and supporting educators at all levels. Currently Susan is the leader of the Human Resource Pilot Project and Co-Chair of the High Expertise Teaching Project. Her book, *Beyond Mentoring: Putting an Instructional Focus on Comprehensive Induction Programs*, fourth edition, co-authored with Jon Saphier and Barbara Aschheim, lays out a conceptual model for comprehensive induction, and is full of practical strategies to support districts in connecting theory to practice.

Many times, induction and mentoring are used synonymously as a way districts support novice teachers. The title of your book, Beyond Mentoring, clearly differentiates mentoring from induction. Could you speak about that differential?

A comprehensive induction program involves more than just mentors. Mentors alone, though a critical part of an induction program, cannot be expected to provide the full range of input, feedback and support that beginning teachers need. Well-

designed induction programs ensure that new teachers in their first three years of practice benefit from assistance that expands and deepens their instructional skills and knowledge in all of the professional knowledge bases on teaching: academic disciplines, content-specific pedagogies, generic pedagogy, parent and community involvement, meeting the needs of all learners, and professional culture. To provide a comprehensive, systematic program of support that enhances and retains its beginning teachers includes specific roles for

[continued on page 2]

An Interview with Susan Freedman, continued

[continued from page 1]

veteran teachers, principals, superintendents, central office personnel, the teachers union, school committees, teacher leaders, and other staff members. Strong communication and collaboration among stakeholders creates a culture of commitment and ensures success.

“An increased focus on defining, measuring, and articulating the impact of effective teacher induction will help make tremendous strides in informing teacher effectiveness.”

-Susan Freedman

There is a growing body of research, both quantitative and qualitative, that is clarifying which features constitute good induction systems. Research by Susan Moore Johnson and the Project on the Next Generation of Teachers found that effective induction is a system of supports, not merely a menu of offerings. It has multiple, interconnected parts all of which have as their primary focus classroom teaching and student learning. Central to the work must be the new teacher’s curriculum, pedagogy and students. Richard Ingersoll and Thomas Smith’s work also speaks to the limits of one-to-one mentoring and the need for more comprehensive induction programs which include such features as common planning time with other teachers in the same subject, regular collaboration with other teachers, and participation with a network of teachers.

What are some first steps districts can take to shift the responsibility of supporting new teachers and administrators from one mentor to the whole school and district community?

At the heart of a comprehensive induction program where everyone has the responsibility for the success of the beginning teacher is a district plan of action for the induction program. Whether a district is launching a new program or strengthening an

existing one, the first step is to assemble a broad based group of stakeholders who will set goals, design activities, and identify tasks and timelines for the induction program. While there are variation in district level induction plans, they usually contain the following elements:

- A mission or vision statement
- Goals for the induction program
- A communication plan for communicating about the plan to the community
- Roles and responsibilities
- A coherent program of staff development and collegial networking for mentors, beginning teachers and administrators
- Selecting, matching and other aspects of the mentoring program
- Quantitative and qualitative program assessment

Another valuable strategy from the outset of implementing an induction program, is to have beginning teachers part of collegial interactions with veteran teachers such as sharing ideas on curriculum and instruction; formal and informal observations in colleagues’ classrooms; working together on the development of curriculum materials; and teaching techniques and strategies to each other. A comprehensive induction program encourages these interactions among all teachers which strengthens the culture of the school.

Participating in professional learning communities provides a formal structure in which new and veteran teachers come together as learners where the intent is on informing their professional practice to strengthen student learn-

ing. Professional learning communities foster the belief that collaborative inquiry is focused on informing practice and student learning as a career-long journey.

What are the highest leverage services that districts can implement to meet the needs of beginning teachers in their induction programs?

The highest impact services for improving beginning teachers’ instructional effectiveness and for contributing to increased student learning are developing mentor, teacher and principal expertise. Providing collaborative opportunities to learn are an integral component of strong comprehensive induction programs.

There is abundant research that points to the necessity of training for mentors. Linking effective mentoring with a vision of instructional excellence and moving teaching practice forward remains at the heart of mentor work. While most mentors are strong classroom practitioners, this excellence does not always translate into effective mentoring. Foundational and advanced training for mentors including such areas as communication skills, differential conferencing, developing protégé’s planning skills, math and literacy coaching etc. help to ensure the mentor has the necessary knowledge base, skills and attributes for teaching; these areas of support are also influencing factors in retaining new teachers.

Since administrators are the key constituency in determining the success and effectiveness of new **[continued on page 3]**

An Interview with Susan Freedman, continued

[Continued from page 2]

teachers and of an induction program, administrator training is an important element of any program. Building truly collegial environments where all staff are responsible for the success of the new teachers, providing growth-oriented supervision and evaluation to new and veteran teachers, protecting and nurturing the mentor-mentee relationships, providing opportunities for distributed leadership and serving as an instructional leader are just a few examples of professional development needed by administrators.

Beginning teachers benefit from ongoing staff development specifically tailored to their needs and guided by professional teaching standards and the appropriate content area standards. Opportunities for beginning teachers including regularly scheduled seminars, on-line professional development, and learning communities provide a context for rich networking, professional dialogue and reflection, as well as combating isolation.

What type of process would you recommend for districts to select mentors and match mentors with beginning teachers?

I recommend that teachers be required to apply for the position of mentor and that the selection process be linked to high standards. This process begins by circulating criteria and expectations that describe the important responsibility. It signifies to mentors and other staff the importance of this role and the high regard in which it is held at the school and district levels. At the same time, superintendents, principals, and other administrators should feel free to encourage individuals who have the appropriate knowledge, skills and attributes to apply to become a mentor.

The traditional wisdom of matching mentors has stood the test of repeated research and practical experience. When matches are based on grade level, content area, and proximity in the building they provide valuable support for new teachers. Grade level and content-area matches provide important commonality in terms of child development, classroom management, and curriculum and instructional strategies. Mentors who are in close proximity to their protégés are able to be informally available before and after school and at other times during the school day.

How can districts sustain effective comprehensive teacher induction programs once they are implemented?

As districts hire increasing numbers of new educators, it becomes critical that they institutionalize the induction program by making it a structural component of the district. The most effective programs have designated an administrator, or teacher leader, as the program coordinator who oversees the implementation of the induction program. Coordinators often establish steering committees who help to plan and oversee the development and oversight of programs and encourage participation. Two important approaches for sustaining effective district level induction programs are having a statement in the school committee's policy manual explaining that comprehensive teacher induction is a district level commitment and having a school budget line item for the district teacher induction program.

Could you address issues surrounding assessing the impact of comprehensive induction programs?

An increased focus on defining, measuring, and articulating the impact of effective teacher induction will help

make tremendous strides in informing teacher effectiveness.

Studies show induction programs build and sustain human capital in schools. A recent study from the Institute of Educational Sciences, for example, shows a significant impact from comprehensive induction programs on student learning in math and reading. According to a recent SRI International report induction programs in Ohio and Illinois improve teacher retention and effectiveness.

Another current issue in measuring the impact of induction programs is defining success. We need to measure outcomes. Indicators of improved teacher practice, professional culture, teacher retention and increased student learning are top priorities to measure. When we have a common language and criteria for success, then the measurement of induction program effectiveness will be more transparent and understandable across a wider range of stakeholders. Defining impact is challenging and measuring it is an even greater task. Many school districts and researchers across the country are wrestling with the process of linking input and actions to evidence of student growth and learning.

There is great value in assessing the impact of induction programs using multiple measures like surveys, focus groups, mentor logs, achievement tests, teacher retention and teacher effectiveness data to obtain a broader picture of the different ways induction programs can positively have an impact. In terms of program evaluation, collecting and analyzing data can help refine induction programs and provide evidence on how to strengthen teacher practice and student learning and achievement.

See page 4 for the *Beyond Mentoring Model of Comprehensive Induction*

In Brief: Induction Programs Raise Student Achievement in Urban Districts

Teacher induction programs have been found to increase positive characteristics related to student learning. For example, the New Teacher Center showed that California districts using comprehensive induction principles had a teacher retention rate of 32% higher than the national average. Induction programs have also been shown to increase effective teaching behaviors.

A recent study showed novice teachers who received intensive mentoring engaged significantly in more quality instruction compared to other novice teachers in the same district (Stanulis, Little, and Wibbens, 2012). A cost/benefit analysis of induction programs even suggests that induction programs have an overall cost effective benefit of \$1.66 for every \$1.00 spent (Strong and Villar, 2007).

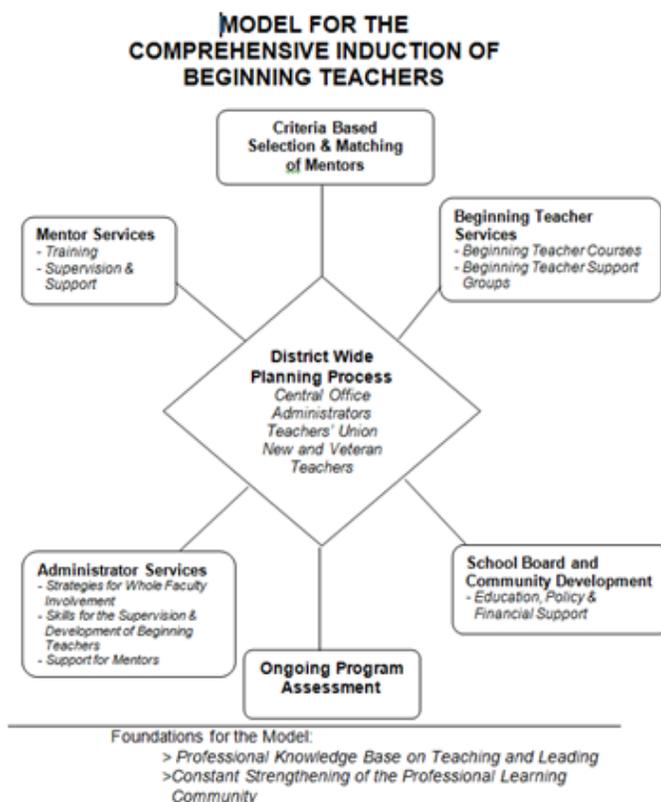
A critical question is “What are the direct effects of induction programs on student achievement?” A recent Institute of Educational Sciences study (2010) of 418 elementary schools in 17 urban districts showed a significant improvement in student reading and math test scores. In the study, students improved 4 percentiles in Reading and 8 percentiles in mathematics.

An average student whose teacher participated in an intensive induction program scored in the 54thile in reading compared to an average student whose teacher received less intensive support who scored at the 50thile. A student of a teacher receiving comprehensive induction supports scored in the 58thile in math compared to a student of a teacher receiving the district’s usual induction program who scored at the 50thile.

The study controlled for a number of alternate explanations for the increase in student achievement. Teachers were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. The experimental condition involved teachers receiving comprehensive induction supports, while the control condition received the usual supports provided by their district.

An interesting finding from the study is there was no difference in student achievement until the third year of the study. Students of teachers in the experimental condition did no better than students of teachers in the control condition for the first two years of the study. The significant differences in student achievement were only found in districts who received two years of the induction program. There was no significant difference in student achievement for teachers receiving only one year of the intensive induction supports. The implications to policy and practice are that the benefits of induction on student learning take time and that differentiated induction supports should be for a three year period.

Planning and implementing comprehensive induction programs is one of the ten levers of change advocated by the WGEE. The IES study described here provides evidence, from a well-designed randomized control study with a large sample, that comprehensive induction programs have the potential to improve student achievement.



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Revere Public Schools: Putting a Purposeful Instructional Focus on Induction

Revere's public schools are in the midst of exciting work on the RTTT HR Pilot Project. The district serves a diverse group of over 6,500 students, including approximately 75% who qualify for free or reduced price lunch. In order to continue to provide a high quality education to all students, developing the expertise of the districts over 400 teachers is a main focus of the district. Assistant Superintendent Dianne Kelly took the time to speak with WGEE about the supports and services for beginning teachers in Revere and future action plans.

A cornerstone of Revere's induction program is a three-day orientation over the summer for all new teachers, as well as teachers who began teaching in the district in the midst of the previous school year. During the three day orientation, the goals and expectations of the district are communicated to teachers. Logistical items, such as an overview of the district's student information system, are reviewed. Teachers also have time to complete a building orientation and meet their mentors.

Each mentor is expected to meet with their mentee for at least one hour per week. While each mentor can be assigned up to three mentees, Dr. Kelly noted ideally the district tries to assign no more than two mentees to each mentor. The specific topics of mentor meetings are ultimately up to the mentors and mentees, with the district providing guidelines and suggested topics for each month. Mentors and mentees maintain a log of monthly activities.

In terms of mentor selection, all teachers who have National Board Certification are automatically invited to be mentors in the district. Mentors and mentees are matched by building, with every effort made to have mentors/mentees that are in the same grade level or discipline. Providing new teachers with a mentor in their discipline or grade level can be challenging across the district. For example, there are relatively few trained mentors in science making it difficult to match new science teachers with a trained mentor in their discipline. Creating a systematic process to identify potential mentors, establishing a mentor job description with broad-based criteria, and creating a mentor pool with a significant number of qualified mentors are future goals for Revere as part of the RTTT HR Pilot Project.

Mentors are a key means of support for new teachers, and new teachers are supported by other personnel as well. New teachers have common planning time with their grade level teams, which provides opportunities for support and supervision from other members of the school community.

Dr. Kelly also described how principals and assistant principals in the district all work with mentors to support beginning teachers. Through a reciprocal relationship, administrators and mentors identify areas for improvement for beginning teachers. For example, a principal may come to a mentor to discuss a need identified from an observation. A new teacher could use further support and supervision around classroom management or effective instructional strategies for teaching reading. This communica-

tion between building administrators and mentors takes place primarily through the teacher evaluation protocol. By modeling collaboration with mentors and encouraging an iterative learning process, principals and assistant principals play an important role in establishing a culture of continuous learning and a focus on instruction in their buildings. By integrating new teachers into a community of adult learners, the principal is a key facilitator in engaging all staff in supporting new teachers.

Revere's induction program offers teachers a number of other supports at the district level. Each year, there are five whole-district mentor workshops that cover special topics for beginning teachers. The topics are strategically chosen to coincide with common areas of difficulty that beginning teachers experience during their first year; "Our session in November, for example, covers communicating and collaborating with parents, and is scheduled a week before parent conferences," noted Dr. Kelly. Other topics covered during the district-wide workshops include the teacher evaluation system, and laws and regulations regarding special education and english language learners. Many of the district-wide sessions focus on instruction and student learning. The March meeting involves teachers analyzing student work and learning how to better document evidence of learning from their students' work.

Providing comprehensive support for new administrators is a challenge facing the district. Currently, two principals in the district are matched with a new principal, but finding time for principals and other administrators is an issue.

[continued on page 6]



"It is all integrated - what we do in other areas comes through in the induction program for new teachers"

***- Dianne Kelly,
Revere Public
Schools***

Connecting Policy and Practice to Support New Teachers: Malden Public Schools

Malden Public Schools experienced a high teacher attrition rate during the 2001-2002 school year. Through the work of a broad-based induction committee, along with expert consulting, the Malden School Committee passed a comprehensive induction policy. Ten years later, Assistant Superintendent and Director of Foreign Languages, Nancy Kassabian talks about the planning and implementation of Malden's plan, as well as lessons learned from ten years as a leader of the induction program.

The development of Malden's comprehensive induction program was purposeful and thoughtful. The district collaborated with Teachers21 in creating Malden's induction program. A committee was formed to plan and propose a comprehensive induction program to support new teachers better. The induction committee included many stakeholders: new and veteran teachers, the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, K-12 Curriculum Director, HR director, union leadership, principals, a School Committee member and an instructional coach. Through this development process, Malden shaped a clear mission statement and theory of action for the induction program; "to attract, support and retain quality teachers who have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that ensure a high quality education for the children of the Malden Public Schools." (Malden Public Schools). Supporting new teachers with comprehensive induction services and assistance is one important ingredient in the recipe for "high levels of teaching and learning."

Malden's induction program has a line item in the annual budget that demonstrates the district's commitment to supporting new teachers. The program has a separate line for mentor stipends as well as one for the induction program. Implementing and evaluating the induction program are the responsibility of a district-level administrator. Ms. Kassabian is the leader of the induction program as part of her duties as Assistant Superintendent and Director of Foreign Languages. Another component of the induction program is its communication plan. The induction program explicitly states that the induction program is a valuable resource to the district with the purpose and benefits of the program clearly

communicated to members of the community, including educators, local businesses, parents, and students. There is regular communication with a number of key stakeholders about the program, from the city council to pre-service teachers and realtors. A 3" x 3" summary of the key points of the program, and different means of communication, including school committee meetings, job fairs, professional organizations' media are also part of the program. Malden communicates broadly the benefits of the induction program to attract and retain high quality teachers to improve student learning.

Malden provides new teachers with a system of supports and services. Ms. Kassabian notes: "While the mentor is a key component of supporting a new teacher, the building principal and all other staff share the responsibility for strengthening new teachers' instructional effectiveness." The mission statement of the induction program reflects the idea that mentoring new teachers is a shared responsibility and is the culture of the school district. "The program will be most successful when all members of the school community understand their role in supporting new teachers and have appropriate training, time and resources for engaging in truly collegial relationships with new teachers." Curriculum directors provide support and training around curriculum and instruction, and grade-level or content teams provide support around lesson planning and classroom management for new teachers. Through a wide system of supports, Malden creates capacity to meet the needs of new teachers.

The differentiated roles and responsibilities of staff in the district are defined as part of Malden's comprehensive induction program. The roles and responsibilities of new teachers, mentors, principals, the Superintendent, instructional coaches, School Committee, the Malden Education Association, Assistant Superintendent and other staff are described vis a vis orientation, support, and evaluation. The Malden Education Association is responsible for incorporating the induction program into union contracts. Principals assume many responsibilities, including forming a committee for mentor selection and matching as a means of supporting new teachers.

[continued on page 7]

Revere Public Schools: Putting a Purposeful Instructional Focus on Induction

[continued from page 5]

Revere plans on providing principals with induction support through an educational consulting organization, and the district continues working on their induction action plan that includes finalizing and implementing a formal induction protocol for leadership positions in the district.

Revere is in the midst of planning and implementing an action plan around

strengthening its induction program, and is utilizing current research to inform decision-making. Providing comprehensive supports that are multi-year and differentiated are a few of the ambitious goals the district has for further supporting new teachers. The district is planning on developing more formalized resources for mentors and mentees, as well as implementing a cultural compe-

tence component to its induction program. Collaborating with institutes of higher education to narrow the research to practice gap, and more closely align teacher preparation programs with what teacher's experience in practice on a day to day basis is another goal related to the district supporting new teachers.

Connecting Policy and Practice to Support New Teachers: Malden Public Schools, continued

[continued from page 6]

Malden also has a criterion-based process for selecting mentors. The induction program identifies qualities of an effective mentor. For example, three of the characteristics which Malden associates with effective mentors are:

- competency in content area
- knowledge about teaching, and
- strong advocacy for the new

Mentors typically have at least five years of teaching experience and professional licensure status. The district provides mentors with in-house training, and plans to launch another round of training to develop a pool of mentors in the future. Mentors are matched by grade level or content area and building.

The activities and supports of the induction program are organized around four overarching goals. The first goal is to integrate new teachers into the cultures at the

school, district and community levels, as well as familiarize them with the norms of the school. This happens in many ways from attendance at an orientation day, learning about the district's policies and procedures, participation in common planning time, to participating in professional learning communities. The second goal is providing new teachers with training on effective instructional techniques, classroom management, differentiated instruction, data analysis, and parent communication. Developing the mentor and new teacher relationship is another goal of the program. Mentors and new teachers engage in professional activities including weekly meetings focusing on teaching practices, co-teaching and observations. Providing support for new teachers to ensure they understand and are prepared for the district's evaluation system is the fourth goal of the induction program.

This goal is achieved through discussion of the evaluation system with new teachers and mentors by principals and other administrators. Regular feedback is provided to new teachers through observations, meetings and co-teaching on topics aligned with the evaluation criteria.

As a result student achievement is supported by strengthening teaching in the classroom. The inclusion of a comprehensive induction program as a School Committee policy and in the district budget symbolizes the district's commitment and provides a framework for sustained support for new teachers as they grow their expertise in all areas of the professional teaching knowledge base.

“The program will be most successful when all members of the school community understand their role in supporting new teachers and have appropriate training, time and resources for engaging in truly collegial relationships with new teachers.”

-Malden Public School Comprehensive Induction Program

Worcester Public Schools: Supporting Beginning Teachers Through Higher Education Collaboration

As the second largest city in Massachusetts, Worcester has many unique opportunities and challenges in educating more than 24,000 students in over 40 schools. The over 2,400 educators in the district teach a diverse student population. With over a dozen area colleges, Worcester utilizes a number of those resources to help support new teachers. Cheryl DelSignore, the district's Staffing/Mentoring Coordinator, discusses the innovative ways Worcester has supported new teachers through higher education partnerships. Worcester has shown a commitment to its induction program through a School Committee policy as well as a line item in the district's budget.

The Beginning Teacher Institute (BTI) is a partnership between the school district and Worcester State University to support new teachers. The BTI is a 3 credit course that Worcester teachers can take at a reduced rate for course credit. The course, which runs from September to December, is taught by the district's Staffing/Mentoring Coordinator.

New teachers meet on a regular basis to share experiences and reflect on instructional practices. Through the BTI, new teachers have a support system composed of district and building -level administrators, resources from Worces-

ter State University and fellow beginning teachers. The teachers are integrated into a learning community and begin their journey to becoming “accomplished.”

The district, in partnership with Worcester State University and Eagle Hill Institute, provides new teachers with an additional opportunity for professional development. Teachers attend the Eagle Hill Institute, a week long residential professional development experience during the summer. By attending the week-long event, teachers

[continued on page 8]

Worcester Public Schools: Supporting Beginning Teachers Through Higher Education Collaboration, continued

[continued from page 7]
receive 3-graduate credits from Worcester State University and get accommodations and meals at no cost. The Eagle Hill Institute is optional to new teachers and can be taken anytime during a teacher's first three years in the district. During the week, teachers are introduced to the district and cover vital topics including meeting the needs of diverse learners, teacher-research methodology and classroom management. Teachers also have an opportunity to meet with key administrators and specialists.

The training at the Eagle Hill Institute does not end on a Friday in August. Attendees reconvene in November of each year, and work on an action research proposal that stems from the summer institute.

In this way, as Mrs. Signore notes, "teachers are encouraged to continue to bridge the gap between research and practice throughout the school year." The BTI and the Eagle Hill institute have had an impact on teacher retention, as the district boasts an 88% retention rate for teachers who attend these programs.

Worcester utilized local resources to provide new teachers with systematic support to improve instruction. In addition to the BTI, action-research project, and the Eagle Hill Institute, beginning teachers also have access to a support team. Each support team is composed of at least the building principal, a trained mentor and one other professional. For example, a beginning teacher could have a support team of the principal, mentor and department head. Instructional coaches conduct regular walkthroughs of classrooms and are a rich source of counsel for teachers. The coaches observe new teachers in the classroom and provide constructive feedback on instructional techniques.

Mrs. DelSignore noted that this system of support is important for all beginning teachers, but especially for the many non-traditional teachers that the district has. Teachers who made a mid-career move from another field such as business or actuarial science, have the content knowledge to teach, but are greatly helped by support and grounded practice in pedagogy. In addition, Worcester plans to offer drop-in sessions on pertinent topics, such as developing IEPs, engaging in parent conferences and achieving licensure throughout the school year to teachers. Through this team approach, Worcester provides beginning teachers with multiple perspectives and avenues to receive feedback and guidance.

The mentoring component is an important piece of Worcester's induction program. Some of the core activities of mentoring include curriculum development and planning lessons together and providing feedback on new teachers' instructional strategies, based on the district's evaluation criteria. Principals assign mentors to teachers, and department directors typically assign mentors to special education teachers and specialists. Mentor matching is based primarily on geographic location and content area, with an attempt to provide mentees with a colleague in the same grade level/department. During the mentoring year, mentors and mentees maintain a log including hours, topics discussed, support provided, and activities completed. Some core activities of mentoring are curriculum planning, classroom observations and co-teaching. The program is assessed annually through a survey that all mentors and beginning teachers complete. After analyzing the survey results, the leaders of the mentoring program adjust to meet the needs of the teachers.

For experienced teachers, Worcester conducts an Aspiring Administrator program for those who hold a professional teaching license. The cohort is run in conjunction with Worcester State University and participants who complete the program are eligible for an administrator license. Through this process, Worcester is providing a continuum of support for experienced teachers who are interested in becoming administrators.

Mrs. DelSignore expressed the desire to enhance the depth of mentor training and build the capacity of master mentors to develop a mentor pool large enough to meet the needs of all the beginning teachers in the district. A goal for the future for the district involves deepening the training and support for mentors.

Worcester's induction program represents a significant partnership with local institutions of higher education to support beginning teachers. As Mrs. DelSignore put it, the bottom line is she "wants teachers to stay." She feels she is able to hire the best and the brightest teaching candidates because there is continued development of the district's induction program.

"Through Worcester's induction program teachers are encouraged to continue to bridge the gap between research and practice throughout the school year."

-Cheryl DelSignore, Worcester Public Schools

A Beginning Teacher's Perspective on Creating Successful Induction Programs

**By Deborah Opar –
Social Studies Teacher
& Mentor**

Every teacher who enters our school community participates in a rigorous, data-based, differentiated induction program. One of my teacher-leadership roles is new teacher mentor coordinator. In that role I facilitate the growth of new teachers who enter our community each year. Each year our new educators participate in a week long summer orientation, monthly cohort meetings, and weekly individualized support sessions. Furthermore, as New Teacher Mentor, I coordinate a weekly Teacher Support Team meeting with the team of mentors, which include our principal, academic coordinators, and other teacher leaders. A goal of our team is to ensure that new teachers are observed three times a month, and given written, actionable feedback following each observation. In reflecting upon which aspects of our program have most led to teacher learning for my peers, I consistently return to the importance of personalization, data-based decision making, and an aligned vision among all school leaders.

Personalization

In order for teachers to truly deepen their practice, they must be active and engaged participants in their own learning process. While this goal can

be achieved in a variety of ways, I have found that it is most essential to involve new teachers in the creation of their own goals and learning experiences, and provide them with opportunities to guide their own learning.

Each new teacher at my school has the opportunity to work with his or her mentor to create an Individual Learning Plan to guide his or her work for the year. This plan includes classroom management, academic content, and cultural proficiency goals, while also identifying learning experiences for each goal.

One teacher this year identified a goal of including more student-centered activities in his classroom. As his peer mentor, we observed and debriefed with a master teacher and researched best practices. I provided feedback on student interactions during group tasks when observing in his room. His classroom now, in May, looks dramatically different than it did in November. This teacher grew because he was invested in his own growth with targeted support.

I encourage school leaders to think about how to personalize whole-group learning time. While I would love to think that the professional development sessions I facilitated on classroom management, writing clear objectives, and interacting with families allowed all participants to deepen their practice, it has become clear to me that each teacher left each session with varied

knowledge. The cohort learning model remains undoubtedly important when supporting new educators. Cohort time should be restructured to allow space for each teacher to work on his or her own goals within a structured setting.

Data-Based Decision Making

While each teacher within my school is working toward their individual goals, it is the responsibility of the mentor to be in classrooms regularly gathering data. This data is shared during post-observation conferences in an open and honest forum. Teachers grow when they have a chance to sit down and discuss data from their own rooms. As an educator, I understand the complexities of collecting data and teaching, but also am cognizant of the benefits of data collection on improving instruction.

It is important for teacher support to be aligned with a vision of what a successful classroom looks and sounds like. Teachers need to see the vision – and know in which aspects data reveals they are meeting expectations and where they are not. It is essential that this is not a contentious conversation, but one that is growth-oriented and emphasizes the learning of the teacher and the learning of students.

Aligned Vision Among Leadership

Providing aligned feedback and data will always be a challenge. Our school has worked to create systems
[continued on page 11]

“It is imperative that support does not end after a teacher’s first year of teaching! Teachers in their second and third years must also receive targeted support.”

***-Deborah Opar,
Social Studies
Teacher
And
Mentor***

In Brief: How international policies and practice on new teacher induction can inform the US

Preparing and developing beginning teachers is an essential function of schools to meet the needs of its students. Harry Wong, Ted Britton and Tom Ganser (2005) offer a summary of an edited book, *Comprehensive Teacher Induction: Systems for Early Career Learning* edited by Ted Britton, Lynn Paine, David Pimm, and Senta Raizen, on five international induction programs. Results indicate individual differences across the five cases, as well as three important common themes among the programs. Lessons learned and recommendations for US policy on teacher induction concludes the study.

This analysis was conducted in five high-performing countries: France, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, and China (Shanghai). There were notable individual differences when comparing the five countries as follows:

1. Switzerland provides student teachers with a network of two other student teachers as a support team. As teachers progress in their careers, they continue to have opportunities to work in these support teams, and engage in professional learning opportunities including observing classes taught by veteran teachers.
2. In Shanghai, teachers are offered a myriad of district-level supports, including peer observation, professional days at local education colleges, and teacher hotlines staffed by content specialists. Shanghai views teaching as a collaborative process, and this is reflected in practices of lesson sharing as well as each teacher belonging to a lesson preparation group and a teacher research group.
3. New Zealand's support system is called the Advice and Guidance (AG) program, which all schools in New Zealand are required to have. All novice teachers having a reduced work load to participate in the AG program. At a regional level, workshops are held with representatives from different districts to share ideas and collaborate on how to improve their AG programs. Each school's AG program is overseen

by an administrator, who coordinates supports including regular meetings with beginning teachers, lesson observations, and peer support.

4. The Japanese regard teaching with dignity and hold teachers in high esteem. In Japan, beginning teachers teach a lower number of classes than experienced teachers and have a guiding teacher, who serves a mentor-like role. Beginning teachers in Japan also engage in demonstration lessons, where their teaching is observed by a team. These demonstration lessons are used as an opportunity for beginning teachers to receive feedback on their instructional skills.

5. The French have an organization specifically devoted to supporting and training new teachers called the IUFM (Institut Universitaire de Formation des Maitres). Beginning teachers all participate in courses at the IUFM supervised by experienced teachers. This process of novice teachers advancing in professional maturity is called formation, or shaping, and is somewhat similar to residencies that beginning doctors experience in medical school. Beginning teachers in France are also required to keep an account of a specific aspect of teaching during their first year.

While each of these five international examples of induction have unique characteristics, there are three important commonalities among the five cases as follows:

1. Induction programs are highly structured
2. There is a focus on professional learning
3. Collaboration is emphasized

In addition to the themes identified by the authors, many of the cases also viewed teaching from an adult developmental perspective, or viewed teaching and learning as a lifelong process. In contrast to US induction programs, which rely primarily on one to one mentoring and can lead to isolation, these five international cases focus on supporting teachers through sustained collaborative approaches.

Transforming Schools into 21st Century Learning Communities: National Commission on Teaching and Learning (from The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2005, p. 1)

Key Findings:

- Induction should be a stage in a continuum of teacher development
- Induction should support entry into a learning community
- Mentoring is a useful component of induction, but only one element of a comprehensive induction system
- External networks supported by online technology can add value
- Induction is a good investment

Goals of Comprehensive Induction Programs:

- Building and deepening teacher knowledge
- Integrating new teachers into a teaching community and school culture that supports the continuous professional growth of all teachers.
- Supporting the continuous development of the teaching community in the school
- Encouraging a professional dialogue that articulates the goals, values, and best practices of a community

A Beginning Teacher's Perspective on Creating Successful Induction Programs , continued

[continued from page 9] that allow for mentors and evaluators to align their practices and their interpretation of our rubrics to align feedback and data. At the start of the year, teachers often receive different suggestions on how to improve their practice, and this resulted in anxiety, confusion, and slow change in instruction. The creation of our weekly Teacher Support Team Meeting has helped us to create our own professional learning community. In this forum, we discuss what we are seeing in classrooms, teacher learning needs, and stumbling blocks. We then work together to improve the instruction taking place in all classrooms.

If leadership in a school does not share an aligned vision on what good instruction is, or what mentoring experiences each teacher should receive,

then teachers in the building will begin to ask why one teacher is getting more support than another. "Are they better than me?" "Are they worse than me?" "Am I going to get fired?" An aligned system impacts the learning environment of the whole-school community that an induction program must support.

Final Thoughts

There are a variety of factors to consider when designing an effective induction program. It is essential to think about what key learning experiences you want all of your teachers to have and what skills they must be proficient in by the end of their first year. This will require prioritizing and will also require the creation of clear rubrics for success. A successful program requires dedication to the growth of the evaluators and mentors.

Their alignment, vision, capacity to provide support, and ability to identify areas of need for new teachers will directly impact the amount of growth teachers will experience. I would also encourage schools to welcome teacher-leaders into their mentoring ranks.

Finally, it is imperative that support does not end after a teacher's first year of teaching! Teachers in their second and third years must also receive targeted support. When we think about our students and how much they deserve and require high quality instruction, it is the responsibility of schools to find ways to create a community where all individuals are inspired to constantly improve and support beginning teachers.

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**WORKING GROUP
FOR EDUCATOR
EXCELLENCE**

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- Nancy Kassabian, Malden Public Schools
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**Next Issue's Spotlight:
Recruitment, Hiring
and Placement**

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Mission of the Working Group for Educator Excellence

WGEE is a broad coalition of 60 individuals from 26 statewide organizations who are united in the belief that the most effective way to provide every child with an excellent education is to take a systemic approach to influencing what teachers and educational leaders know and can do. We believe when key elements of the human resource system are strengthened to align with one another and with a common research-based, field-tested core of professional knowledge, the cumulative effect will be improved student achievement and a more efficient and effective system that strengthens teacher and leader expertise.

Human Resource Pilot Project

The pilot project, funded by the RTTT initiative, is a joint effort by the WGEE and DESE to accomplish two goals. The first goal is to systematically and strategically create, strengthen, and align the key influences on the quality of teaching and leadership in three school districts: Attleboro, Brockton, and Revere. Secondly, the project aims to embed the knowledge bases of professional teaching and leading at the appropriate stage of an educator's career. The influences, or levers, include Recruitment, Hiring, and Placement, Comprehensive Induction, Professional Development, Supervision and Evaluation, Teacher Leadership, Organizational Structure, and Adult Professional Culture. Through qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, we aim to determine the degree to which alignment will strengthen quality teaching and leading, increase student achievement, use cost, time, and resources with greater efficiency, improve teaching and leadership practices, increase the satisfaction and retention of teachers and leaders, and improve school and district culture.