

Promising Practices and Implementation Tools

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3. Lever Addressed: Induction

4. Title of Promising Practice: Supporting and Retaining New Teachers at Clinton Public Schools

5. District Where Implemented: Clinton Public Schools

6. Applicable Grade Levels: K-12

7. How This Practice Reflects District's Mission & Core Values:

The goals and components of Clinton's Induction program directly reflect the district's mission to "provide the highest quality educational opportunities in a safe and secure environment that maximizes talents while recognizing individual differences and instilling essential skills through partnerships with teachers, parents, and community members".

8. Goals of This Practice:

- 1.) Cultivate new talent by providing multiple avenues of support
- 2.) Increase Teacher Leadership opportunities throughout the district
- 3.) Continue to develop a more collegial environment that includes shared responsibility for supporting new teachers

9. Description of This Practice:

Approximately three years ago a group of dedicated teachers seized the opportunity to participate in the Project SUCCESS graduate course (School University Collaboration Committed to the Educational Success of All Students) as a way to expand their expertise and improve upon the district's existing mentor program.

This first cohort group set the stage for moving the district's program forward. They developed an action plan, were able to gain support from central administration in terms of budget and resources and ultimately created a new model to mentor and integrate new teachers into the district. There have been 2 other cohort groups trained since this time, expanding the expertise and knowledge base to approximately 20 newly trained mentors.

Clinton's Induction program has evolved from being funded by outside business and community resources to the fully funded program it is today. The current structure

includes:

2 Coordinators or "Master Mentors" who oversee all aspects of the program, collaborate with building based Lead Mentors, grade level and department chairs, and continually communicate with district administration.

A cadre of district wide mentors who are paired with new teachers by building principals in collaboration with the Coordinators of New Teacher Mentoring or specific department chairs. Mentors are purposefully paired with teachers in another department or grade level, extending the curriculum support to department chairs and other curriculum specialists so that the main focus is on building relationships. Mentors may also be assigned to more than one new teacher or teacher new to the district depending on the need.

A mandatory three-day Orientation takes place in August that involves all new teachers and their newly assigned mentors. Each morning is spent together as a K-12 group and new hires are welcomed by district administrators and union reps, provided an overview of the district structure and resources, and hear from other speakers geared to highlighting programs, such as the Student Mentor Program, that have met with great success. The afternoons are building based and focused on mentors and mentees working together to acclimate to a particular school environment and set up their classrooms. In addition, Mentor Coordinators visit all new mentor and mentee teams during this time, offering additional support as needed. The entire district then comes together during an additional two-day "welcome back" orientation, which is also divided into both K-12 and building based sessions.

It is required that Mentor and Mentee teams meet approximately 30 hrs. per month, which may involve a variety of interactions including:

Monthly themed meetings are attended by both mentors and mentees and facilitated by the program coordinators. These meetings are guided by the *Mentoring in Action* curriculum, include visits from district resources, such as Tech support, and end with time for just the new teachers and coordinators to touch base and elicit feedback. (A feedback form is included as an implementation tool.)

Monthly themed meetings also provide direct training for both mentor and mentees and may be differentiated according to need. For instance, groups may be divided according to level of need or experience on topics such as classroom management, parent interaction or discipline, and may be facilitated by veteran teachers other than mentors. Other teachers who are not officially part of the induction program may also be invited to attend a meeting as was the case when the focus was on the evidence component of the new teacher evaluation system. These informal meetings were so popular, that others were scheduled outside of the monthly meeting time and attended by teachers, dept. chairs, lead teachers and administrators. This example underscores the districts efforts to extend the responsibility of support for new teachers beyond the mentor to other faculty and administrators.

Individual mentor and mentee meetings and observations are also a key aspect of the required time. These observations and discussions are reflected on and documented using

a log adopted by the district. Mentors are also required to submit a log to the mentor coordinators. (A *Collaborative Assessment Log* is also an implementation tool.)

Monthly assignments for both mentors and mentees are also built into these required hours. These assignments can vary, and may involve the requirement for a mentor to observe in the classroom of another new teacher who is not their assigned mentee, or a new teacher observing in a classroom other than their own department or grade level. (Also an implementation tool.)

Mentor and mentee attendance at special school-wide or outside related programs might also be used to meet the monthly requirement

New teachers receive this comprehensive support in their first year of employment, but are also informally mentored in years two and three by other sources of support, including their original mentor, the mentor coordinators, principals, department chairs and grade level and department colleagues. Second and third year teachers are also required to keep a log that is periodically submitted to coordinators.

Evaluation of the program is conducted using a variety of formative and summative tools. These include:

A survey new teachers are requested to complete when hired (attached)

Monthly meeting evaluation

Reflection/Collaborative Logs

Mentee Portfolios showing progress towards Standards of Effective Teaching Practice

Mentor and Mentee Exit Survey

Periodic reports completed by the coordinators submitted to the Superintendent and shared with School Committee

An additional feature of the program includes a designated meeting space used exclusively for all K-12 participants.

How This Practice Addresses Criteria for the Induction Lever:

The district provides comprehensive, systematic supports to make the transition from novice to accomplished educator more effective and professionally rewarding. As detailed below, this promising practice exemplifies many of the criteria necessary for successful implementation of Induction as it relates to continual school improvement:

School district has a comprehensive Induction Plan that includes program elements, roles and responsibilities, implementation processes and time lines, and that identifies necessary tools and resources.

All members of the district and school community share collective responsibility for contributing to novice teacher and administrator growth.

Provision for professional growth of novice teachers and administrators is an integral part of the school district's professional development plan for all educators.

The induction process is informed by the Common Core of Professional Knowledge and Skills and is focused on instruction.

Induction programs provide comprehensive support for all teachers and administrators in their first three years of practice.

Professional development for novice teachers and administrators is specialized and developmentally appropriate.

Programs are differentiated to address educators' specific areas of responsibility and levels of experience.

Induction programs are multi-faceted and include training, orientation and networking for beginning teachers, leaders, veteran teachers and administrators.

Induction and mentoring programs are provided with the administrative supports and resources necessary.

The selection, training, responsibilities and rewards for mentors are informed by research and are part of the district Induction Plan.

Time for mentoring of novice teachers and administrators is an integral part of the instructional day and provides opportunities for observation, consultation and reflection.

The district Induction Plan includes a process for collecting program data and conducting ongoing formative evaluation and regular summative evaluation of program effectiveness.

10. How This Practice Was Implemented So It Was More Successful Than Others:

District buy in and support from Superintendent and Administrative Leadership.

Increased expectations and accountability for both mentees and mentors via logs, portfolios and monthly meetings.

Participation in Project SUCCESS has provided the structure and motivation to move the district forward.

Clinton's Induction program and leadership position stipends are independent of the teacher union contract, but have the full support of all members. The program is also mainly teacher run, which lends itself to connecting to new teachers as "job alike" colleagues.

11. How This Practice Changed The District or School:

This new induction model has changed the culture in Clinton in that teachers are more apt to view themselves as part of a collaborative team rather than independent contractors.

There has also been more opportunity to work in vertical teams across grade levels. This increased K-12 collaboration on projects such as Writing Across the Curriculum, has been included in much of the PD taking place within the Induction program, so that

teachers see themselves as a part of the district initiatives vs. separate grade level entities. Since the induction program has been revised, there has also been a greater sense of shared responsibility to support and retain new teachers across the district.

12. Resources (time, money, materials etc.) Required For Successful Implementation:

Funding for Mentor Coordinators, Lead Mentor and Mentor stipends, program supplies and materials, coverage for observations and meetings and attendance at outside conferences. Each new teacher also receives the resource book: *Mentoring in Action*

Time for meetings, observations and PD events

In-house faculty expertise and teaming with nearby districts for PD

New teacher supplies donated by local business

13. Tools You Used To Implement or Advance This Practice:

- 1.) Introduction to Mentoring Survey
- 2.) Monthly Meeting Evaluation
- 3.) Monthly Assignments
- 4.) Collaborative Assessment Log
- 5.) Mentor/Mentee Exit Survey