Promising Practices and Implementation Tools

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3. Lever Addressed: Induction

4. Title of Promising Practice: New Teacher Induction at Southeastern Regional: A Collaborative Approach

5. District Where Implemented: Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical High School

6. Applicable Grade Levels: 9-12

7. How This Practice Reflects District's Mission & Core Values:
This promising practice reflects the districts mission to "transform students into lifelong learners" in that fostering continual growth through professional development and ongoing support for novice and veteran teachers, directly impacts the district's ability to successfully accomplish this mission.

8. Goals of This Practice:
Integrate new staff into the existing Southeastern Regional school culture
Orient new staff in stages and differentiated by needs
Share best instructional practices consistently and collaboratively in both academic and   vocational departments so that all teachers, both novice and veteran, are continually   improving upon their practice
Continue to build upon a network of support for mentors and mentees that retains new   teachers and promotes a collegial work environment for teachers within and across all   departments

9. Description of This Practice:
Over a period of approximately seven years, the induction program at

Southeastern Regional has evolved from a one-year mentor program for new teachers, to the broader based, multiple year support program that currently exists. Each year the district has strived to improve upon its program by focusing on enhancing the orientation, mentoring or professional development component of induction for new teachers and teachers new to the district.

Southeastern's improvement process has been largely accomplished by working with Bridgewater State to enhance the induction program for new teachers and more recently by participating in Project SUCCESS (School University Collaboration Committed to the Educational Success of All Students) a graduate program funded by a grant from the state, through UMASS Dartmouth.

Project SUCCESS is a comprehensive graduate level course that trains lead mentors and mentors with the knowledge and skills to effectively support new teachers and eventually train other new mentors in their district. To date, 6 out of Southeastern's 14 mentors have completed this program and have been instrumental in providing leadership, collaboration with administration and implementation of a more structured and comprehensive induction program.

Key components of Southeastern's New Teacher Induction Program include:
  • A welcoming letter and request to complete an induction survey is given to a new teacher when hired. The survey is designed to learn more about the new member of the teaching staff and assist in creating the best possible match for mentor assignments. It also serves to differentiate a new teacher's needed level of support, based on prior experience and content areas taught.

  • The assignment of a mentor to a mentee is made as a result of careful review of survey information and the collaborative efforts of either an academic or vocational supervisor, the Innovation Academy administrator, Special Education Director, Professional Development Director and Southeastern's two Lead Mentors.

  • Attendance at a three day Orientation program in August is a requirement for new teachers, their mentors, lead mentors, and all administrators. During these three days, new teachers are warmly welcomed and have an opportunity to learn more about each academic, vocational, special education, IT and business aspect of the school community, who's who, and how each area is interconnected. New staff also have the opportunity to meet with their new

mentors and learn how to access mandatory technology tools.

• Two Lead Mentor stipend positions were created two years ago and have been key to increased collaboration with administrators and within all departments. Primary responsibilities include, meetings, observations and facilitating mentor observations, monthly communication that focuses on evaluation standards linked to best practices, quarterly meetings with program supervisors and conducting three anonymous assessments throughout the year to gather feedback and fine tune professional development needs. (The job description is included as an implementation tool)

• Those who apply for teacher mentor positions are chosen based on the survey results of new hires, direct communication with the new teacher and the collaboration between the Director of Professional Development, Lead Mentors and Administrators relative to the content area involved. These stipend positions come with a clear set of yearly expectations including attendance at monthly mentor training meetings facilitated by the Lead Mentors. It is the hope that the same mentor will work with a mentee for a three year period, but adjustments may be made as needed. (Mentor expectations are also included as an implementation tool)

• All new teachers are required to attend a series of fourteen induction meetings throughout the year. These sessions begin and end with the Principal and are geared to familiarizing mentees with administration, addressing practical issues involving student academic and social/ emotional needs and focusing on the four evaluation standards. For instance, discussions may focus on how to best access the Guidance Dept., the IEP process, Technology tools, such as e-portfolios, or the New Teacher Evaluation process. Teachers or administrators with expertise in any of these areas are invited to facilitate these mentee meetings. (See sample e-portfolio program included as an implementation tool)

• Mentor Trainings occur on a monthly basis, with the option to attend either a before or after school session to accommodate the range of teachers' schedules. There is a designated focus each month, which can be on specific skills such as listening, observing, asking probing questions or the specifics of effective lesson planning. Both mentor training and mentor-mentee meetings are framed around key resources the district has invested in through their participation in Project SUCCESS: Mentoring in Action and The First Year Matters. For instance,

mentors and mentees utilize the Collaboration Log, which assists mentors and mentees in reflecting, working side by side and ultimately focusing on improving instructional practices. The district also provides a mentor/mentee luncheon prior to PD on early release days, as an added relationship-building opportunity.

• Professional Development topics that are chosen for the induction or mentor-mentee meetings are often the results of PD that has occurred school wide. For example, training on a recent initiative to provide Chrome Books for all freshmen and sophomores, including using Google documents, was conducted for the entire faculty, but required follow up during department meetings. Mentors and their mentees, veteran teachers and often student interns, are now involved in dialogue about learning this new tool and demonstrating the shared belief that technology is integral to the delivery of the Common Core at Southeastern. This example also underscores the district's commitment to ensuring that all members of the school community share the responsibility for the professional growth of new teachers.

• The evaluation process is also a key component of Southeastern's Induction Program. Surveys for new teachers and mentors are conducted three time per year and the feedback is used to match a new teacher with a mentor, improve the program and differentiate PD that is best aligned with new teacher and mentor needs. Tools from the aforementioned resources, Mentoring in Action and The First Year Matters, are also used to assess mentor-mentee interaction and progress.

How This Practice Addresses Criteria for the Induction Lever:
As detailed below, this promising practice exemplifies many of the criteria necessary for successful implementation of Induction as it relates to continual school improvement:

The district provides comprehensive, systematic supports to make the transition from novice to accomplished educator more effective and professionally rewarding.
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:

Participation in Project SUCCESS has required thoughtful planning, which in turn, has fueled the district's commitment to developing a more formalized and comprehensive induction program that effectively facilitates the integration of new teachers into Southeastern's educational culture.

Administrative leadership, support, communication with Lead Mentors, and playing a key role at Induction Meetings all effectively model the shared commitment to support and retain teachers new to the profession.

Professional Development for new teachers is included in the overall

Professional Development program as specified in Southeastern's School Improvement Plan.

Consistency in time and scheduling of trainings has provided greater support for vocational teachers without an education background, to complete licensure requirements.

Induction and mentor meetings are framed around key resources that align tasks to new teacher evaluation standards/indicators.

11. How This Practice Changed The District or School:
The current Induction Program includes Lead Mentor and Mentor positions, which offer additional teacher leadership opportunities in all vocational and academic departments.

The induction program has fostered more collaboration on a teacher-to-teacher basis, enabled the delivery of more consistent programs, and provided a vehicle to share and adjust instructional strategies within departments.

Participation in Project SUCCESS has heightened awareness about the challenge of differentiating training for mentors and mentees based on level of need and experience. The Lead Mentors and Director of Professional Development are in the process of refining this element so it is more effectively infused into the program.

12. Resources (time, money, materials etc.) Required For Successful Implementation:
Funding for Lead Mentor and Mentor stipends, induction meetings, professional development and materials
Time and coverage for meetings and observations
Technology resources and a New Teacher Website that includes staff info and shared folders (Contact Jon McDonagh if interested in this resource, as it requires approved access.)

13. Tools You Used To Implement or Advance This Practice:
See separate attachments:
Lead Teacher Job Description
Mentor Job Description

Power Point used for training in an e-portfolio program entitled Digication