

## Promising Practices and Implementation Tools

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**3. Lever Addressed:** Induction

**4. Title of Promising Practice:** Building and Sustaining a New Teacher Induction Program

**5. District(s) Where Implemented:** Newton Public Schools

**6. Applicable Grade Levels:** PreK-12

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

The Newton Public Schools Core Values of Excellence, Innovation, Respect and Responsibility are mirrored in the new teacher induction program in that both focus on sustaining an environment that fosters collaboration, reflection, active engagement and academically successful students.

**8. Goals of This Practice**

Improve teaching and student learning by providing support, encouragement and guidance to teachers who are new to the profession or new to the district  
Provide opportunities for professional growth in a collegial, non-judgmental environment

Retain qualified educators by providing a quality mentor program

**9. Description of This Practice and How it Addresses Criteria for This Lever:**

The Induction program in Newton has evolved from the Ed Reform mentor program requirements in the late 1990's, to the current, more comprehensive program that exists today. Currently, Newton maintains a mentor coordinator, who works collaboratively with teachers, teachers union and administration to meet the range of needs presented by new teachers or teachers new to the district.

In the past few years, leadership roles have expanded and three cohorts of teachers have participated in Project SUCCESS (School University Collaboration Committed to the Educational Success of All Students). Coupled with the

districts on-going commitment to retain high quality new teachers, the action plans that have resulted from this training have propelled the district forward.

In addition to the district coordinator, there are currently eighteen trained Mentor Facilitators strategically placed so there is a teacher leader supporting new hires and collaborating with mentors and principals in each building, K-12. Key roles of Mentor Facilitators include:

- Partner with principals/building administrators regarding mentor and mentee pairings
- Create and monitor curriculum for new teachers and mentors
- Support new teachers and mentor pairs in each building/department
- Communicate with Mentor Coordinator and Asst. Superintendent when issues arise
- Facilitate face-to-face meetings with mentors and/or new teachers

Support roles are also differentiated appropriately based on new teacher needs. For instance:

- Mentors supporting teachers new to the classroom and new to the district are responsible for a minimum of 15 contact hours, which include:
  - Meeting three times a month with the new teacher
  - Attending face-to-face meetings
  - Completing two observations of the new teacher
  - Completing a mentor log

Mentors and mentor facilitators are stipend roles accompanied by 15 PDP's or an option of In-service credits. Teachers are currently invited to become mentors by building principals, in collaboration with mentor facilitators and the mentor coordinator. However, the district is considering a more formalized application process.

- A teacher colleague is assigned to an experienced teacher who is new to the position, and is responsible for: meeting at least once a month; assisting with the grading system and supplies; and working closely to acclimate the new hire to the district, building and overall culture of the community.

Important to note that aside from meetings during this formal process, there is strong collegial support for new teachers and teachers new to the district during grade level and department common planning time, curriculum support interactions, and administrative support through the new teacher evaluation

process. These collaborative paths underscore the district's commitment to sharing the responsibility of supporting and retaining new teachers in Newton.

Similarly, once this formal mentoring process is completed in year 1, support for new teachers continues in years 2 and 3 in the form of grade level, department and building collaboration and professional development courses. Second and third year teachers are required to submit a reflective log at year's end that provides evidence of these collaborative experiences.

On-going professional development begins in August when all K-12 new hires and mentors are expected to attend an extensive two-day orientation, which is in addition to the two-day all district professional days before the start of the school year. This training is structured with both district wide and building specific components, times for separate mentee and mentee trainings and sufficient time for mentor and mentees to work together.

Newton's yearlong curriculum includes resource books organized around the four standards of practice for teachers, templates and content highlighted in *Mentoring in Action*, and *The First Year Matters*, and discussions generated from collaborative assessment and observation logs. Engaging in collegial dialogue about topics such as effective instructional strategies, planning lessons, classroom management, subject area content, parent communication and opportunities for on-going reflection on one's practice, are at the heart of the district professional development and support for new teachers.

Three additional focused professional development opportunities, designed and facilitated by K-12 Mentor Facilitators and geared to blended learning, are available to mentors and new teachers, as well as other interested teachers and administrators throughout the school year. This year, these PD sessions centered around:

- Professional conversations with parents and colleagues
- Training on peer observation and peer coaching
- A seminar on Respect for Human Differences for New Teachers
- Reflecting on one's practice for Mentors

As Newton's Induction program continues to improve, gathering feedback from all major stakeholders is critical to its growth and sustainability. To that end, the

evaluation process is multi-faceted and involves the following:

- Initial hire survey to assist mentors in getting to know their new mentee
- End of the year on-line surveys for new hires that are anonymous and focus on their overall induction and mentoring experience
- Reflections conducted after each one on one mentor/mentee meeting. Each mentee is asked to respond to three questions: What's one thing you learned? What questions do you still have? What suggestions do you have for our next meeting?
- End of the year survey of Mentors on their experience and suggestions for program improvement
- Retention data from Newton's Human Resources Department
- Beginning and end of the year meeting involving Mentor Coordinator, Mentor Facilitators, and Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning

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:**

- Probably the greatest factor is that Newton's Induction program is not a top-down initiative, but one that stems from teachers committed to taking on leadership roles that support and retain colleagues new to the profession or new to NPS.
- Participation in Project SUCCESS has provided training, a comprehensive approach and practical tools for successful implementation of the program.
- New teachers and teachers new to the district receive ongoing support from a strong network of building administrators, curriculum coordinators, trained mentor facilitators, coaches and colleagues.

**11. How This Practice Changed The District or School:**

- Participation in Project Success and implementation of action plans by dedicated staff has reinvigorated the existing mentor program and stimulated good thinking, resulting in both positive and sustainable change.
- Teacher leadership capacity has expanded. Highly trained mentor facilitators have become the experts who will then provide future district mentor trainings.
- Feedback from both new and experienced teachers indicates that new teachers and teachers new to the district are better supported.

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

- Funding for mentor coordinator, mentor facilitator positions, and all program materials such as Mentoring and Induction resource binders, and the Mentoring in Action and First Year Matters texts.
- Release time for mentor/mentee meetings, peer observations and related professional development
- Professional development opportunities during the summer

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

**See separate attachments:**

- 1.) Mentor Handbook
- 2.) Routines Checklist
- 3.) Materials Available for Mentors
- 4.) NPS– Monthly Scope & Sequence
- 5.) PK–5 Mentor Meeting– Power Point
- 6.) New Hire Survey Link:

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