



Research Base for the Ohio Resident Educator Program Standards

Resident Educator Program Standards Research Base

The following premises are based upon the research conducted by educators engaged in program review and recommendations from 2007-09 and guided the development of the Resident Educator Program Standards:

“Teachers are not ‘finished products’ when they complete a teacher preparation program” (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 2003)

Teacher preparation as the first stage of formal development of teachers must be the time when teachers gain a repertoire of knowledge and skills needed to support and advance the learning of all students as described in the *Standards for Ohio Educators* (2007, p.26-38). Teacher learning is a complex, ongoing process occurring through formal and informal mechanisms throughout the teacher’s career. Therefore, we must ensure that formal linkages are made across the teacher professional development continuum: between teacher preparation and induction, and between induction and the on-going professional development of teachers as they advance in their careers. This continuum of teacher development must include a network of support and a system of formative and summative assessments and coaching that accelerates teacher effectiveness.

Historically beginning teachers were given little if any support during the first year of teaching with the assumption that the teacher entering the classroom for the first time was fully prepared to teach without assistance. “This trial-by-fire method exacts a high price on new teachers, their students, and the entire school community” (Moir and Gless, Winter, 2001).

In studying how people are prepared in a variety of professions, Schulman noted that the job of a teacher is much more complicated than that of an engineer, yet “it’s very rare for an engineer doing complex design to ever be truly flying solo” (Shulman, 2005, p. 15-23). In another study, new teachers in general, “perceived that they were expected to be expert and independent” even in their first years of teaching (Kardos & Johnson, 2007). This concept can be applied to almost any profession. “Doctors, lawyers, engineers, and other professionals must all prove their abilities BEFORE they are allowed to practice their professions independently. They are not placed in professional settings and told to rely on their ‘mentors’ if they have any questions” (Wong, H. & Wong. R., 2008).

University-district collaboration is one key to ensuring an effective transition into the profession, fostering enhanced growth of teachers and informing teacher preparation program improvements. Field supervisors, cooperating teachers, induction program leaders and principals must receive training and support to ensure consistency and avoid redundancy.

Intensive professional development and assessment are necessary to build upon teacher preparation and enable beginning teachers to improve practice to have a positive impact on student learning.

- ✓ *RE Program Standards 1 (Program Administration), 3 (Systems Alignment) and 6 (Performance Assessment) are based on this research*

Induction programs must enhance the capabilities of beginning teachers in order to increase student learning

We know that teacher quality is the most important school-based factor affecting student learning. Numerous studies illustrate this impact (*Fulton, Yoon and Lee, 2005; Moir and Gless, 2001; Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin 1995; Fallon, 2003*). Among them, Haycock and Huang (2001) found that the best teachers in a school have *six times* as much impact on student achievement as the bottom third of teachers.

Similarly a 2004 study by Nye, Konstantopoulos and Hedges (as cited in Marzano, 2007) found that students who have a teacher at the 75th percentile in pedagogical competence will out-gain students who have a teacher at the 25th percentile by 14 percentile points in reading and 18 percentile points in math, which is statistically significant enough to have policy implications.

Perhaps more importantly, the effects on achievement of both strong and weak teachers persisted over time in studies by Konstantopoulos (2007) and Sanders and Rivers (1996). Likewise, research on induction has demonstrated that comprehensive, multi-year programs that include rigorous mentor selection; high-quality intensive, on-going mentoring; school-protected release time for mentoring; on-going, research-based professional development for mentors, principals and administrators; the use of research-based teaching standards, formative assessments and teacher portfolio processes such as those offered by the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz strengthen beginning teacher effectiveness so much that their students demonstrate learning gains similar to those students of their more veteran colleagues (S. 1979--110th Congress,2007).

A central strategy that can increase the knowledge and understanding beginning teachers have about their students and their instruction is the use of formative assessment instruments. Formative assessment is a process whereby teachers receive feedback based on evidence to inform their professional practice. Used in collaboration with mentors and other educators along with structured self-assessments, formative assessment can help inform teachers' future practice and accelerate their learning.

Another important factor in advancing teachers from knowing theory to thoroughly understanding and implementing that knowledge into practice is adult learning theory. Researchers contend that teacher learning is very much like student learning (Lieberman, 1995; Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995). Lieberman (1995) concluded that "...people learn best through active involvement and through thinking about and becoming articulate about what they have learned' (p.592). Experience, interest in the subject (especially as it pertains to their job or personal life) and "learning [that] is problem-centered rather than content-oriented" (Knowles as cited in Conlan, Grabowksi and Smith, 2001) are also important factors to consider when providing professional development for the adult learner.

"Teachers learn by doing, reading, and reflecting...; by collaborating with other teachers; by looking closely at students and their work; and by sharing what they see" (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995). The climate that reinforces teacher learning and growth over time "...resembles a web, in which networks, seminars, meetings, and focus groups intersect to provide an array of opportunities for teachers" (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin).

- ✓ *RE Program Standards 3 (Systems Alignment), 4 (Mentor Quality) and 5 (Resident Educator Professional Development) are based on this research*

Principals must be actively involved in induction programs in non-evaluative, supportive roles

A 2008 study by SRI International found that high-quality induction programs and support from mentors can improve new teacher retention and efficacy. “However, even high levels of program and mentor supports are undermined if schools suffer from weak leadership, a shortage of basic supplies and materials or a lack of a professional community” (Humphrey, Wechsler, Bosetti, Park, & Tiffany-Morales. 2008, p. 1) . Previous evidence indicates that to some extent Ohio principals do assist beginning teachers. In 2004, in a survey of beginning teachers, 47% reported as being satisfied with the opportunity to meet with their principal during the entry year orientation process. In addition, only 14% of those beginning teachers indicated that the lack of principal support was the most challenging aspect of their first year of teaching. Eighty-two percent noted they received informal support from their principal and 53% indicated they received formal support from their principal (Entry Year Teacher Survey Report, 2003-2004).

According to Harvard University Professor Susan Moore Johnson (as cited in Hurwitz and Hurwitz, 2005) a strong and informed principal is valuable to the success of a school-based induction program. She states, “Someone has to understand the needs of new teachers, the complexity of the school, the difficulty of teaching, and also recognize how to hand off this responsibility to more experienced teachers” (p. 40).

Watkins (2005) supports the usefulness of learning communities to assist principals in providing a context in which teachers can grow and develop in addition to finding satisfaction within their profession. He asserts, “Without a strong learning community that supports new teachers, the principal faces attrition rates that jeopardize student achievement and curriculum continuity. Principals must help less experienced teachers to have high levels of satisfaction, and establish professional autonomy while being supported with guidance and clear expectations”.

Strong learning communities can also contribute to instructional strategies that can improve the effectiveness of all teachers working in the school. As Fulton, Loon, and Lee (August, 2005) determined, “Working together, PK-12 educators and their higher education partners can use teacher preparation, induction, and continual professional development to establish a new culture: a collaborative community of practice” (p. 21).

Principals provide the structure and create a positive climate for the induction program’s support and assessment activities. They must understand and respect the need for confidentiality between mentors and beginning teachers; provide time and resources for the implementation of the induction program; and ensure clear and consistent communication. Districts must assist principals in this effort and establish policies that support beginning teachers and the induction program.

Those responsible for policy development and implementation must align policies to focus upon teacher knowledge and a change in culture. “The challenge...is to realign the existing system of signals and incentives that shape school organizations, teachers’ practices, role expectations, and assumptions so that they support student and teacher learning” (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995).

- ✓ *RE Program Standards 1 (Program Administration), 2 (Principal) and 3 (Systems Alignment) are based on this research*

Retention rates in Ohio have declined slightly in recent years
from 76% to 72% after five years (*Driscoll and Fleeter, 2007*)

Conservatively, researchers estimate that the cost of replacing public school teachers who have dropped out of the profession to be \$2.2 billion a year or over \$12,500 per teacher (Kardos & Johnson, 2007); costly problems “both for the students, who lose the value of being taught by an experienced teacher, and to the schools and districts, which must recruit and train their replacements” (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). Fortunately, Ohio’s retention rates are higher than the national average. In their research of several Ohio school districts, Humphrey, et al. (2008) reported that an average of 69% of the beginning teachers remained in the same school and 84% of them remained in the same district.

However, a more comprehensive study in Ohio found that “the number of teachers with zero to five years of experience is now at the lowest percentage since 1999. Since the existence of a veteran cadre of teachers in ten years depends on the progression of these teachers through increasing levels of experience, and since attrition data suggest that some of these teachers will depart teaching in the next ten years, some danger exists that the education system will not have an appropriate balance of experienced and inexperienced teachers by 2017” (*Driscoll and Fleeter, 2007*).

It is also known that with changing generational norms, retention, in the sense of spending a lifetime in one career or location, is becoming more difficult. According to Johnson, “the average teacher today expects as her generational peers in other fields do, to take on differing positions and responsibilities throughout her career” (Coggins, 2008). Acknowledging this shift, the question becomes, what can we do to retain promising young teachers for five to ten years?

One answer is that induction programs must aspire to more than retention; they must promote high quality instruction. They must envision a new image of the successful teacher whose leadership capacity is developed from the moment the teacher enters the classroom. The professional development offered to beginning teachers must be differentiated and guided by a growth model that is standards-based and builds collaboration and communities of practice (*Program on Education and Society, 2007*).

Another answer is in the relationship between mentors and beginning teachers. Beginning teachers need many types of support including psychological support (personal & emotional needs), instruction-related support (multiple tasks and problems with instruction), and development (gaining independence as a professional to identify and address the idiosyncratic learning problems of their students). Trained mentors can provide this type of support and build supportive relationships with beginning teachers (Pan and Mutchler, 2000).

Support for beginning teachers also comes from the culture of the school. Fulton et al. (2005) indicated that when formal structures are built into the culture of schools and all teachers accept responsibility for student learning and assisting beginning teachers, novice teachers are more likely to feel supported in their work and, as a result, are more likely to stay and contribute to the professional community (p. 16).

“...If the national goal of providing an equitable education to children across the nation is to be met, it is critical to develop *and retain* high-quality teachers in every community and at every grade level (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005).

- ✓ *RE Program Standard 1 (Program Administration) and 5 (Resident Educator Professional Development) are based on this research*

High-quality induction programs provide
a positive return on investment

A cost-benefit analysis conducted in a study from the New Teacher Center demonstrates that “high-quality induction programs provide a positive return on investment both because beginning teachers stay in greater numbers and because those who stay are more effective...When costs and benefits are summed up for society the program secures a return after five years of \$1.66 for every dollar invested” (Villar & Strong, 2007).

According to Darling-Hammond (2008) beginning teachers are often given the most difficult assignments and left to “sink or swim,” without the kind of help provided by other professions. “Isolated behind classroom doors with little feedback or help, as many as 30% leave in the first few years, while others learn merely to cope rather than to teach well.” Within today’s standards-based teaching and learning requirements, “coping” does not result in improved student growth and achievement.

High quality induction programs utilize adult learning theories among other strategies to assist novices to grow into their careers and continue their own development. Mentors and beginning teachers need to be involved in as many aspects of their own professional development as possible.

Participation in learning communities also contributes to teacher effectiveness and satisfaction. Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos (February, 2009) state, “Research shows that when schools are strategic in creating time and productive working relationships within academic departments or grade levels, across them or among teachers school-wide, the benefits can include greater consistency in instruction, more willingness to share practices and try new ways to teaching, and more success in solving problems of practice” (p. 11).

New teachers can be as effective as experienced teachers more quickly when new teachers participate in comprehensive induction programs, which can also improve the satisfaction and skills of veteran teachers. “Experienced teachers serving as mentors or evaluators improve their own teaching practices by observing and coaching beginners. Often teacher coaches find that mentoring provides them new opportunities for career growth and better pay” (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005).

Such an attitude of change can begin to assist teachers with their own professional growth and therefore add tremendous benefits to the school and district. As Lieberman (1995) stated, “...if teacher learning takes place within the context of a professional community that is nurtured and developed both within and outside the school...[then], such teacher learning can bring about significant and lasting school change” (p. 65).

- ✓ *RE Program Standards 2 (Principal), 4 (Mentor Quality) and 5 (Resident Educator Professional Development) are based on this research*

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