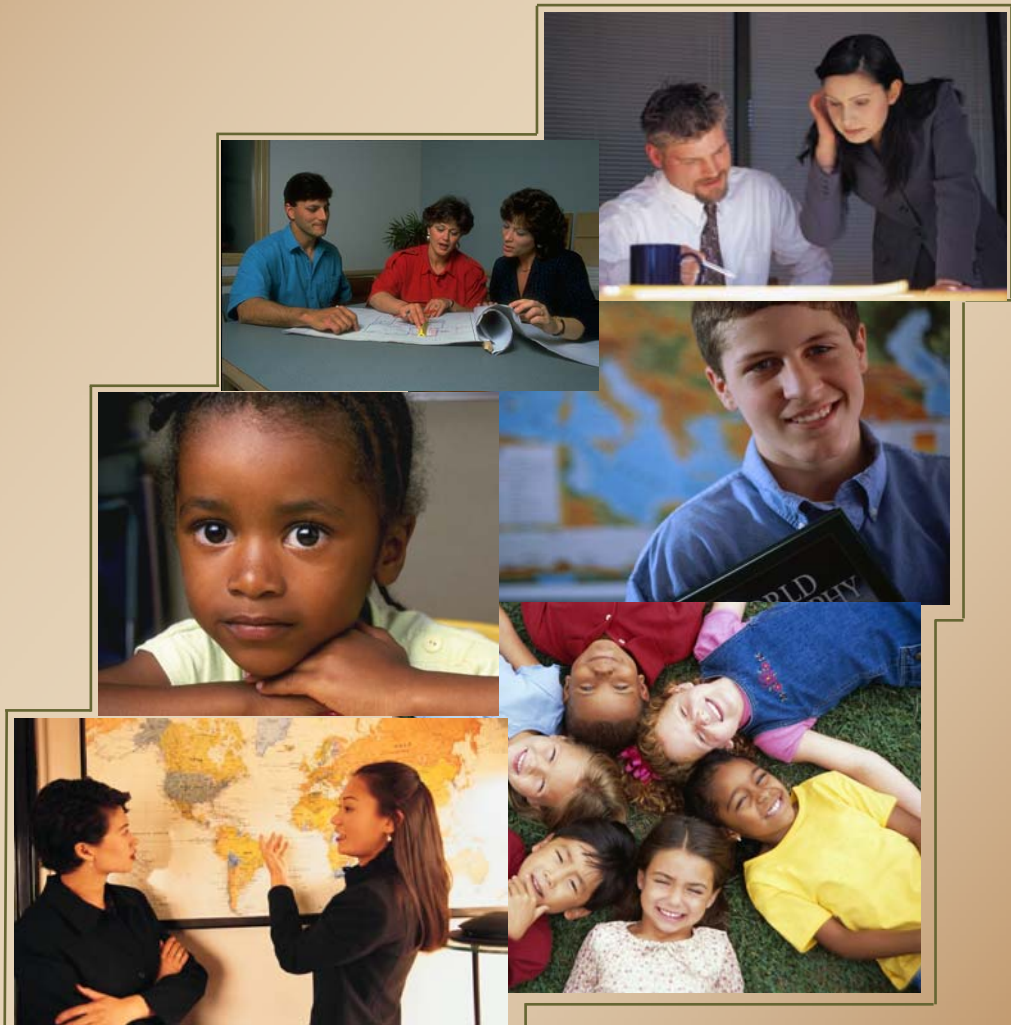


TEACHER INDUCTION in ILLINOIS and OHIO



FINDINGS and RECOMMENDATIONS



February 2008

Teacher Induction in Illinois and Ohio: Findings and Recommendations

February 2008

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Commissioned by
The Joyce Foundation

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Executive Summary

Research has shown that students taught by beginning teachers demonstrate smaller learning gains than students taught by experienced teachers (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2004). In addition, teachers in their first 5 years are far more likely to leave the profession than their more experienced colleagues. In response, policymakers have increasingly turned to induction programs to support new teachers' entry into the profession, with the concurrent goals of improving their teaching and retaining them in the profession.

Overall, our data indicated that high levels of support from induction programs and 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. The study also found that beginning teachers' backgrounds and needs for induction support vary. However, the induction programs participating in the study did not always tailor their supports to match those variations. Moreover, for about one-fifth of beginning teachers opportunities to observe, be observed, or plan lessons with their mentors were infrequent or did not occur at all.

The recommendations in this report indicate seven positive actions that policymakers, district leaders, and induction program directors should take in light of study findings:

- Invest in high-quality induction and attend to the school environment.
- Integrate preparation and induction supports for alternative certification teachers.
- Frontload supports for late hires.
- Conduct formative assessments of beginning teachers and tailor induction supports to their individual needs.
- Support teachers in learning how to address the needs of special populations.
- Set minimum expectations for mentor support and ensure those expectations are met.
- Provide adequate time for mentors and mentees to engage in useful activities.

Equally important is the study conclusion that teacher induction is the responsibility of the whole school community, whose full engagement is required to ensure that beginning teachers are effective.

Teacher Induction in Illinois and Ohio: Findings and Recommendations

Introduction

This report, prepared for the Joyce Foundation, presents policy recommendations and highlights key evidence drawn from a 2-year study of teacher induction programs in Illinois and Ohio. Both states have been active in developing teacher induction policies and programs. Ohio has supported a statewide induction program since 2002-03. In Illinois, where district-sponsored programs have been common, the state funded 10 pilot induction programs in 2006. In 2008, the state expanded the pilot program.

Data sources for this report included interviews with state policymakers; case studies of eight Illinois programs, including four participating in the Illinois Teacher Induction Pilot Program, and five Ohio programs; surveys of all induction participants in the case study programs, as well as in all Illinois pilot program sites; and retention data for all of the case study programs and Illinois pilot programs. Data were collected in the 2005-06 and 2006-07 school years.

The report is organized around seven key recommendations and the evidence that led to them. Our preliminary report and a complete compendium of the survey results is available on our website at <http://policyweb.sri.com/cep/projects/displayProject.jsp?Nick=teachinduct>

We begin with a discussion of the outcomes associated with induction supports for beginning teachers.

Teacher Induction Outcomes

Recommendation 1

Invest in high-quality induction and attend to the school environment

Our research points to the benefits of strong induction supports for beginning teachers, both from their schools and from their induction programs. Teachers who worked in supportive school environments characterized by trust and a professional community focused on teaching and learning, and teachers who received strong induction supports had higher retention rates and higher levels of efficacy. Policymakers should invest in high-quality induction programs and attend to the school environment.

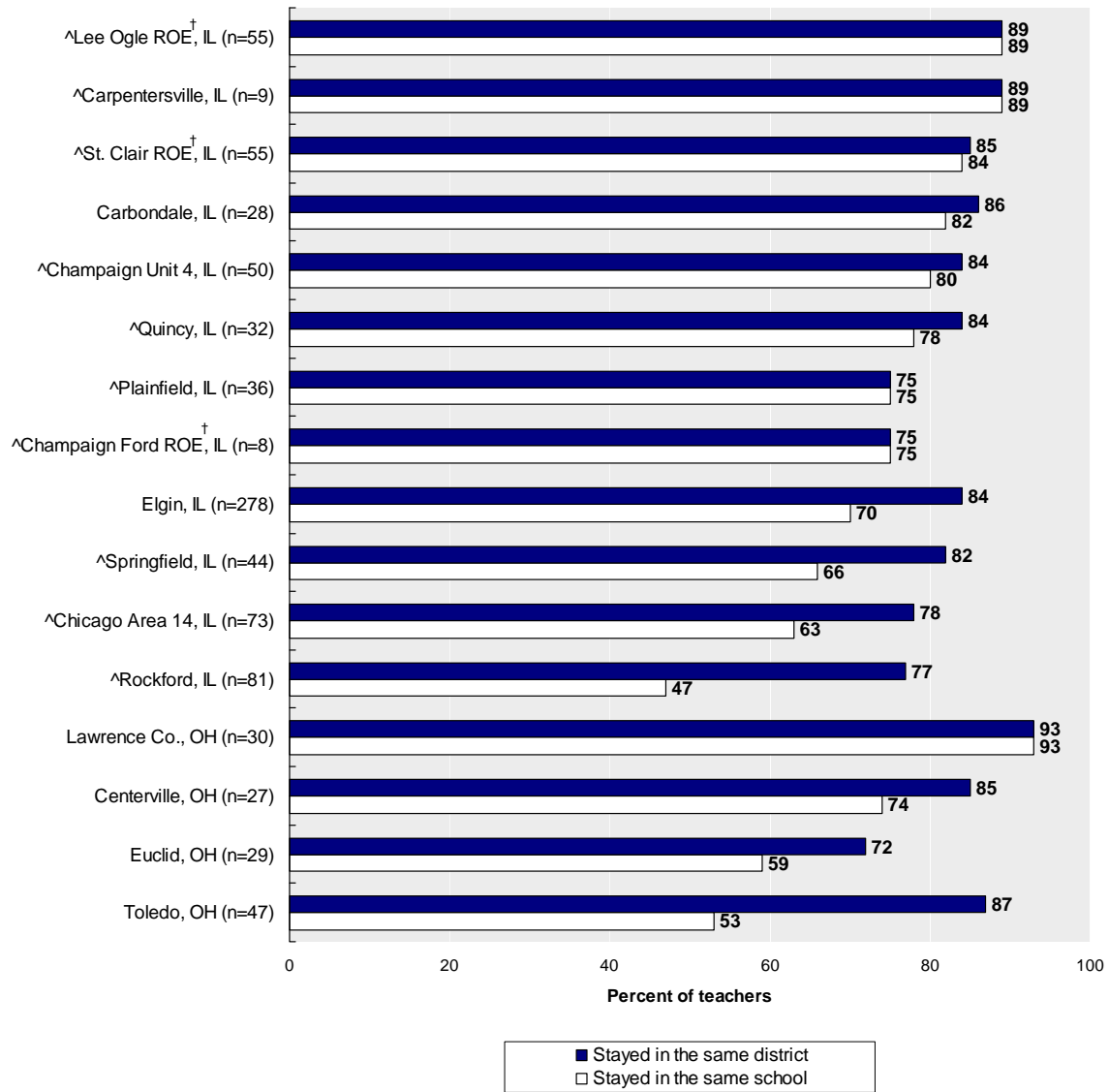
Teacher Retention

Longitudinal data in a recent report on teacher retention in Illinois suggest positive statewide trends in teacher retention, with only 27% of beginning teachers leaving the profession after 5 years (DeAngelis & Presley, 2007). This was good news. However, the same study showed that 44% of new teachers left their *initial school* after 2 years. In our sample of beginning teachers, more than one in four beginning teachers who were teaching in Spring 2007 did not return to the same school in fall 2007—and the rates were even higher in some school districts. Both Illinois and Ohio share the same school attrition problem. Although our sample was not representative of all beginning teachers in Illinois or Ohio, the findings should sound an alarm for policymakers, because so many departures can significantly disrupt individual schools. All of the districts that we studied had induction programs, but many still had high attrition rates. This suggests the need to understand the mix of induction supports and the school environments that result in better outcomes.

Exhibit 1 presents the retention rates by Illinois and Ohio program, showing the percentage of teachers who remained in their school and the percentage who left that school but remained in the same district.¹

¹ In Exhibit 1 we show individual program data for all programs. In future exhibits we only report data for those programs with response rates greater than 10 to protect the confidentiality of respondents.

Exhibit 1
Percentage of Beginning Teachers Who Were Teaching in Spring 2007 and Returned to Their Schools and Their Districts in Fall 2007



^ Illinois Teacher Induction Pilot Program

† Regional Office of Education

As Exhibit 1 illustrates, the percentage of beginning teachers who left their initial school after the first year varied by district.² This variation is likely to be seen among individual schools within a district as well, with some schools experiencing higher attrition than others, although we do not have school-level data to confirm this assumption. Regardless, the high percent of beginning teachers who leave their initial school each year in some districts can cause significant problems.

² Note that because our sample does not include teachers who left their schools before the spring of 2007 when we conducted our survey, actual retention rates are likely to be lower than shown.

Our teacher survey was designed to measure how different inputs contributed to teacher retention and teacher efficacy. We conducted factor analyses of survey responses—identifying individual items that measure the same construct and combining them analytically—to create robust measures of inputs. The analyses found that the items comprised six different constructs that we then analyzed as inputs: school environment, availability of instructional materials and supplies, induction program support for instructional preparation and planning, induction program support for working with special student populations, mentor support for instructional preparation and planning, and mentor support for working with special student populations. Exhibit 2 specifies the survey items that make up each of the inputs.

Exhibit 2
Survey Items Comprising Each Input Factor

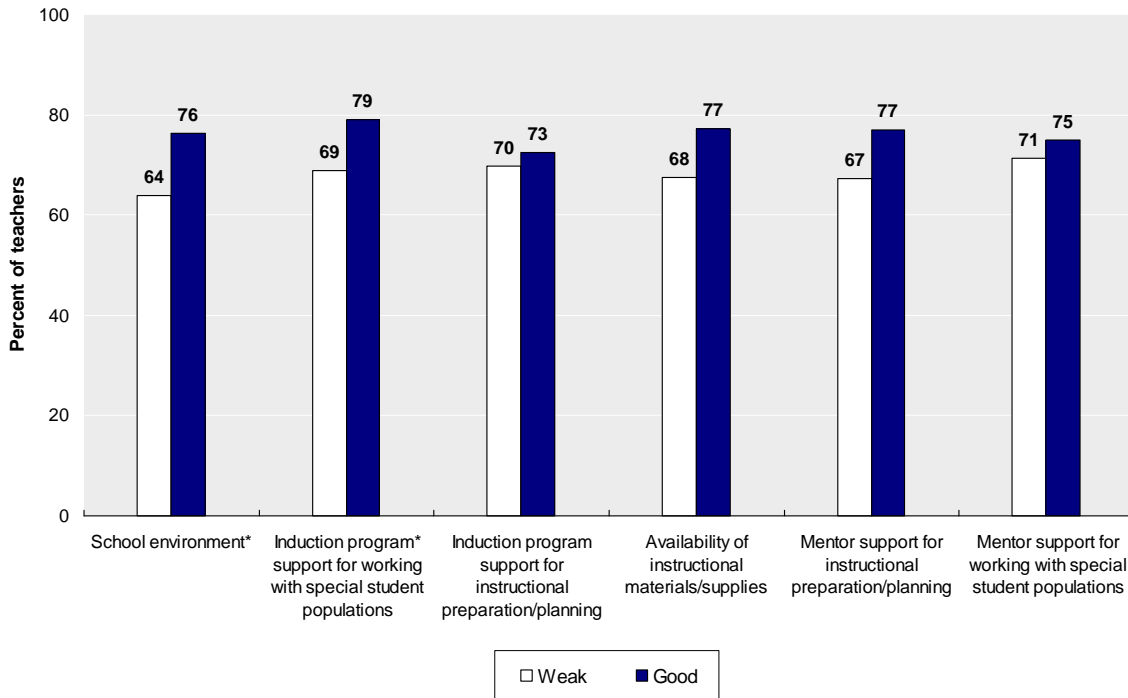
Input Factor	Survey questions (all 4-point Likert scales)
School environment	<p><i>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers in this school trust each other. • I feel supported by colleagues to try out new ideas. • Teachers in this school feel responsible to help each other do their best. • Teachers in this school are encouraged to experiment with their teaching. • Teachers use time together to discuss teaching and learning.
Availability of instructional materials and supplies	<p><i>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have the necessary textbooks and print resources to teach. • I can get instructional materials (e.g., lab supplies, math manipulatives, classroom library books) without buying them myself. • I can get the classroom supplies (e.g., paper, pencils, staples, tape) I need without buying them myself.
Induction program support for instructional preparation and planning	<p><i>Thinking about all the different supports you have received in the 2006-07 school year (including the summer of 2006), to what extent have they addressed the following topics?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The subject matter I teach. • Instructional techniques appropriate for the grade level/subject matter I teach. • Assessment techniques appropriate for the grade level/subject matter I teach. • Instructional goals appropriate to the grade level/subject matter I teach. • The use of textbooks or other curricular materials/instructional programs for my current position. • The use of data (e.g., analyzing student work or student test scores) to plan instruction.

Exhibit 2 (continued)
Survey Items Comprising Each Input Factor

Input Factor	Survey questions (all 4-point Likert scales)
Induction program support for working with special student populations	<p><i>Thinking about all the different supports you have received in the 2006-07 school year (including the summer of 2006), to what extent have they addressed the following topics?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional techniques to meet the needs of English language learners. • Adapting instruction for students with individualized education plans. • Instructional techniques to meet the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds.
Mentor support for instructional preparation and planning	<p><i>How helpful has your mentor or consultant been in your development of the following teaching skills during the 2006-07 school year?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The subject matter I teach. • Instructional techniques appropriate for the grade level/subject matter I teach. • Assessment techniques appropriate for the grade level/subject matter I teach. • Instructional goals appropriate to the grade level/subject matter I teach. • The use of textbooks or other curricular materials/instructional programs for my current position. • The use of data (e.g., analyzing student work or student test scores) to plan instruction.
Mentor support for working with special student populations	<p><i>How helpful has your mentor or consultant been in your development of the following teaching skills during the 2006-07 school year?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional techniques to meet the needs of English language learners. • Adapting instruction for students with individualized education plans. • Instructional techniques to meet the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Once we identified the inputs, we analyzed survey responses to determine new teachers' scores for each one, and then compared the retention rates of those teachers whose composite scores were in the top and bottom quartiles. For example, we compared the retention rates of teachers whose scores were in the highest quartile on the school environment factor with the retention rates of teachers whose scores were in the lowest quartile on school environment. We made similar comparisons for each of the input factors (see Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 3
Percentage of Teachers Who Returned to the Same School for the 2007-08
School Year, by the Type of Support Received



* Significant at the $p < .05$ level.
 The range of n is 249-350.

As Exhibit 3 illustrates, only two factors showed statistically significant differences between teachers in favorable and unfavorable conditions. Specifically, teachers in supportive school environments were significantly more likely to return to their initial school than teachers in challenging school environments. Likewise, teachers who received strong program support for working with special student populations were significantly more likely to return to their initial school than teachers who did not receive strong support in this area.

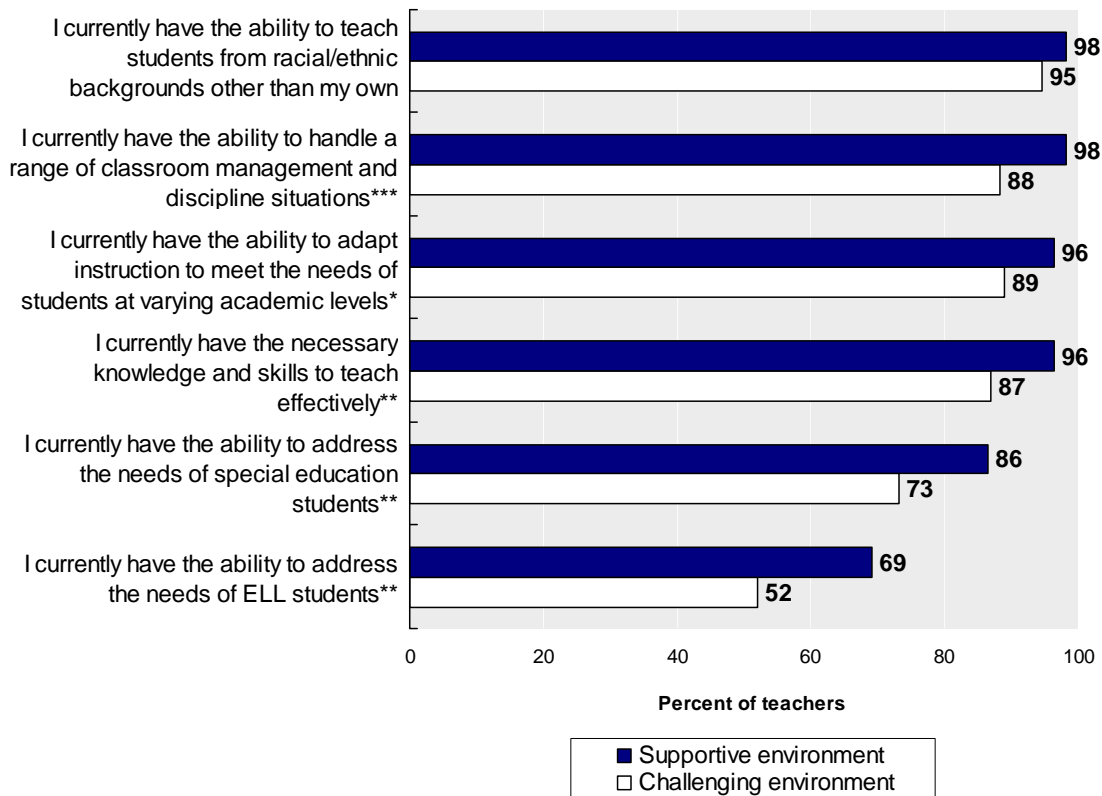
Although not statistically significant, each of the other comparisons also showed a trend in which higher percentages of teachers who received strong induction supports returned to their initial school than did teachers who received weak supports. Several reasons explain the relatively small differences: our survey did not capture beginning teachers who left before the spring, small numbers of the teachers fell into the high support and low support groups, and other circumstances outside of the induction supports and school environment may have caused teachers to stay at their school. Overall, our results are consistent with other recent research that documents the crucial importance of the school environment and the contributions of strong induction supports to teacher retention (Kapadia & Coca, 2007; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Teacher Efficacy

Another outcome variable we analyzed was teachers' self-efficacy. Darling-Hammond, Chung, and Frelow (2002) concluded that teachers' self-efficacy and confidence are important to foster early in their careers. Reviewing literature on teacher efficacy, Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, and Hoy (1998) reported that self-efficacy is related to student achievement, motivation, and students' sense of efficacy.

When we examined different groups of teachers, we found important differences in the efficacy they reported. Specifically, we found that teachers who worked in supportive school environments had higher efficacy in regard to a variety of measures than did teachers who worked in challenging school environments. As Exhibit 4 illustrates, teachers in supportive school environments were more confident about their teaching skills, although both groups of teachers reported relatively high levels of efficacy, except in working with special student populations.

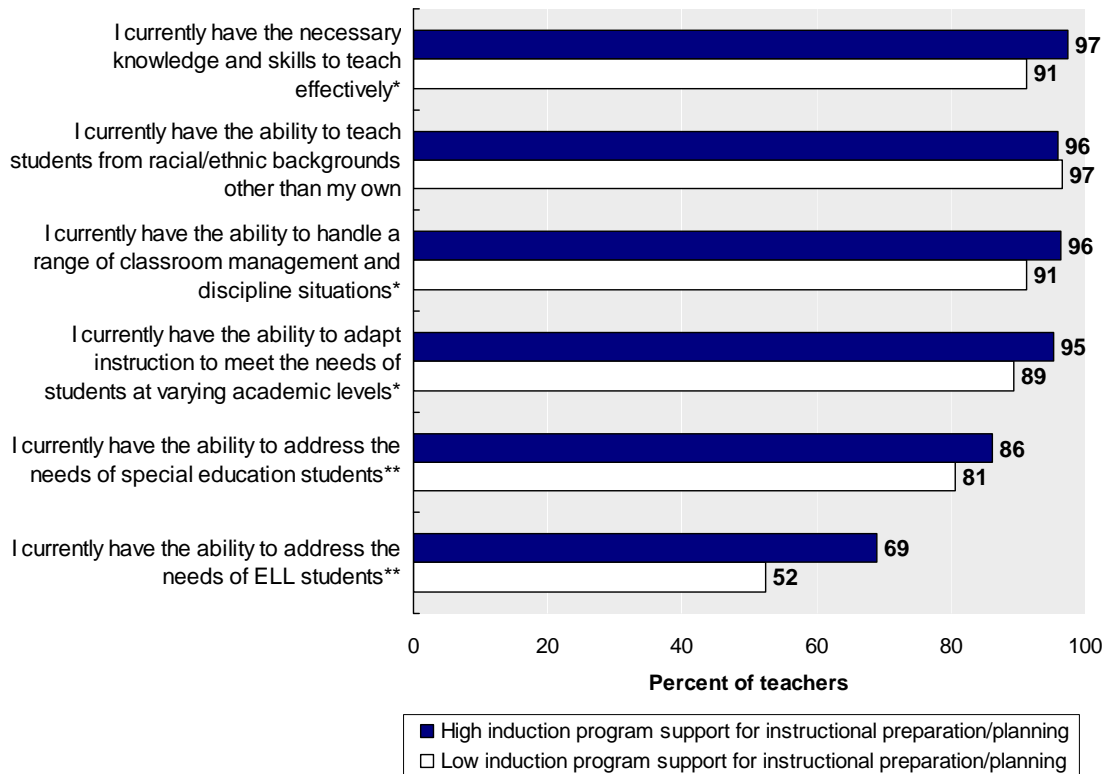
Exhibit 4
Percentage of Beginning Teachers Agreeing with Statements about Efficacy, by School Environment



* Significant at the $p < .05$ level; ** Significant at the $p < .01$ level; *** Significant at the $p < .001$ level. The range of n is 310-315.

Similarly, we found that teachers who received significant support from their induction programs and from their mentors reported higher levels of efficacy (see Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5
Percentage of Beginning Teachers Agreeing with Statements about Efficacy, by Induction Program Support for Instructional Preparation and Planning



* Significant at the $p < .05$ level; ** Significant at the $p < .01$ level.
 The range of n is 343-347.

Like school environment, the data also show the importance of the induction program for teachers' efficacy. Beginning teachers who received strong support for working with special populations from their induction program or their mentor reported much greater confidence in their ability to address the needs of special student populations than did those who received weak support. For example, 89% of teachers who received strong support from their mentors in working with special populations reported that they had the ability to address the needs of English-language learners (ELLs), compared with only 50% of teachers who received weak mentor support in this area.

Overall, our examination of teacher efficacy found that supportive school environments and high levels of support from induction programs and from mentors have positive impacts. Taken together, the research points to the importance of providing beginning teachers with strong induction supports from both programs and schools. Policymakers would be wise to invest in programs and policies aligned with these findings.

Alternative Certification Teachers

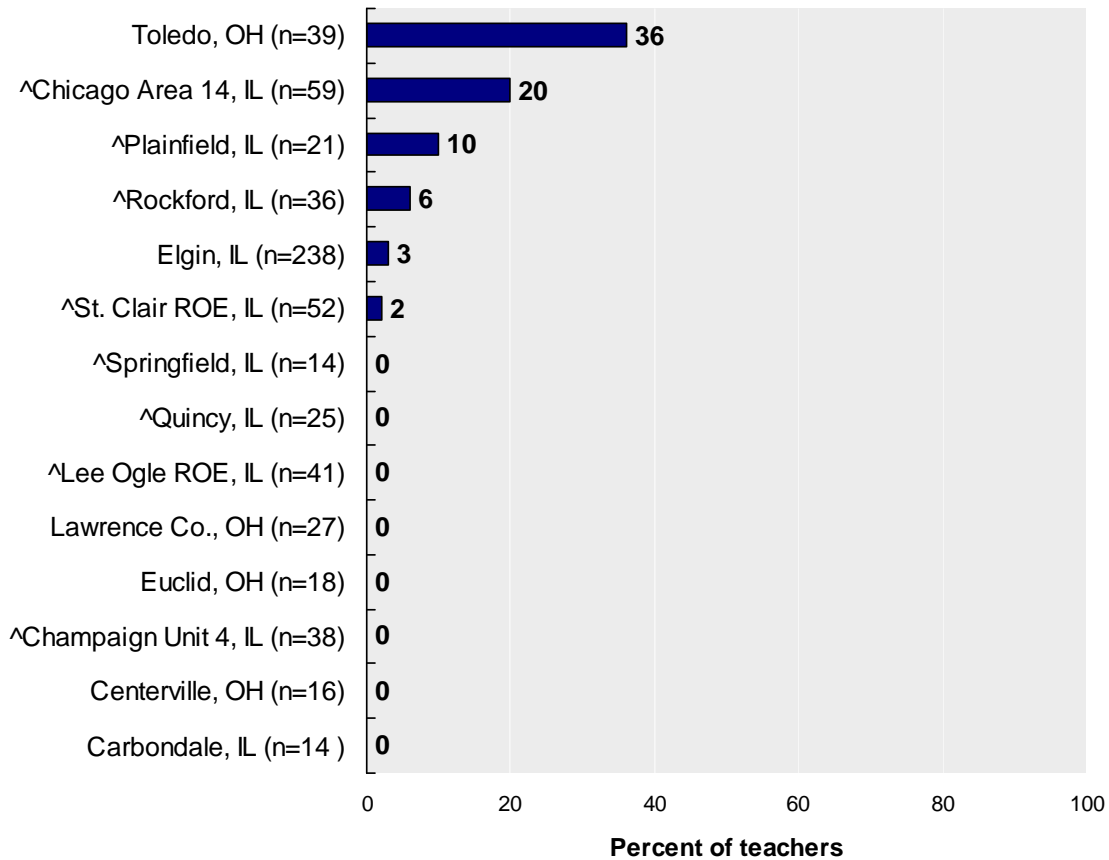
Recommendation 2

Integrate preparation and induction supports for alternative certification teachers

Beginning teachers concurrently enrolled in an alternative certification program and in an induction program need the two programs to work together to provide coherent and consistent support. Induction programs and alternative certification programs should invest resources to facilitate planning and cooperation between the two programs, particularly in districts with large numbers of teachers seeking alternative certification.

The beginning teachers served by induction programs represent varied backgrounds in terms of their preparation for teaching. Although a majority of teachers across programs had completed their teacher preparation and hold an initial teaching license, several districts had a sizable number of teachers seeking alternative certification—a group of beginning teachers who had not yet completed their teacher preparation. More than one-third of participants in Toledo and one-fifth of participants in Chicago Area 14, for example, were enrolled in an intern or alternative certification program (see Exhibit 6).

Exhibit 6
Participants Enrolled in an Intern or Alternative Certification Program



^ Illinois Teacher Induction Pilot Program

Teachers who have not completed sufficient requirements to earn an initial or provisional teaching license have decidedly different induction needs from those of traditionally certified teachers. Often, given their incomplete training, alternative certification teachers require more mentor support as they try to learn on the job what traditionally prepared teachers have learned in the clinical component of their teacher preparation programs. Alternative certification teachers cited the need for assistance with classroom management, instructional strategies, and even with noninstructional tasks such as filling out paperwork.

Alternative certification teachers experience more, or at least different, challenges than do their traditionally prepared counterparts. In addition to participating in the induction and mentoring activities, alternative certification teachers are completing coursework while teaching. Most of these teachers reported that teaching full time, completing certification requirements, and participating in an induction program were extremely burdensome. In one case study district, that burden was exacerbated by financial demands on the alternative certification teachers. This district, which draws alternative certification teachers from several local universities, hires them at a lower salary than certified teachers. In addition, each teacher pays about \$4,000 per year in university fees for their

coursework. Because of their lower income, many of these teachers take on extra duties (e.g., after-school programs, tutoring) for additional salary, which adds yet more work to their already stressful workload.

Coordination between induction and alternative certification programs also can present challenges. In the case studies, alternative certification teachers reported that they were unable to participate in induction program activities because of scheduling conflicts with their alternative certification program. Coordination can also be a problem in terms of the content of their support. Alternative certification teachers are learning to teach as a part of both their teacher preparation programs and their induction programs. Without explicit coordination between the programs, new teachers may not receive coherent messages about teaching. In the best case, the lessons taught by the different providers reinforce each other; in the worst case, they contradict each other.

The case study programs typically treated alternative certification teachers as if they were fully credentialed. As a result, those teachers were overly burdened because they had to meet two sets of overlapping and sometimes inconsistent program requirements.

The solution is not to delay induction, however. Interviews with alternative certification teachers revealed that the support of their mentors and participation in the induction activities had a significant positive impact on surviving their first year of teaching. The solution, then, is purposefully integrating the programs so that they are coherent both in terms of content and in terms of the time they demand from teachers.

Late Hiring and Beginning Teachers

Recommendation 3

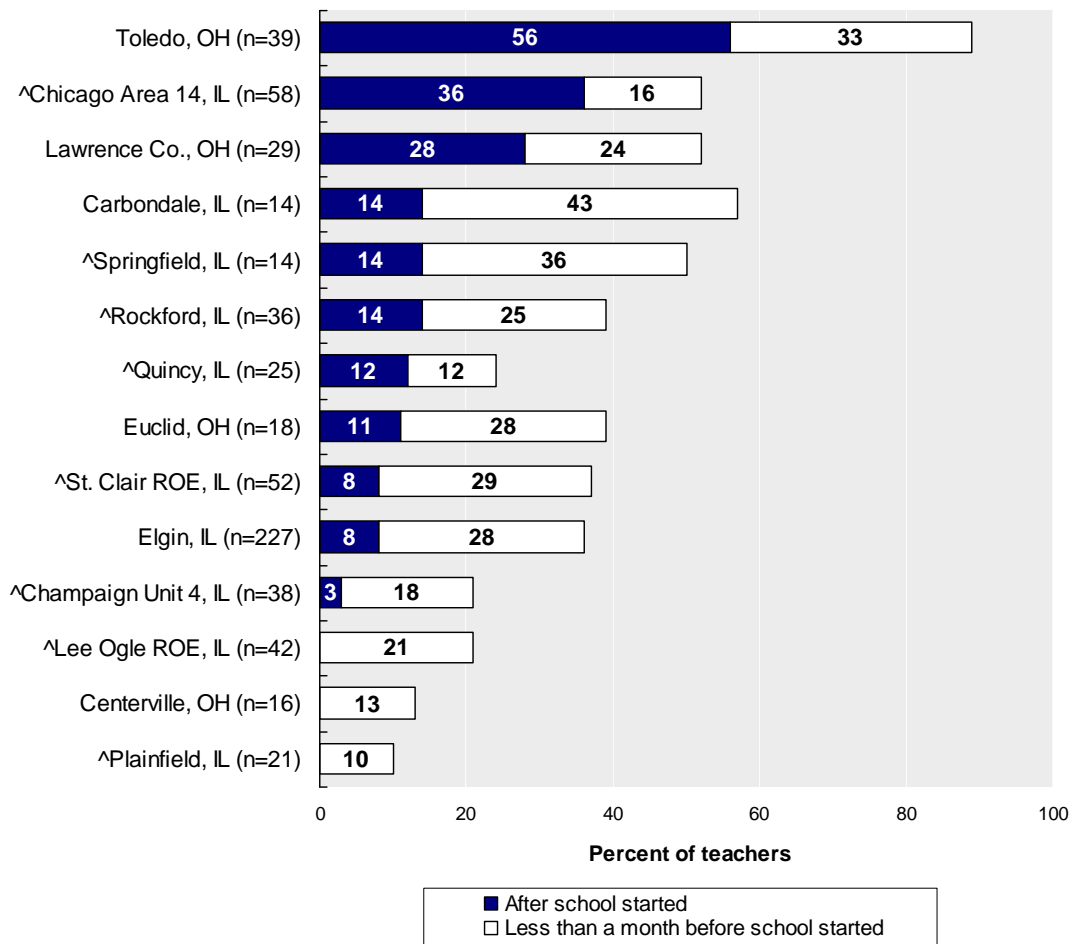
Frontload supports for late hires

Beginning teachers not hired until the start or after the start of the school year are at a significant disadvantage. One result is that late hires have much higher attrition rates than teachers hired in a more timely fashion. The induction program should thus provide a co-teacher or other intensive in-class supports during new teachers' first 2 to 4 weeks of teaching.

The start of a school year is a demanding time for new teachers, and their early support is critical for the successful start of the school year. Teachers need time to prepare for the first few weeks of school by reviewing the existing curricula, preparing lessons plans, gathering materials, and perusing student records so that they understand their incoming students' achievement levels and special needs. Teachers also need to learn local routines and procedures (e.g., how to take attendance, where to get textbooks, how to order materials, how to get a substitute, where to park). Early orientation and induction support can help teachers with both realms of their jobs.

However, one complication with early support is that some new teachers are not hired in time for them to participate in the early induction experiences. In some of the study districts, large numbers of beginning teachers were hired just before or even after the beginning of the school year (see Exhibit 7). In Toledo, for example, only 11% of participants were hired at least a month before the start of school. Instead, more than one-third of Toledo's participants were hired less than a month before the start of school, and more than half (56%) were hired after the start of school. Chicago Area 14, too, hired more than one-third of participants after the start of school.

**Exhibit 7
Percentage of Participants Hired Just Before or After
the School Year Started**



^ Illinois Teacher Induction Pilot Program

Late hiring has serious consequences for teacher retention. Of those teachers hired less than a month before school started or after school started, more than one-third (34%) left their initial school. In contrast, of those teachers hired at least 1 month before school started, only 19% left.

Teachers hired late in the summer or after the start of the school year were at a severe disadvantage in that they had little, if any, time to set up their classrooms, gather materials, make curricular choices, and plan for instruction. In addition to missing out on critical planning time, many teachers hired after the school year reported that they never received orientation to their school building and did not know how to make copies or handle procedures, or even know the location of the restroom. Importantly, late hires missed out on critical induction services that may have made these early preparations easier and more instructionally sound, and that could have eased their transition into their jobs.

Because of these disadvantages, late hires have the need for early and intense induction support. They need to quickly make up lost ground in planning instruction and establishing classroom procedures, with the assistance of well-trained and experienced mentors. Their needs may differ from those of teachers hired earlier who have had time to plan on their own and in conjunction with their mentors. However, none of the case study programs made adjustments to meet the needs of late hires. Induction programs need to intensify early support for teachers hired late through such mechanisms as being assigned a co-teacher or other intensive in-class supports. Though such interventions might entail significant costs, they hold promise for increasing teacher retention rates as well as the academic attainment of the students in the classes who started their school year without the stability of a permanent teacher.

Induction of Experienced Teachers

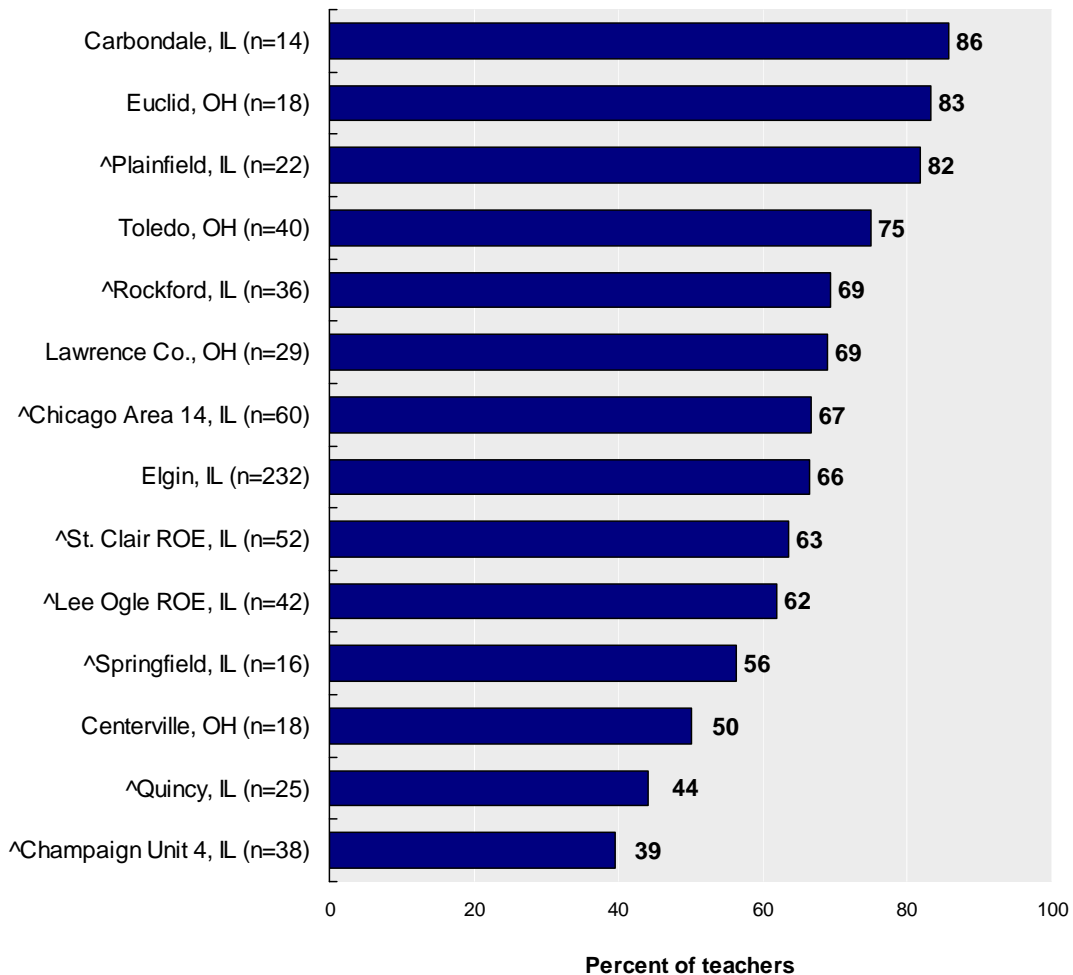
Recommendation 4

Conduct formative assessments of beginning teachers and tailor induction supports to their individual needs

A considerable number of teachers participating in induction programs have teaching experience and may view their induction program as redundant. Others, even those with experience, need a high level of support. For all beginning teachers, induction programs should review evidence of skills and knowledge (from the teachers' preparation programs or previous employment), conduct classroom observations at the start of the school year, and work to individualize support for beginning teachers.

Although newly credentialed or new to their jobs or schools, a sizable percentage of induction participants had prior classroom experience. Across all programs, nearly two-thirds of induction participants (65%) had worked as classroom teachers, substitute teachers, or teacher's aides before entering their current teaching positions. Although all induction programs had participants with experience, the percentages of teachers with experience ranged from a high of 86% in Carbondale and 83% in Euclid to a low of 33% in Champaign Unit 4 (see Exhibit 8). The Carbondale district deliberately chose a high percentage of participants with previous experience; that is, the induction program worked specifically with teachers in their first 4 years of teaching and also had a component to work with teaching fellows from a nearby university.

**Exhibit 8
Participants with Prior Working Classroom Experience**



^ Illinois Teacher Induction Pilot Program

Teachers who have led classrooms before or assisted in classrooms have needs that differ from those of inexperienced teachers. However, the programs in our study rarely differentiated their supports on the basis of beginning teachers' prior experience or skills and knowledge. We interviewed one teacher who became eligible for induction services in her fifth year of teaching when she was transferred from an out-of-field to an in-field position. At this point, however, she had already joined her school's leadership team, informally mentored colleagues, and completed the mentor training. Clearly, the nature of support this teacher needed in her fifth year of teaching was different from what she needed in her first year. With over half of program participants in nearly all sites having prior classroom experience, the mismatch between supports needed and supports provided experienced by this teacher was not atypical.

Induction programs have many ways to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of new teachers to tailor support better. For teachers who have just completed teacher preparation programs, information can be gathered from those programs about coursework and clinical experiences. For teachers who have been teaching, their students' test scores and their lesson plans may provide evidence of their skills. For any new teacher, however, even if prior evidence of skills is not available, mentors can observe their classrooms early in the school year to determine teachers' strengths and weaknesses. Formative assessments are important so that support can be individualized to better meet the needs of the teachers.

Learning How to Address the Needs of Special Populations

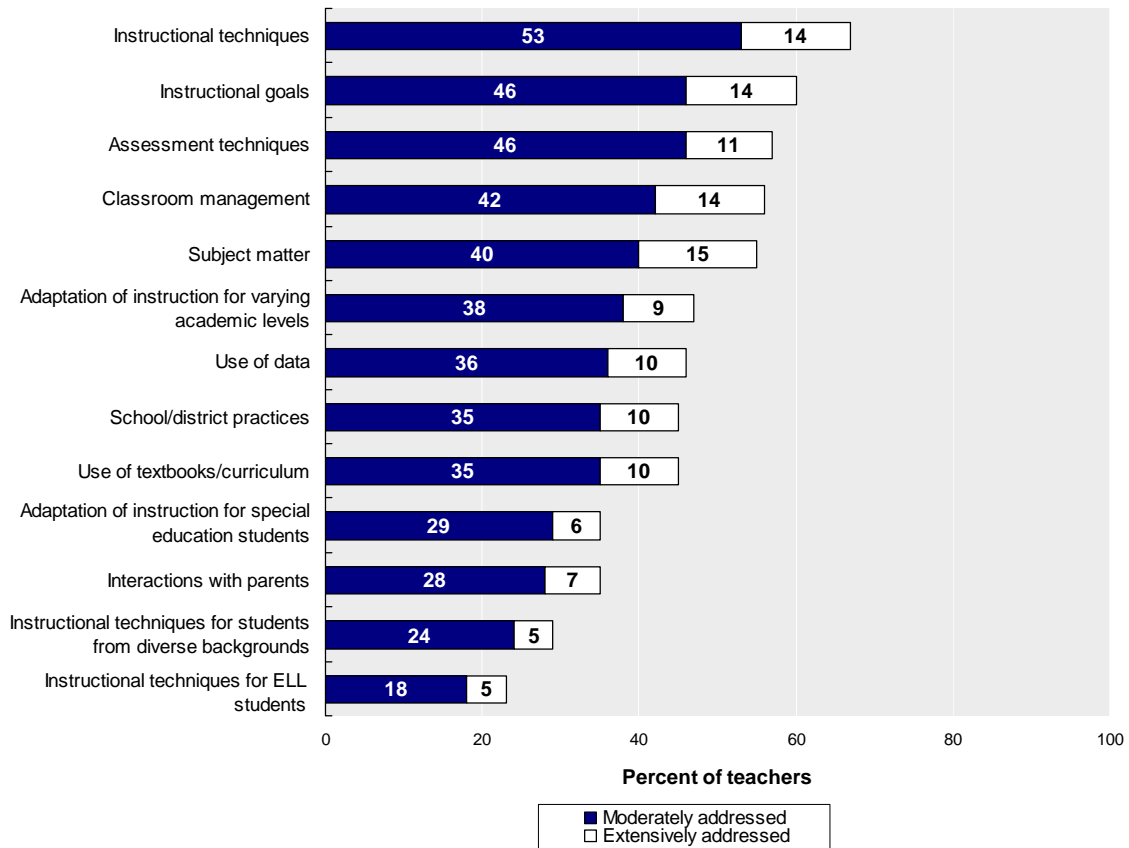
Recommendation 5

Support teachers in learning how to address the needs of special populations

Only a minority of beginning teachers in the induction programs we studied were provided with the supports they needed to teach special education students, English language learners (ELLs), and students from diverse backgrounds effectively. For teachers with special student populations in their classes, more attention should be devoted to providing training in these areas. In addition, other beginning teachers would benefit from more focused approaches to addressing the needs of special populations. Additional training for mentors to address the needs of special populations is necessary as well.

Beginning teachers reported that they were particularly challenged by the needs of special education students and ELLs in their classrooms. However, the induction programs in our study generally fell short in helping beginning teachers learn how to address the needs of special student populations (i.e., special education students, English language learners, and students from diverse backgrounds). Fewer than half of new teachers reported that their support moderately or extensively addressed topics related to meeting the individual needs of students (see Exhibit 9). Specifically, only 47% of teachers reported that their induction support moderately or extensively addressed the adaptation of instruction to meet the needs of students at varying academic levels; 35% reported that their program addressed adapting instruction for students with individualized education plans (IEPs); 29% reported that their program addressed instructional techniques for students from diverse backgrounds; and 23% reported that their program addressed instructional techniques to meet the needs of ELLs.

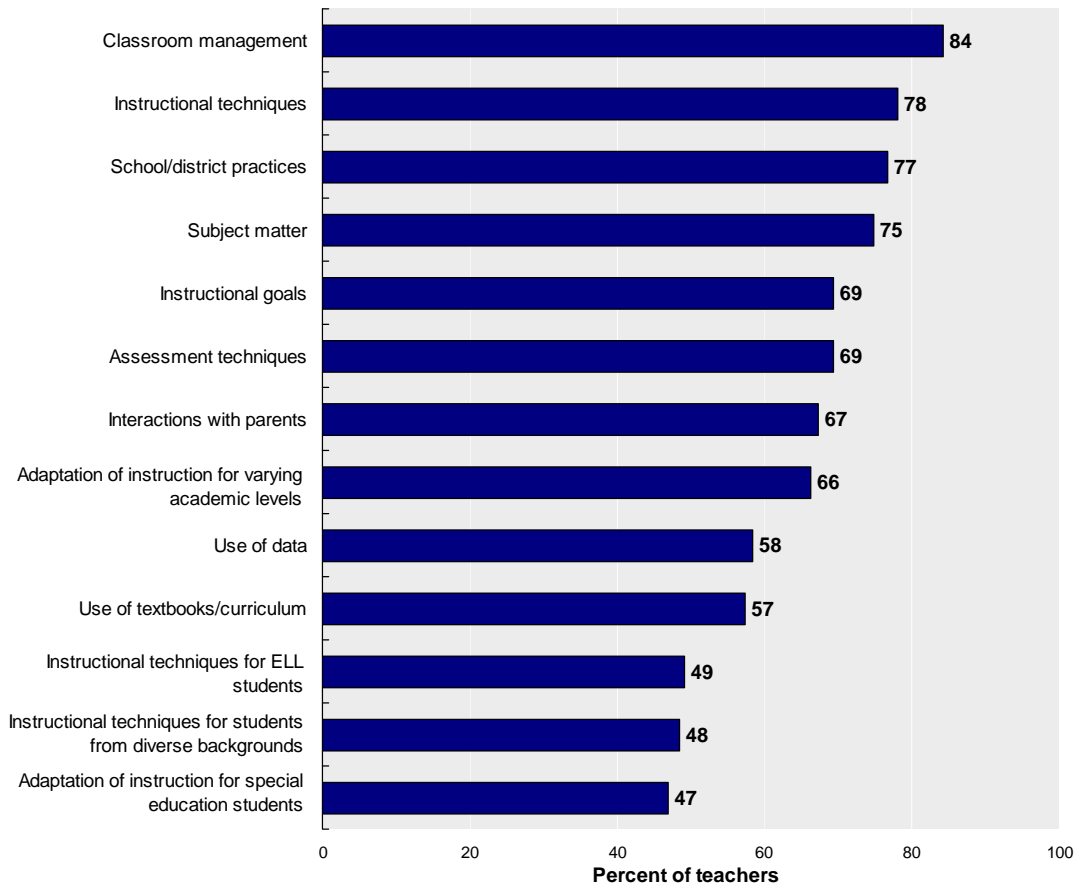
**Exhibit 9
Percentage of Teachers Whose Induction Programs
Addressed Various Topics**



The range of n is 644-654.

Although addressing the needs of special student populations was not the only area that survey responses from beginning teachers indicated was underaddressed in induction programs, the responses strongly suggested the need for expanded attention to helping beginning teachers learn strategies in this area. The survey responses also suggested that new teachers received only limited support from their mentors in this area (see Exhibit 10).

Exhibit 10
For Teachers Needing Specific Supports,
Percent Whose Mentor Was Helpful in those Areas



The range of n is 163-352.

New teachers reported that mentors were most helpful in developing classroom skills and techniques, and in understanding school and district policies, procedures, and resources. Mentors were less helpful with areas related to adapting instruction to meet the needs of individual students or subgroups. For example, of those new teachers who reported needing support with instructional techniques to meet the needs of ELLs and students from diverse backgrounds and adapting instruction for students with IEPs, fewer than 50% reported that their mentor was helpful in developing these skills.

Frequency of Mentor Support

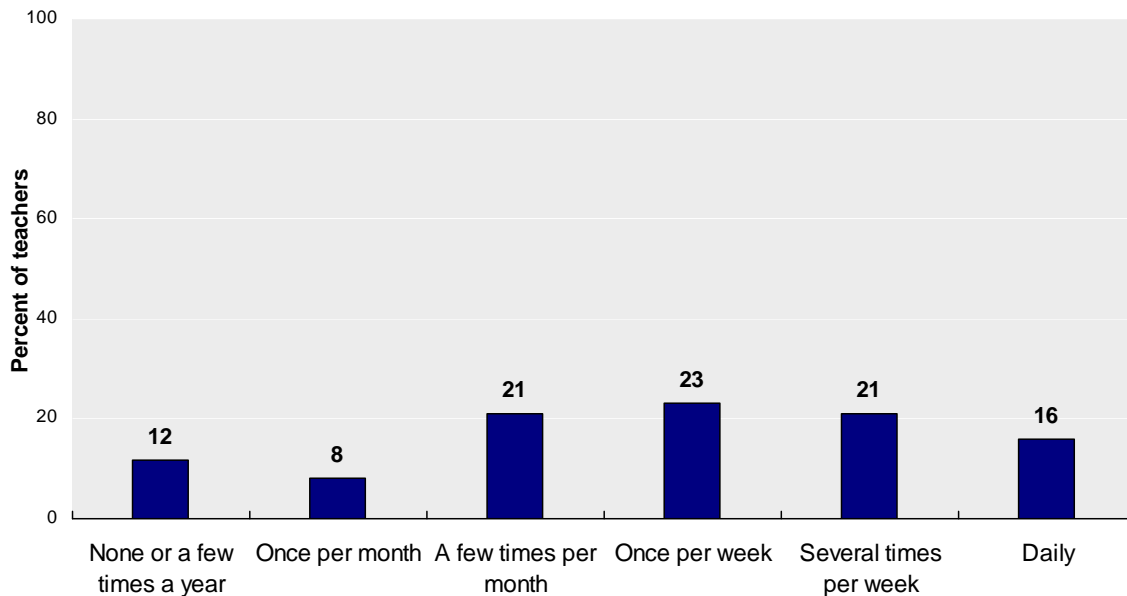
Recommendation 6

Set minimum expectations for mentor support and ensure those expectations are met

A sizable number of beginning teachers reported surprisingly low levels of interaction with their mentors. Beginning teachers had infrequent opportunities to observe their mentor's teaching, be observed by their mentor, plan a lesson with their mentor, or engage in other highly valued activities. Induction programs should set minimum expectations for mentors and the supports they provide, and ensure those expectations are met.

All programs emphasize mentoring as a key program support and it appears that most teachers did receive regular mentoring (see Exhibit 11). Sixty percent of new teachers reported that they interacted with their mentors at least once per week, with 16% reporting daily interactions. On the other hand, 12% of teachers reported interacting with their mentors only a few times or not at all over the course of the year, and 8% reported interacting with their mentor just once a month.

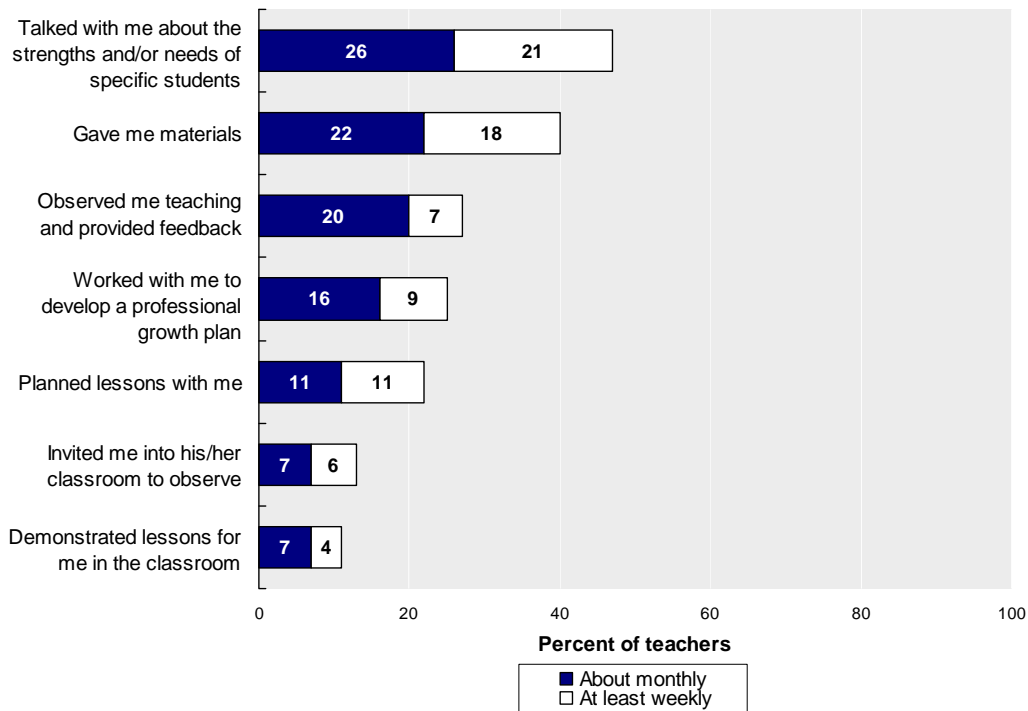
Exhibit 11
Frequency of Interactions with Mentors



The n is 626.

The most commonly occurring mentor activities included talking about the strengths and/or needs of specific students and providing new teachers with materials (see Exhibit 12). Other potentially beneficial mentoring activities occurred less frequently, with only 27% of new teachers reporting that their mentors observed them teaching and provided feedback, or worked with them to develop professional growth plans on a monthly or more frequent basis. Moreover, few new teachers had frequent opportunities to observe their mentors in their classrooms or to observe demonstration lessons given by their mentors.

Exhibit 12
Frequency of Mentoring Activities

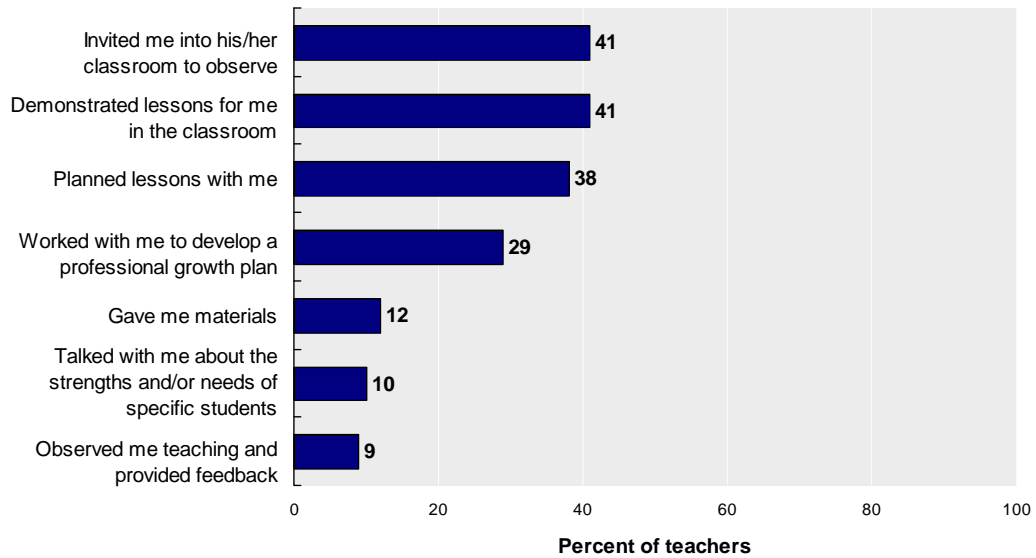


The range of n is 617-625.

Not only did very few new teachers report engaging in some mentor activities with any regular frequency, notable percentages of new teachers reported that they never engaged in these activities (see Exhibit 13). Forty-one percent of new teachers reported that they were never invited to observe their mentors in the mentors’ classrooms, and 41% reported that their mentors never demonstrated a lesson.³ Thirty-eight percent reported that they never planned a lesson with their mentors, and 29% reported that they never worked with their mentor to develop a professional growth plan. The activity most beginning teachers experienced was having the mentor observe their teaching and provide feedback; yet as Exhibit 12 showed, only 27% of teachers engaged in this activity at least monthly.

³ Full-time release mentors do not have classrooms in which to invite a beginning teacher; they can, however, demonstrate lessons in the beginning teachers’ classrooms.

Exhibit 13
Percentage of Teachers Who Never Engaged in Specific Mentoring Activities



The range of n is 617-625.

Overall, the low levels of mentor activities help explain the weaker than expected contributions of induction to beginning teacher retention and efficacy. For policymakers, district leaders, and induction program directors, these findings suggest the need to clarify the expectations for mentor activities and ensure that they are met.

Full-time Release and Other Models

Recommendation 7

Provide adequate time for mentors and mentees to engage in useful activities

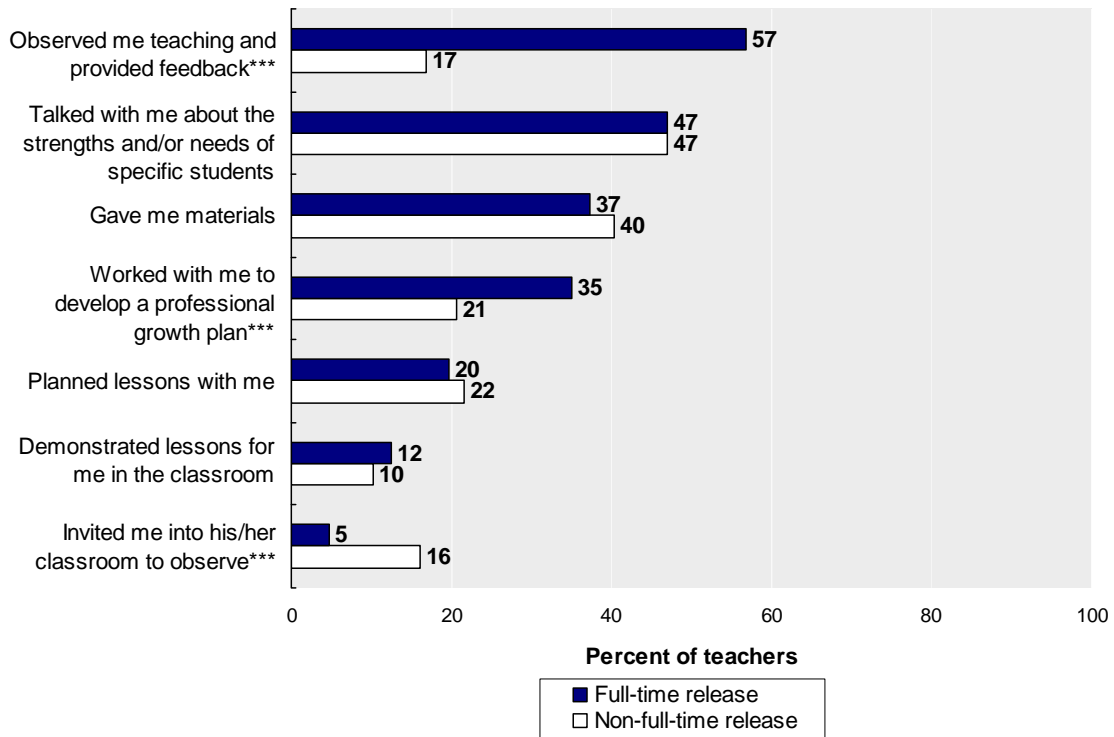
Induction programs that give beginning teachers and mentors designated time to meet with one another allow for more frequent and more valuable supports than programs that do not. Full-time release models are not always feasible and advantageous. However, beginning teachers in induction programs with full-time release models reported more frequent and more valuable supports from their mentors than teachers in programs that used full-time teachers as mentors. If a full-time release model is not possible, programs need to ensure that adequate resources are available to allow mentors and mentees the time to engage in useful activities.

The longstanding debate over how best to organize the mentoring component of induction programs often is framed as an argument between releasing teachers from their teaching duties to serve as mentors (i.e., full-time release models), versus using full-time teachers as mentors part time. Of the 16 programs included in the study, five had full-time release models. Our research suggests that the best model depends on local circumstances, but that designating time for mentors and mentees to meet and ensuring that they do are the critical elements.

As with non-full-time release models, there was variation in the frequency of mentoring both across and within full-time release models. For example, in Toledo, nearly all participants (97%) reported that their mentor observed them teaching and provided feedback at least monthly, compared to only 50% of participants in Chicago Area 14 and in Rockford. Twenty-two percent of participants in Chicago Area 14 reported that their mentor demonstrates lessons for them in the classroom compared to only 10% in Toledo and 6% in Rockford.

Comparing full-time release to non-full-time release models, participants in full-time release programs reported that their mentor engaged with them more frequently in two key types of activities: (1) observing the teacher teach and providing feedback, and (2) working with the teacher to develop a professional growth plan. Across other mentor activities, including demonstrating lessons, providing materials, planning lessons, and talking about the strengths and/or needs of specific students, the frequency with which these activities occurred was similar for the two types of programs. Participants in non-full-time release programs reported that their mentors invited them into the mentors' classrooms to observe more frequently than those in full-time release programs because full-time release mentors do not have their own classrooms. Exhibit 14 presents comparisons between the two models.

Exhibit 14
Percentage of Teachers Receiving Mentoring Support
About Monthly or At Least Weekly



*** Significant at the $p < .001$ level.
 The range of n is 617-625.

Although Exhibit 14 shows some clear advantages to full-time release models, especially the frequency of observations, few differences were found in other areas of mentor support. More importantly, the case studies revealed important contextual factors that may impede full-time release models. For example, in one district we found that full-time release mentors lacked the expertise to assist mentees who were working at grade levels and in disciplines that differed from those of the mentors. Moreover, finding an appropriate match was difficult, given the low number of mentors allowed under a full-time release model. One model is not necessarily more effective than another, but the important point is ensuring that mentors and mentees have designated times to meet and that they do meet.

Conclusion

In summary, the study found evidence that beginning teachers who worked in supportive school environments and who received strong induction program and mentoring support had better retention rates and greater confidence in their teaching abilities than beginning teachers in unsupportive schools and in weak induction and mentoring programs. Importantly, it is the combination of environment and program that pays the biggest dividends for new teachers. Further, the school environment and the induction program clearly do not operate in isolation; rather, their interaction affects outcomes for beginning teachers. As such, the induction of beginning teachers should be the responsibility of the entire school community, and induction programs must work to realize the full integration of the program and the school. When the induction of new teachers is relegated to an isolated program, the multiple sources of guidance and support needed to make beginning teachers effective are squandered.

This study was undertaken to identify program characteristics and practices that best help beginning teachers succeed. Ultimately, the analysis of the data pointed to a different conception of teacher induction—one that views induction as the full engagement of the district and the school in support of beginning teachers. Although policymakers would be wise to attend to the particulars of induction program design, mentor activities, and the differentiation of supports for the variety of beginning teachers, inattention to the school environment and whole-school responsibility for the success of new teachers is likely to undermine even the best-crafted program.

Because both Illinois and Ohio continue to work on their induction policies, additional research will be beneficial to policymakers as they review current policies and determine directions for the future. The next phase of research will explore further the induction supports provided to beginning teachers, the variation between and within programs, the influence of state policies on induction programs, and the influence of working conditions on teacher outcomes. It will be designed to understand the most promising program elements and the factors that support and impede strong induction.

Additionally, the next phase of research will include a more focused analysis of specific program elements. Specifically, it will include a cost analysis, analyzing the various sources districts use to fund programs to ascertain the real cost and benefit of induction. Also, it will include a focus on mentor selection and training. Further, it will include a refined analysis of outcomes. In addition to tracking retention from the very beginning of the school year, it will analyze student outcomes and relate them to teachers' induction experiences. In all, the next phase of research will be informative to both policymakers and program directors as they strive to develop the most promising induction programs for new teachers.

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