Induction and Mentoring in the Berkshires
MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Spring 2015 Convening (May 27th)

Overview: A unique partnership involving the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA), the Berkshire County Superintendents’ Roundtable, and the Berkshire Readiness Center has resulted in the delivery of both New Teacher Induction (NTI) and mentoring training. These aligned programs support new educators as they navigate their first year(s) by providing practical content, opportunities to engage with peers, and on-site mentoring. Both NTI and mentoring reflect ESE expectations for new teacher induction programming.

Goals: The program goals for NTI and mentoring are to:

1) Retain quality teachers;
2) Improve beginning teachers’ skills and performance;
3) Support teacher morale, communications, and collegiality;
4) Build a sense of professionalism, positive attitude;
5) Facilitate a seamless transition into the first year of teaching;
6) Put theory into practice;
7) Prevent teacher isolation; and
8) Build self-reflection skills.

A. New Teacher Induction (NTI):

Content and Timing: The program is delivered by faculty who include both practitioners and college teacher preparation faculty. New teachers participate in nine sessions, each three hours long, over the course a full academic year. The modules include a blend of specific classroom skills and an understanding of the context within which they work. Additionally, students learn about community resources. The nine modules (2014—2015 were):

Module 1: Introduction and Teach Like a Champ (September Session)
Module 2: Smart Goals, Evaluation and Accountability (October Session)
Module 3: Student Support Services (November Session)
Module 4: Deconstructing Standards and Accountability (December Session)
Module 5: Assessment and Data Use #1 (February Session)
Module 6: Assessment and Data Use #2 (March Session)
Module 7: Tiered System of Support (April Session)
Module 8: Teach Like a Champ #2 and year end review (May Session)
Module 9: Community Resources and Closing Reception (Optional)

Cost: Districts pay $400 per teacher. Students earn professional development points, but may seek to earn 3 graduate credits through MCLA. Students seeking this pathway work with MCLA faculty on additional reading and writing assignments, and pay the tuition difference.
B. Mentoring

Mentor programs help beginning teachers make a successful transition into teaching by relying on the expertise of veterans to provide a clinical, real world training process.

**Mentor training:** The Berkshire County Mentor Training Program is based on the work of the New Teacher Center in Santa Cruz California. This training provides collaborative professional development to help veteran teachers develop their mentoring skills with adult learners. The mentors learn how to translate their understanding of teaching and learning into strategies that help new teachers on their path towards instructional excellence. Mentors are provided with the tools and strategies that promote deep thinking and reflection about teaching practices. Specific topics include:

- Role of a mentor
- Characteristics of adult learners
- Analysis of teaching strategies
- Observation skills including observation protocols
- Strategies for conferencing and feedback
- Diagnosis and analysis of classroom management issues
- Problem solving skill development
- Design of portfolios and preparation for professional performance evaluation
- Reflective practice
- Use of student work to evaluate and inform practice
- Standards—based curriculum, instruction and assessment

**Timing:** Mentors participate in two full day training sessions (12 hours) and complete six additional hours of independent work.

**Mentoring of New Teachers:** Beginning teachers are then provided with trained mentors who understand teacher development and professional learning, and mentors are provided with ongoing support for the significant role they play in moving teacher practice from beginning to exemplary. This equips first year teachers to seek answers to questions as they arise; utilize performance evaluation for practice and growth; discuss, plan and participate in professional development; observe and conference with experienced teachers; share relevant experiences from previous teaching; design lessons and classroom instruction based on analysis of student work/need; ensure a successful first year.

**Cost:** Districts pay $300 per teacher. Districts vary on how they handle compensation for mentors and provide release time.

**Some lessons learned:**
- Have a project manager
- Provide value add (credits)
- Create through—line and faculty alignment (between modules as well as between NTI and mentoring programs)
- Build in time for group reflection and debriefing
- Consider released time during school day
- Regularly (formally and informally) collect feedback from students/faculty to inform content/program improvements
- Seek out input from superintendents, principals, and union representatives on program content and format
- Consider ways to scale into years 2---3

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