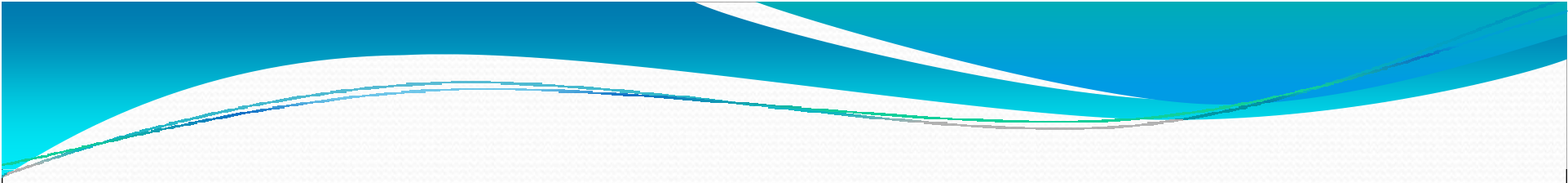# Teacher Retention Strategies and Initiatives

Dr. George Ann Rice

Personnel Improvement Center
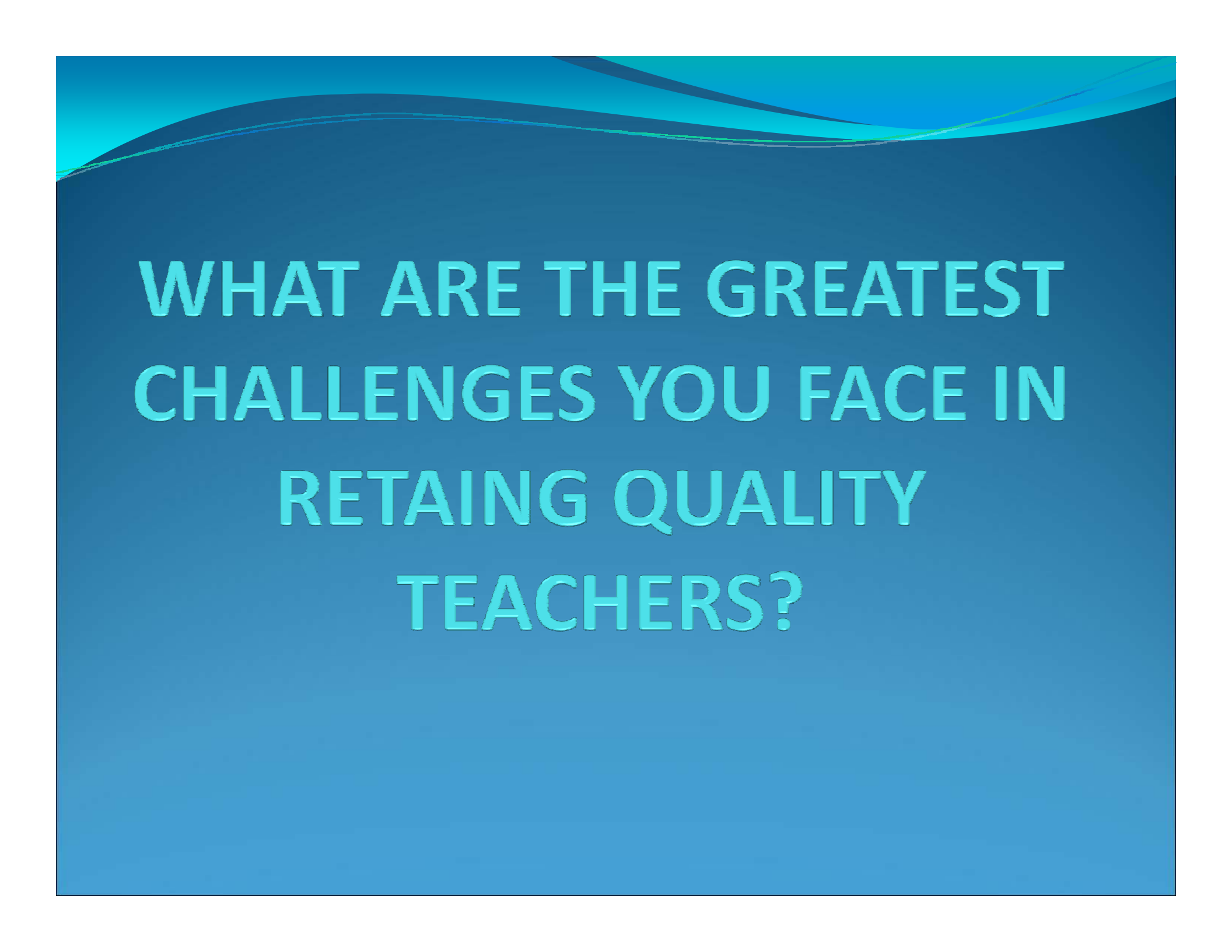
NASDSE

January 13, 2012

- Research shows that teacher quality is the single most critical factor in whether students achieve.

- We know that **40-50%** of public school teachers leave within the **first 5 years.**

CONSEQUENCES OF TEACHER TURNOVER

- Perpetuating Inequity
  - New teachers, who have yet to develop their skills and knowledge, are disproportionately assigned to the most challenging schools
  - These new teachers are less effective in helping students learn
- Loss of Highest Quality Teachers
  - The most promising teachers who leave
  - Teachers with highest scores on certification tests are twice as likely to leave as those with the lowest scores

More Consequences of Teacher Turnover

- Loss of Education Dollars
  - Houston estimates costs at $35 million
  - New York City estimates costs at $115 million
  - NCTAF estimates national cost if $7.3 billion each year
- Reduced School Capacity
  - Loss inhibits ability of schools to develop human capital, create strong instructional programs, and create educational environments where kids can thrive
  - High levels of turnover among best new teachers significantly impedes our efforts to provide a high-quality education for all kids
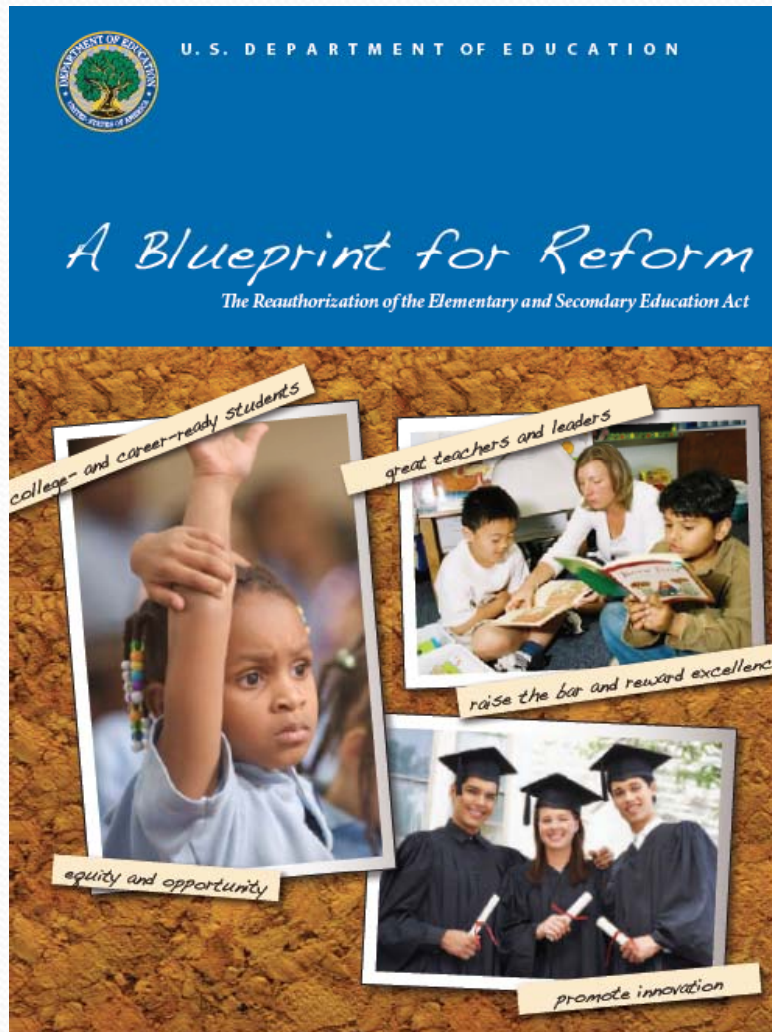
What are the primary practices that positively impact teacher retention?

- **Improving working conditions**

- Providing administrative support and leadership

- Implementing effective mentoring programs

- Providing high-quality professional learning on research-based strategies for improving student outcomes

ESEA Reauthorization Blueprint Calls for Survey Data on Conditions and Climate

Transparency of Data

- around the key indicators of whether students and schools have effective teachers and principals
- whether teachers have the professional supports they need (teacher survey data on levels of support and working conditions in schools)

States and districts also to collect other information about teaching & learning conditions & climate

- student, teacher and school leader attendance; disciplinary incidents;
- student, parent, or school staff surveys about their school experience

Working Conditions and Retention

- The Gallup Organization interviewed more than 2 million employees and found that the quality of relationships with immediate managers is the No. 1 predictor of whether an employee stays or leaves.

- There is a saying: "People are attracted to companies, but leave managers." Examine your relationship with your staff.

- How employees are treated by their supervisors is a "make or break" issue with respect to retention.

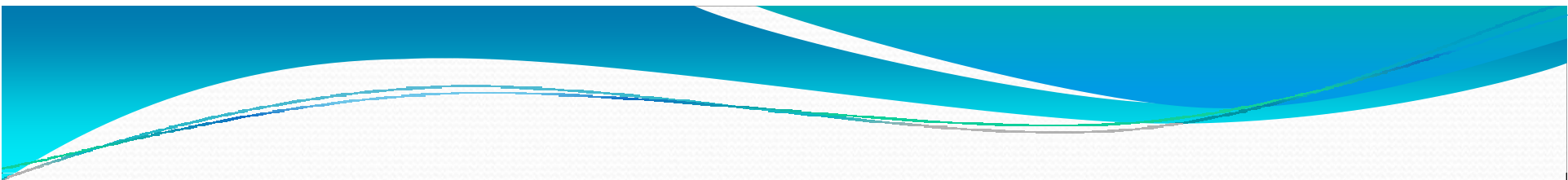- Key question is "How can I improve those working relationships?"

Working Conditions and Retention

- "Finally, our analysis of teacher mobility showed that salary affects mobility patterns less than do working conditions such as facilities, safety and quality of leadership." (Hanushek and Rivkin, 2007)

- "…working conditions factors, especially principal support, had more influence on simulated job choice than pay level, implying that money might be better spent to attract, retain or train better principals than to provide higher beginning salaries to teachers in schools with high-poverty or a high proportion of students of color." (Milanowski et al., 2009)

- A survey of 2,000 educators from California found that 28 percent of teachers who left the profession before retirement indicated that they would come back if improvements were made to teaching and learning conditions. (Futernick, 2007)

Steps to Improving Working Conditions

- Select your target population

- Use the information from surveys you have/or use a survey designed just for special education teachers

- Determine the highest priority issues related to special educators, by position and setting, if possible

- Ask for input from your teachers and staff on strategies for improvement in those areas—this is evidence of their value to the program and to you.

- Determine resources needed to provide improvements and implement changes

- Collect data on changes in survey results once the issues are being addressed

- All of this can be accomplished with tools such as Interest Based Problem Solving

What are the primary practices that positively impact teacher retention?

- Improving working conditions

- **Providing administration support and leadership**

- Implementing effective mentoring programs

- Providing high-quality professional learning on research based-strategies for improving student outcomes.

Administrative Supports: Improving New Special Educators' Experience in Schools

- Consider the applicant's match for the job
- Encourage a sense of belonging
- Create a learning culture
- Support inclusive and collaborative practices in schools
- Provide support with curriculum and materials
- Support school wide expectations for behavior
- Support new teachers' work with paraprofessionals
- Support role clarity
- Provide "protected" status

Source: Billingsley (2010) "Work Contexts Matter: Practical Considerations for Improving New Special Educators' Experiences in Schools." *JSEL. V23, N1.*
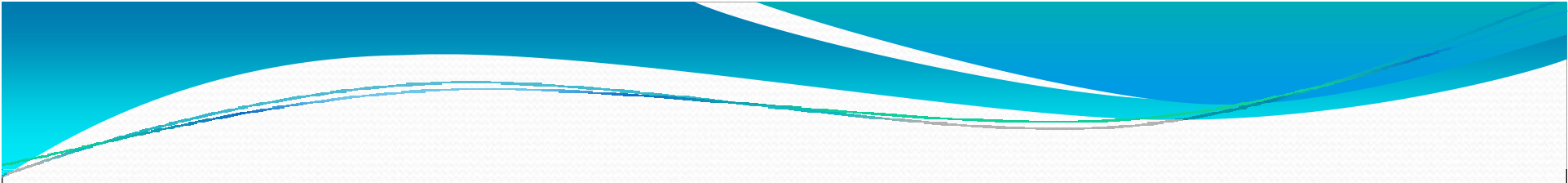
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

- Recent report by Wallace Foundation revealed leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school related factors that contribute to what students learn at school.

- Recent study analyzing teacher survey results found that teachers leaving because of job dissatisfaction, most often point to lack of administrative support and low salaries.

- Teachers from high minority, high poverty schools were even more likely to report that lack of administrative support was primary reason for leaving.
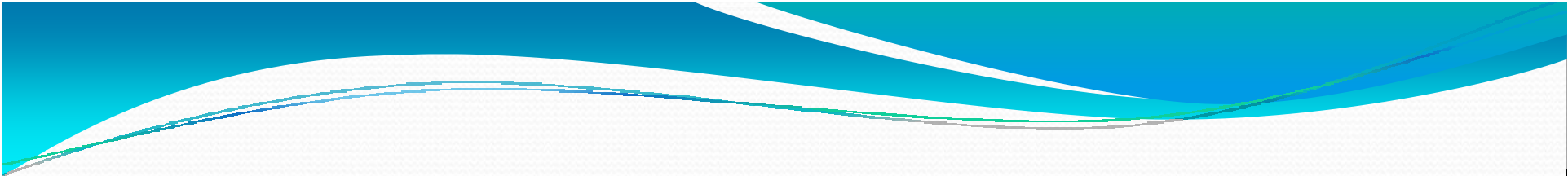
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create a system where principals have meaningful professional learning opportunities designed to impact their effectiveness as instructional leaders.

- Allow principals sufficient time for effective and ongoing communication with teachers.

- Ensure that evaluation systems, both formal and informal, provide feedback that informs practice and teachers' professional learning.

- Ensure that principals and other school personnel are effectively supporting teachers and responding to primary concerns that prohibit teachers from improving student learning. Teacher support should be accessible proactive, and collaborative.

- Celebrate successes.

What are the primary practices that positively impact teacher retention?

- Improving working conditions

- Providing administration support and leadership

- **Implementing effective mentoring programs**

- Providing high-quality professional learning on research-based strategies for improving student outcomes

- Two studies have shown that students, taught by teachers who have received comprehensive mentoring support for two years, show significantly greater learning gains than their peers who have teachers who have not received that support.

- Studies show new teachers in comprehensive mentoring programs are about as effective as more experienced peers despite generally being in more challenging classrooms.

HIGH-QUALITY MENTORING CAN:

- Reduce rate of new teacher attrition. Two studies have shown that 88 percent of new teachers remain in teaching after six years with effective mentoring; if we consider only leavers, the retention was 94 percent.

- Accelerate the professional growth of new teachers.

- Provide a positive return on the investment through reduced personnel costs and greater student learning gains.

Why a Special Education Specific Mentoring Program?

- **Attrition rates for special education teachers are twice the rate of general education teachers**.

- Many states hire between 25 to 50 percent more new special educators prepared through alternative preparation programs than those prepared through tradition programs.

- Considerably fewer new special education teachers are assigned mentors than general education teachers, due to lack of experienced job-alike professionals in their schools or even districts.

What are the Quality Indicators?

- Mentor selection-Job and disability/age level 'alike' matching.
- Common release time for mentors and mentees or 'dedicated' mentors
- Principal/peer support
- Accountability/impact
- Participant satisfaction and commitment
- Mentor training and support

Elements of Effective Mentoring Curriculum

- Developing Productive and Supporting Relationships
- Understanding Professional Standards
- Collecting and Analyzing Observation Data
- Using Formative Assessment Strategies
- Using Student Work/Data to Guide Instruction
- Creating Learning Opportunities for Adults
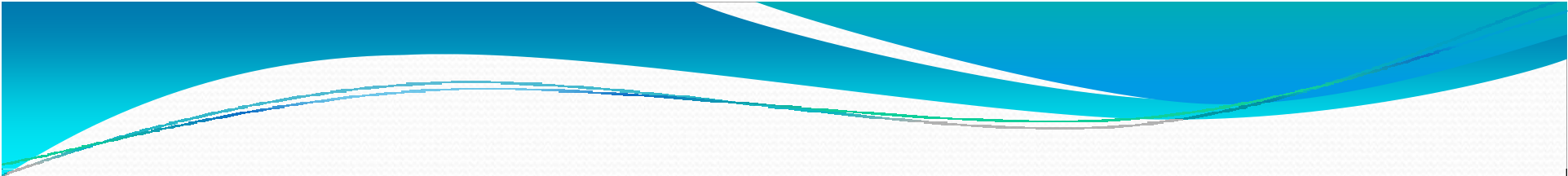- Building Leadership Capacity and Skills

Additional Components to Ensure Success

- Instructional coaching from an exemplar special educator with expertise in similar assignment- co-teaching, resource, self-contained.

- Content-specialist that can teach the novice teacher research-based instructional strategies that are *content*-specific.

- Opportunities to become a part of the school community--both personally and professionally

BEGIN RETENTION EFFORTS AS SOON AS HIRING DECISION IS MADE

- If possible, hire couples or friends
- Welcome Center
- Living Accommodations/ Room Mate Leads
- School Plan for Welcoming and Acclimating
- Community Day/Outside Interests
- Enlist Student Councils and PTAs
- Create a Mentoring Program
- Plan Social Events or Outings

- Help them become familiar with area
- Show genuine concern about issues of moving to a new area and/or starting a new job
- Help spouse find a job—involve community
- Appreciate surrounding area through sight seeing
- Take a bus route tour of areas from which students will come
- Ask family to come in to talk about family life and challenges they face
- Ask high school student council members to come in to talk about family life and challenges they face
- Ask community leaders to share traditions and culture

New Teacher Center's eMSS: e-Mentoring for Student Success
Program Models 2011-2012

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE:

Pre-service and New Teachers

- Access to a facilitated online community of practice.
- Specific content or exceptionality focused discussions
- Opportunities to ask questions and receive prompt feedback.
- $300 per year per teacher

INQUIRIES:

Professional Development for New Teachers

- Inquiries are a guided inquiry of practice focusing on pedagogy and/or content topics in special education.
- Application of practice directly to the classroom.
- Each beginning teacher receives individualized feedback
- $150 per Inquiry per teacher [fall, winter, spring]

COMPLETE PROGRAM:

Online Mentoring + Community + Inquiries

- **CONTENT FOCUSED MENTORING:** A highly qualified **online mentor.**
- **COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**
- **INQUIRIES:** Opportunity to engage in three (3) inquiries that focus on instruction
- $1200 per teacher per year

What are the primary practices that positively impact teacher retention?

- Improving working conditions

- Providing administration support and leadership

- Implementing effective induction and mentoring programs

- **Providing high-quality professional learning on research-based strategies for improving student outcomes**.

Professional Qualifications and Skills

- Teachers with a solid understanding of content and the ability to teach their respective subject effectively have the greatest impact on student achievement.

- Therefore, both the quality of their preparation programs and their professional learning opportunities after being hired are important for student achievement as well as **for job satisfaction and retention.**

We Must Work Closely With Our Preparation Partners

Preparation of effective teachers requires:

- More time during their preparation programs in actual K-12 classroom settings;

- Better preparation to manage behavior;

- Knowledge of assessment of student learning and a variety of methods and strategies to can match the ways their students learn; and

- Collaboration skills in working with other teachers.

IRIS Center Resources

- Research-based instructional strategies to prepare all teachers to improve results for students with disabilities.

- Uses adult learning research in developing modules, case studies, information briefs and activities in:

  - Math, Reading, RtI
  - Behavior/management
  - Data collection and usage
  - Assessment, including progress monitoring
  - Differentiated instruction
  - Learning strategies
  - Plus many other topics

IRIS Center Web Tour and Supports

- Free - funded by US DOE, OSEP
- All online
  - http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources.html
- Support from IRIS Center staff and online tutorials
- Join PIC state and local level communities of practice that are using IRIS for professional development and mentoring/coaching support:
  - GA
  - LA
  - NC
  - NV
  - OK
  - UT

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THESE IDEAS AND STRATEGIES?

- Develop an realistic action plan

- Monitor progress internally and with others

- Share successes with others

- Share challenges with others

- Be involved in continuous learning