
Cultivating Effective Teachers Through Evaluation And Support

*A Guide For Illinois Policymakers
And Educational Leaders*



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Preface

Like students, teachers also are learners. The best way to improve student learning is to strengthen the instructional practices of teachers through job-embedded professional development and instructional support. Evaluation systems have a critical role to play in informing this work, and the ones conceived in this spirit will be most likely to succeed. But evaluation can't get this job done alone—especially when it comes to new teachers.

Teacher evaluation must focus less on teachers and more on teaching. These policies and systems must not only measure teacher performance but also provide pathways to develop and improve teaching practice. A well-designed teacher evaluation system might better be termed a performance management system. Its primary intent is to deepen the impact of teaching. It does so as a critical component of an aligned system that provides embedded opportunities for teachers to continuously learn and improve. For beginning teachers, this should include targeted support and assistance to ensure that they become highly effective practitioners.

The singular desire of some policymakers to grade and rank teachers can distract from the more important task of improving individual and collective teacher performance. Even with that focus, states often “are only explicit about tying professional development plans to evaluation results if the evaluation results are bad.”¹ A related challenge is that many states have approached the overall design and implementation of evaluation policies narrowly. Janice Poda of the Council of Chief State School Officers describes state policy action on evaluation as occurring “in isolation” and suggests that states are “missing the boat” by not focusing on evaluation’s potential to improve instruction.² Some school districts, too, use evaluation data narrowly, focusing on dismissal as opposed to systemic instructional improvement.³

New Teacher Center (NTC) is engaged in this analysis out of a concern that emerging evaluation systems do not sufficiently prioritize teacher development, especially for those new to the profession. Evaluation is too often rhetorically framed and sometimes designed within state policy as the sole means to provide feedback to teachers—and only by way of the results of those evaluations. As the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality has argued, professional development must be “recognized as an integral part of the evaluation process itself.”⁴ While beginning teachers should be held to the same high teaching standards, state policies and local evaluation systems need to recognize their initial learning curve and distinct developmental phases—anticipation, survival, disillusionment, rejuvenation, and reflection.⁵

As states demand greater accountability for teaching performance, they are flagging in their commitment to develop and support our newest teachers. While large majorities of new teachers across the nation and within Illinois report receiving some mentoring assistance, the quality and breadth of this support varies widely.⁶ Research evidence indicates that new teachers can improve their classroom practices and sharpen their effectiveness if provided regular, structured, collaborative feedback on their instruction from a trained mentor or coach. In very few settings is such feedback and support provided with the necessary depth, frequency and timeliness to accelerate and enhance new teacher effectiveness.

As articulated in this Guide, NTC believes that evaluation alone cannot sufficiently inform and accelerate new teacher development. Teacher learning must be supported within a more comprehensive talent development system that includes the induction of beginning teachers. But overlooked amidst the din of evaluation reform is the fact that few states have policies to ensure that all beginning educators receive high-quality induction and mentoring assistance. In most settings, induction does not fulfill its potential as a vehicle for instructional improvement.

If evaluation systems are to have the desired impact on strengthening teaching, they will need to attend to teachers as learners. For new teachers, this must include an aligned program of high-quality induction, featuring regular contact with a mentor, regular classroom observation, on-going opportunities to engage in reflection and self assessment, and actionable, “real time” feedback that can inform instructional improvement throughout the school year.

If we help beginning teachers to benefit from job-embedded learning opportunities connected to these new evaluation systems, we will elevate their potential to grow professionally and teach their students. If we prioritize the learning-focused elements of evaluation, we will make the teaching profession a more attractive one for current and future generations of educators.

Executive Summary

Reform of educator evaluation, in Illinois and around the nation, is intended to more accurately identify effective and ineffective teachers and to inform teacher development. The reality is that more effort and attention has been focused on how to rate teachers within such systems than on how to design these systems to provide regular and useful feedback on teaching. If the 2010 Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) is to achieve its aims in Illinois, it must help teachers to learn and improve on the job.

For beginning teachers, the challenge is more pronounced. On average, new teachers are less effective than their more experienced peers. Improvements in individual teaching practices tend to occur during these early years in the classroom, when teachers are applying lessons learned during preparation and developing their own pedagogical approach. While beginning teachers should not be held to a different performance standard, they do require more intensive support and more frequent feedback to grow into highly effective practitioners. This is one reason why highly structured, intensive new teacher support is prized by beginning teachers—and strengthens their teaching.

If PERA is to accelerate new teacher effectiveness, beginning teachers in Illinois will require more feedback and support than what is provided by this law alone. An aligned system of high-quality induction—featuring regular contact with a mentor, frequent classroom observation, on-going opportunities to engage in reflection and self-assessment, and actionable, “real time” feedback to inform instructional improvement throughout the school year—would provide the necessary intensity of instructional support. To accomplish this, Illinois should design and articulate a comprehensive talent development system with teacher learning at its center.

Illinois is well-positioned to succeed. Its deep commitment to successful PERA design coupled with a gradual approach to implementation has put the state on the right track. Its existing induction program standards and new induction rules lend important tools to the effort to address the unique learning curve of beginning teachers.

This Guide explores how the state can solidify PERA’s role in informing and supporting new teacher development. In this effort, we have identified two main priorities for Illinois policymakers and PERA implementers.

- 1. Design a comprehensive educator effectiveness system that encompasses both evaluation and robust instructional feedback and support. For new teachers, this system must include induction support aligned with PERA’s evaluation requirements.**
- 2. Encourage and enable teacher leaders to serve as teacher mentors and as peer evaluators. Instructional improvement is a collective responsibility and is too critical and time-intensive an endeavor to leave solely to school administrators.**

Purpose

New Teacher Center (NTC) is a national non-profit organization that works to improve student learning by accelerating the effectiveness of new teachers and school leaders. NTC's work in Illinois began in 2005. With support from The Joyce Foundation, NTC informs state policy on teacher induction and mentoring, guides the development of induction program standards and program tools, leads a statewide induction program leadership network (with funding from the Grand Victoria Foundation), and provides induction support to new teachers in Chicago Public Schools.

Cultivating Effective Teachers Through Evaluation and Support: A Guide for Illinois Policymakers and Educational Leaders represents the extension of our work into the sphere of educator evaluation. The Guide focuses specifically on the how the developmental needs of beginning teachers are addressed within evaluation in the state of Illinois. Our primary goal is to ensure educator evaluation and aligned systems embed new teacher support and embrace an aggressive focus on continuous instructional improvement.

We seek to assess two primary questions:

- (1) Does the state's Performance Evaluation Reform Act provide sufficient, actionable feedback to strengthen new teachers' practices?
- (2) How can instructional feedback be provided to new teachers through evaluation systems as well as through aligned policy and program elements?

State policymakers and local implementers of the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) need guidance on how to thoughtfully construct evaluation systems—especially for new teachers. In this Guide, we will identify the supports and structures that give new teachers the best chance to accelerate their effectiveness and achieve successful evaluations under PERA.

Methodology

To determine whether Illinois is poised to grow effective teaching through its focus on teacher evaluation, we employed a number of strategies. First, we applied our knowledge of state policy on teacher induction and mentoring from our work in Illinois dating back to 2005. Second, we analyzed state laws, rules and guidance on teacher evaluation and new teacher induction. Third, we interviewed stakeholders within Illinois education and policy to glean their perspectives and recommendations. Fourth, we analyzed three U.S. school districts that have blended teacher evaluation with new teacher support—and interviewed program leaders in those settings. Fifth, we conducted a literature review of policy and academic research on teacher development, evaluation and induction. Our recommendations are shaped by our analysis of this information and the available evidence.

Developing and Supporting Beginning Teachers

Beginning educators represent a growing cadre within the teaching profession. In 1987-88, the modal, or most common, teacher in the United States had 15 years of experience; today, the typical teacher has spent just a single year in the classroom.⁷ In 2008, more than one-eighth of the Illinois teaching force had three years of experience or less—a cadre of new teachers likely to grow in coming years.⁸ We also know, nationally and in Illinois, as a result of inequitable teacher assignments and distribution, that low-income, lower-achieving students are most likely to be assigned a beginning teacher.⁹

NTC founder and CEO Ellen Moir has documented the phases of new teacher development.¹⁰ The first years of teaching are a distinct developmental phase that all new teachers must navigate. Classroom management, meeting the needs all of students including those with special needs, working with parents and families, and myriad teaching duties are most challenging when faced for the first time. It is easy to understand why new teachers need not just to be evaluated, but to benefit from a targeted and aligned set of supports. But new teachers' unique learning curves are seldom sufficiently addressed within the context of evaluation.¹¹

State policies to reform educator evaluation have generally left the relationship between new teacher support and these new systems undefined. Research shows that comprehensive induction programs accelerate teacher effectiveness, improve student learning and reduce teacher attrition. However, while 43 states currently require annual teacher evaluations¹², only 11 require the provision of induction and mentoring assistance for all first- and second-year teachers.¹³ This is why NTC believes that every state should require all first- and second-year educators to receive induction support aligned with these new evaluation requirements. This support must be universal and not reserved only for those who “fail” their evaluation. We believe that the provision of strategic support to new teachers alongside this heightened accountability will better enable them to thrive professionally and to help their students excel.

NTC Definition of Comprehensive, High-Quality Teacher Induction

- Multi-year assistance (for at least the first two years);
- Carefully selected, well-prepared, and systematically supported mentors who focus on instruction and student learning;
- Ongoing, standards-based formative assessment of new teachers' practice to guide learning experiences and professional goal setting;
- Sanctioned time for mentors and beginning teachers to work together, for mentors to conduct classroom observations, for beginning teachers' to observe master teachers;
- Professional development for new teachers geared toward district learning goals;
- Engaged principals who know how to create conditions that support teacher development;
- Program leadership collaboratively shared among all stakeholders, including district administration and union/association leaders;
- Strong alignment with other district goals that support teacher learning (i.e., evaluation, tenure, professional learning communities); and
- Impact data is used to track teacher progress and inform program improvement.

An investment in comprehensive teacher induction... will improve the effectiveness of a state's or district's teaching force.

The “greening” of the teaching force and the inequitable distribution of experienced teachers, coupled with the significant research evidence on supporting new teachers, suggests that an investment in comprehensive teacher induction—aligned with a state or district evaluation system—will improve the effectiveness of a state’s or district’s teaching force. Below we will analyze the importance of this assistance for beginning educators in Illinois who are facing the onset of new evaluations. Drawing upon this analysis and several national examples, we will suggest improvements that state policymakers and educational leaders in Illinois can make to PERA to ensure that the developmental needs of new teachers are met.

Illinois Background

Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA)

In 2010, Governor Pat Quinn signed the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA), which requires Illinois school districts to design and implement performance evaluation systems that assess teachers' (and principals') professional skills and incorporate measures of student growth. PERA requires that evaluations be based on standards of effective practice, with evaluators trained and pre-qualified to conduct observations, collect evidence and provide helpful, timely feedback. The law requires all educators to be rated using one of four performance categories: Excellent, Proficient, Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory. All beginning, non-tenured teachers (and all principals) must be evaluated annually. (In June 2011, a related law, known as Senate Bill 7 was enacted. S.B. 7 establishes, in part, a standard upon which educators may have their license suspended for incompetency, requirements for the filling of new and vacant positions, rules for the acquisition of tenure, and reductions in force and layoffs and recall rights.)

Illinois has taken a gradual approach to implementing teacher evaluation. [See Table 1] Most school districts must fully implement their new evaluation systems by either September 2015 or 2016. (Chicago Public Schools must complete its implementation in September 2012 or 2013.) Illinois stands in marked contrast to other states, such as neighboring Indiana which fully implemented its evaluation law in fall 2012.

Table 1. PERA Teacher Evaluation Implementation Timeline

<i>New Evaluation Systems¹⁴</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluators must be trained and pre-qualified in order to conduct evaluations using a new system. At least 300 Chicago public schools must begin evaluating teachers using a new system that incorporates student growth measures. Any school receiving federal School Improvement Grants must begin evaluating teachers using a new system that incorporates student growth measures. 	September 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All remaining Chicago public schools must evaluate teachers using a new system that incorporates student growth measures. 	September 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A research-based study of the effectiveness of school district evaluation systems will be completed. 	September 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lowest-performing 20% of school districts must begin using new teacher evaluation systems that incorporate student growth measures. 	September 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Illinois school districts must begin using new teacher evaluation systems that incorporate student growth measures. 	September 2016

Under PERA, Illinois school districts have two options for adopting a new system that incorporates student growth measures into teacher evaluations. A school district can develop its own system that meets minimum standards mandated by state rules or it can choose to use all or portions of a state-designed default model.

The Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) is charged with providing input from educators to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and monitoring PERA development and implementation. Among other responsibilities, PEAC has made recommendations to ISBE on rules for districts wanting to develop their own educator evaluation systems and for a statewide default model for teacher evaluation. However, PEAC recommended that the state’s teacher performance evaluation model should only address the student growth component. It currently does not include any elements on teacher observation or student feedback.

PERA rules do articulate general requirements for conducting classroom observations and collecting “evidence of professional practice” as part of the evaluation process.¹⁵ It requires three annual observations of untenured (new) teachers. Two of those must be formal observations and one may be informal. [See Table 2]

Table 2. PERA Rules for Classroom Observations and Collection of Evidence		
<i>Formal Observation</i>	<i>vs.</i>	<i>Informal Observation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for the acquisition of evidence of “the teacher’s planning, instructional delivery, and classroom management skills”. • Comprises a minimum of 45 minutes, a complete lesson, or an entire class period. • Must include both a pre-conference (to review the lesson plan) and post-conference (to discuss the evidence collected). • The evaluator must provide oral or written feedback to the teacher. • If any evidence gathered may result in a “needs improvement” or “unsatisfactory” rating, the teacher must be notified in writing. • Subsequently, the teacher must work with the evaluator or others “to identify areas for improvement.” 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not announced in advance. • Not subject to a minimum time requirement.

Illinois has customized Charlotte Danielson’s Framework for Teaching as the state’s default observation rubric¹⁶, although individual districts are able to choose a different tool. The Danielson Framework divides teaching into four domains—(1) Planning and Preparation, (2) Classroom Environment, (3) Instruction and (4) Professional Responsibilities—with 22 components and 76 elements. It allows teachers to be rated at four performance levels as required by PERA. Research has shown that such tools and rubrics “can effectively measure teacher effectiveness and provide teachers with feedback on the factors that matter for improving student learning.”¹⁷

PERA rules include robust requirements governing the training and competency of evaluators. They are required to be pre-qualified in order to conduct observations, collect evidence, and provide feedback to teachers. ISBE has contracted with the Consortium for Educational Change Partnership Group to provide high-quality evaluator training. The Illinois Performance Evaluation Growth Through Learning training and assessment was developed by this group with input from education stakeholder organizations throughout Illinois. As of January 7, 2013, 10,049 teacher evaluators had begun the required training, with approximately 90 percent having had completed 4 of the 5 required modules.¹⁸

Teacher Induction in Illinois

The last ten years have marked significant state policy activity on teacher induction and mentoring in Illinois. In 2002, a state law established a new teacher induction mandate but only “provided that funding is made available by the State Board of Education from an appropriation made for this purpose.” The authorized level of funding is \$1,200 per beginning teacher—a level of investment that the state has never come close to making.¹⁹

While state law continued to be marked by this dormant mandate, state funding of induction began in the 2006-07 school year²⁰, peaking as a \$10 million state grant program that supported more than 60 teacher induction and mentoring district-based and consortia programs during the 2008-09 school year. For the last two school years, the state has provided no dedicated funding to support beginning teachers. Illinois’ Race to the Top (RTT) grant, however, does include induction funding that supports new teachers in the 35 participating RTT districts.²¹

As the Illinois New Teacher Collaborative (INTC) has chronicled, state funding made a difference in the provision of instructional support to beginning teachers. State-funded programs were more likely to provide mentoring assistance to new teachers. This assistance continued even after the elimination of state funding, however at some cost. A 2012 INTC program survey found that new teachers in the formerly funded programs now received less professional development, and release time was no longer available for mentors and mentees during the school day. Further, survey respondents suggested that the previously funded programs were continuing to benefit from resources and talents developed during the period of funding—trained mentors, program coordinators, and supportive school principals. When these leaders leave the school community, will “the previously funded programs ... start to look far more like the never-funded programs or even revert to a buddy-style mentoring system?”²²

Since 2006, state education leaders and educators have worked to develop world-class induction program standards and an induction program continuum in Illinois. Approved by the Illinois State Teacher Certification Board in December 2008, the *Illinois Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Beginning Teacher Induction Programs*²³ set forth a clear framework to assist in the development of research-based induction programs that are responsive to local contexts. The Standards are broad and interdependent, describing a vision of a comprehensive and dynamic program for beginning teachers and those who support them. They provide a research-based foundation to guide and support development, design and delivery of high quality, effective induction programs. Specifically, the Standards are comprised of nine elements: (1) Induction Program Leadership, Administration, and Support; (2) Program Goals and Design; (3) Resources; (4) Site

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Administrator Roles and Responsibilities; (5) Mentor Selection and Assignment; (6) Mentor Professional Development; (7) Development of Beginning Teacher Practice; (8) Formative Assessment; and (9) Program Evaluation.

These induction standards have been embraced by ISBE in two specific ways. First, the 35 participating RTT districts are required to implement standards-based teacher induction programs. Second, the Standards form the heart of a recent ISBE-led effort to revise the state's induction and mentoring program rules, ensuring that future state grant funding would flow only to programs that adhere to quality standards. These new rules were adopted by ISBE in October 2012.²⁴

The typical absence of articulation between induction and evaluation made suggested next steps easy to envision.

The *Illinois Induction Program Continuum*, first offered as guidance by ISBE in February 2010, is a companion document to the Standards that describes program development across multiple levels.²⁵ The developmental Continuum is designed to provide a common language to describe and discuss program development and ongoing improvement, assist induction program leaders to collaboratively design, implement, and assess the quality and effectiveness of their programs, and assist program leaders in setting clear, evidence-based goals and planning for program development and improvement.

The impact of these policy tools has been severely blunted by the dormancy of the state induction requirement and the absence of state funding, however. With limited exceptions, these standards and tools serve mainly as guidance, unfamiliar to many school districts across the state.

What Illinois Education Leaders Say

In the course of preparing this Guide, the authors conducted interviews with more than two dozen educational stakeholders in Illinois, including educators, district program leaders, policy advocates, union leaders, and researchers. Two consistent messages we received were: (1) the connection between teacher evaluation and induction is rarely considered or made; and (2) the needs of new teachers are not systematically factored into the design of evaluation systems. In one sense, these consistent responses made our work difficult in that we were unable to elicit many answers to the topics we were exploring. In another sense, the typical absence of articulation between induction and evaluation made suggested next steps easy to envision.

Everyone we spoke with agrees that Illinois has not fashioned induction as a central component of a statewide educator effectiveness system. Few Illinois policymakers and school leaders have aligned induction with evaluation or factored new teacher needs into evaluation system design. Unlike states including Colorado²⁶, Oregon²⁷ and Vermont²⁸, the state of Illinois has not formally positioned induction as a key lever to develop educator talent. While Illinois does not have an active induction requirement in law, ISBE has prioritized induction in state budget requests and in its federal Race to the Top application.

Most Illinois school district leaders look upon induction as completely separate from evaluation. One respondent drew a parallel between induction and school improvement plans in this regard. Like making school improvement part of the collective work of schools and not the sole work of a dedicated school improvement office within a district, induction needs to become an integral part of teacher development and evaluation within Illinois schools.

In the spring and summer of 2012, the Consortium of Chicago Schools Research (CCSR) and the Illinois Education Research Council (IERC) explored how Illinois school districts were approaching the design and implementation of new teacher evaluation systems. Researchers collected data from respondents in five school districts in Illinois: School District U-46 (Elgin), Evanston/Skokie CC School District 65 (Evanston), Niles Township High School District 219 (Niles), Olympia CUSD 16 (Olympia), and Sandoval CUSD 501 (Sandoval). Their report found that these existing systems were working as designed to pinpoint teachers' weaknesses, but they were less successful at helping transform those weaknesses into strengths. That is liable to be a continuing challenge as Illinois districts design and implement brand-new evaluation structures. Many of the teachers they interviewed expressed concern that the present policy focus on "accountability rather than improvement" could have a harmful effect on these districts' existing systems and threaten the "promise" of new systems across the state.²⁹

With our specific focus on new teachers, two school districts from the CCSR/IERC report are worth mentioning. First, Elgin's existing teacher mentoring program birthed its evaluation system.³⁰ Mentor program leaders provided the catalyst in reforming the district's evaluation system once they realized the misalignment between it and the teacher-mentoring program. "By moving to a teacher appraisal system that was also based on Danielson's Framework, they were able to leverage the knowledge and skills developed through the mentoring program to bolster their capacity to implement teacher evaluation reform—the performance standards were already accepted by a large proportion of the district's teachers, and a cadre of capable evaluators had already been established."³¹ Elgin phased in its new evaluation system through voluntary participation, beginning in 2008. By fall 2012, the new system was fully implemented district-wide.

Niles managed to increase the number of classroom observations and alleviate the burden on principals by hiring additional evaluators within its new system. It first adopted a peer assistance and review (PAR) approach to evaluation in the 2011-2012 school year. Every first- and second-year teacher in the district is observed eight to 12 times per year. By funding two consulting teachers to observe and support new teachers, the PAR program in Niles "has helped observers feel much less overwhelmed by their caseloads." New teachers are also assigned a mentor from their department for additional instructional support. In 2012-2013, the PAR program has expanded to focus on veteran teachers in need of improvement, and it has grown to include four full-time consulting teachers.³²

Whether new teachers should be treated differently within evaluation systems was a topic that came up frequently in our interviews with educators and induction program leaders. All agreed that new teachers should be held to the same teaching standards. But they also reported that at least two Illinois school districts (Chicago and Elgin) approach the evaluation of new teachers differently than experienced teachers. While districts tend to differentiate new teacher needs on the process/support side, these two districts are differentiating on the evaluation side among components within the four domains of the Danielson Framework. In practice, these districts are employing a "scaling up" approach to new teacher evaluation, identifying critical building blocks within the Domains. In Elgin, for instance, a "first things first" prioritization is made among teaching abilities. If a first-year teacher is struggling with something as basic as organizing her classroom for learning, the evaluator and support provider won't immediately worry about evaluating that teacher on higher-order teaching skills. "High frequency" mentoring is used to focus support

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on those foundational teaching elements. By the end of a teacher's second year in Elgin, all 22 related Danielson components are evaluated.

Another trend that emerged from our interviews was the challenge of distinguishing teacher feedback that flows from formal observations and evaluations from feedback that is formative in nature. Many induction programs have traditionally aspired to "firewall" mentor-driven formative assessment of new teachers from the evaluation process. Many mentors suggest that removing confidentiality requirements around their work would reduce the number of educators interested in performing that role and would "change the trust factor" that provides the glue in a strong mentoring relationship.

School districts can create alignment between evaluator priorities and coaching priorities by using the Danielson Framework to guide what that means for individual teacher evaluation, self-assessment and mentoring. This necessitates a system of open communication between mentors and evaluators, although not a blurring of their non-evaluative and evaluative roles necessarily. It also requires a shared protocol for assessing teaching shared by the induction program and the evaluation system. This then allows for common training for both evaluators and mentors, something that is done in at least one of the school districts we spoke with. This connection gives the evaluator the option of relying on the mentor teacher as the primary new teacher coach, allowing the evaluator to focus on conducting more classroom observations.

Concern was raised among some respondents about the composition of educators receiving the required PERA evaluator certification training within Illinois.

Concern was raised among some respondents about the composition of educators receiving the required PERA evaluator certification training within Illinois. In many districts, only building principals and district administrators are becoming pre-qualified. Research on the importance of multiple observers—including that emanating from the Gates Foundation's Measure of Effective Teaching (MET) Project—and the helpful role that peers can play, raises concerns about the depth of classroom observations, the accuracy of observational ratings and quality of subsequent feedback from any single observer or evaluator. One interviewee suggested that the state's policy regarding the availability and financing of the training (provided to one administrator per school building) was driving districts' decision to certify only administrators as evaluators. Districts must pay to send more educators through the state training. It likely is a cost worth paying, but the state may be able to do more to encourage or incentivize that practice.

Is Illinois Supporting Its Beginning Teachers?

Perhaps more than any other group, new teachers will be most greatly impacted by PERA and S.B. 7 in Illinois. A critical success factor in the implementation of these evaluation systems in the state's 879 school districts will be whether beginning teachers find them to be credible, reliable and supportive. Illinois teachers say that they want and need evaluation systems that: accurately and consistently measure teaching performance and distinguish between high and low levels of performance; and are genuinely designed to improve their teaching practice and provide individualized feedback and assistance.³³ If teachers embrace these systems, evaluation can help to transform the prevailing culture of teaching to emphasize continuous improvement and the recognition of teaching excellence.

While the political appetite for greater teacher accountability in Illinois may be satiated, the more difficult work of supporting and developing teachers within these new frameworks is underway. As evaluation rolls out, new teacher induction in Illinois today is at a crossroads. While the state is requiring greater accountability for classroom performance, it has simultaneously flagged in its commitment to fund the development and support of its newest teachers. Not only has Illinois eliminated the dedicated appropriation for teacher induction (that existed from 2006 to 2011), it also is not among the ranks of 27 states that require all beginning teachers to receive mentoring assistance, during at least their first year.³⁴

The most curious element of Illinois state law on teacher induction is how it has been structured to avoid becoming an “unfunded mandate.” Induction is required for new teachers under state law only if the state provides funding at a level of \$1,200 per beginning teacher—something it has never done in the ten years the law has been on the books. In practice, Illinois state policy deems induction as a desirable, but optional, activity. Teacher evaluation is treated differently. No such “trigger” is built into the state’s PERA law. School districts must evaluate educators even though no dedicated state funding is provided. This inconsistency in the state’s policy approach to the closely related endeavors of teacher evaluation and new teacher induction is troubling.

As a result, induction support is widely variable, if present at all, in Illinois’ districts and schools. Many new teachers are increasingly left to “sink or swim.” In Chicago, where NTC has worked since 2006, PERA evaluations are required of new, non-tenured teachers this school year. However, a confluence of events—the elimination of state funding, the lack of a state policy requirement for induction support, the local teachers’ strike—collectively resulted in a failure to assign mentors to new Chicago teachers until later in the school year. A similar dynamic could play out in other Illinois school districts where evaluation systems take root alongside a missing or insufficient new teacher support infrastructure—even where it once existed.

Some policymakers and policy advocates describe evaluation as the means for providing feedback and support to teachers. But research and practice (detailed in the following sections) strongly suggests that evaluation and induction should be connected within an aligned educator effectiveness system. At present in Illinois, it is clear that teacher induction is not fulfilling its potential as a vehicle for instructional improvement and is not explicitly envisioned as a key element of the state’s approach to strengthening educator effectiveness and student performance. That will need to change.

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Lessons from Research and Practice

What The Evidence Suggests About Evaluation

Evaluation is generally described as having two primary purposes: (1) measuring teacher performance; and (2) providing individualized feedback and support to strengthen teaching. This notion is neatly encapsulated in the title of a 2012 policy paper written by Craig Jerald for the Center for American Progress: *Movin' It and Improvin' It!* Jerald writes that *movin'-it* strategies treat an individual teacher's effectiveness as "a fixed attribute at any given point in time, using personnel policies such as effectiveness-based layoffs to move individuals with lower effectiveness out of teaching." *Improvin'-it* policies, on the other hand, treat teachers' effectiveness as "a mutable trait that can be improved with time." The idea of providing teachers with individualized, evaluative feedback is clearly an *improvin'-it* strategy.³⁵

This leads us to two specific questions. First, do evaluation systems provide sufficiently frequent and actionable feedback to inform changes in beginning teachers' practice? Second, is instructional feedback solely the realm of evaluation, or should it occur through other aligned systems and processes?

As a starting point, an evaluation system must be designed and implemented well to inform teacher learning and strengthen classroom teaching. It should be tied to standards and ensure that teacher performance is assessed against those standards. It should be informed by data from a variety of sources, including measures of student learning and growth. And it must be a priority within the district, with dedicated time, training, and support provided to evaluators. Further, systems that help teachers improve use multiple classroom observations conducted by trained evaluators looking at multiple sources of data to provide timely feedback to the teacher.³⁶

Where the dialogue on teacher evaluation has moved from "gotcha" to "growth", teachers have warmed to the idea of evaluation, provided that it is built to support teacher learning, based upon multiple measures, and conducted by evaluators who have had the necessary professional development to ensure fairness and objectivity. Illinois has addressed these areas of evaluation well.

Evidence from research suggests that effective evaluation must be nested within an aligned system of educator development and support. Three existing evaluation models from around the nation (Hillsborough County Public Schools (Florida), Montgomery County Public Schools (Maryland), and Pleasanton Unified School District (California)—highlighted throughout this section and in the Appendix of this Guide—illuminate this approach in practice. Such a system should include opportunities for ongoing conversations among teachers, peers, evaluators, instructional coaches and mentors about professional performance, data, and improvement.³⁷

Where the dialogue on teacher evaluation has moved from "gotcha" to "growth", teachers have warmed to the idea of evaluation.

Evaluation is most effective when it is integrated with other processes that support professional growth.³⁸ The overall system needs to provide individuals teachers the opportunity to analyze both the process and impact on their instruction and make modifications based on that analysis.³⁹ What teachers say they want is less the evaluative rating than actionable feedback on their practice. A commitment to educators' ongoing learning, including the creation of personalized professional learning plans, should be demonstrated by evaluation structures. These plans should point teachers toward specific and highly relevant learning opportunities that allow them to address areas of instruction that need improvement. This will only happen when those responsible for evaluating, coaching, and mentoring teachers and principals are trained in the art of providing meaningful, developmental feedback, encouraging reflection, and creating opportunities for professional growth.⁴⁰

If designed as part of a broader system, “feedback, instruction, reflection, and mentoring activities move development from a one-time or infrequent event to continuing growth.”⁴¹ It is critical that districts build these principles and structures into their evaluation systems because, when it comes down to it, a district’s teacher evaluation system will succeed or fail based on its ability to improve teaching.

The latest research from the Gates Foundation’s Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Project outlines some useful lessons for evaluation system design.⁴² For the focus of this Guide, two specific findings stand out. First, the MET Project suggests that teachers should be observed at least four times per year. Illinois comes close to this standard with its three required annual observations (two formal, one informal) of non-tenured, beginning teachers. Teacher induction research, however, suggests that more “frequent” observations of the new teacher’s classroom—as well as opportunities to observe veteran or exemplary teachers—is necessary to improve beginning teachers’ practice.⁴³

A focus on growth in two of the model districts

Montgomery – The Teacher Professional Growth System focuses on the continuous improvement of teachers. Two key components of the program are: a multi-year professional growth cycle that incorporates continual reflection; and professional development years that incorporate individual growth plans into school plans.

Pleasanton – The Assessment and Professional Development System assesses teachers to determine where they are on the Continuum of Teacher Development and provide them the support to move along the continuum.

Number of observations in the model districts

Hillsborough – Swap mentors (expert teachers serving as evaluators) observe new teachers 3 times a year. School principals conduct 3 additional observations per year for a total of 6 annual observations used for evaluation purposes. Additionally, full-time mentors visit new teachers regularly solely for the purpose of providing support and mentorship. A teacher’s planning period is often used for mentoring during the school day.

Montgomery – For new teachers, administrators conduct a least 2 formal observations per year and consulting teachers conduct at least 3, adding to at least 5 formal observations used for evaluation. Each formal observation must be at least 30 minutes. Teachers are often observed more times than the minimum requirement for the purpose of providing them instructional support.

Pleasanton – New teachers and other teachers in the Administrative-Mandated evaluation are observed no more than 3 times a year by an administrator. Additionally, induction coaches conduct observations, model lessons, and provide support in planning, problem solving, and reflecting multiple times a month.

Observers in the model districts

Hillsborough – Observations are conducted by “swap” mentors, school principals and assistant principals. Mentors may conduct additional observations for the purpose of mentoring.

Montgomery – Observations are conducted by school administrators, qualified observers, and consulting teachers.

Pleasanton – School principals conduct observations of elementary teachers and school principal or assistant principals conduct observations of secondary teachers. Induction coaches conduct additional observations for coaching purposes.

The Gates research also suggests that more than one observer should evaluate each teacher.⁴⁴ While PERA does not preclude the utilization of multiple observers, in practice it would appear that principals and administrators are poised to do most, if not all, of the heavy lifting in Illinois districts.

Post-observation conferences provide the needed context and concrete feedback to inform teacher learning following observations. Teachers and evaluators

should end these conversations with a shared understanding of short-term improvement goals for the teacher and a plan for how the evaluator, instructional coaches, mentors and the overall system will support the teacher in achieving them. At the end of the year, if an individual teacher is surprised by his or her performance

rating and learns about areas that need improvement for the first time, the system has failed. Evaluation cannot become an autopsy of one’s teaching when the school year is over. Evaluation must be constructed as part of a system to maximize individual and collective performance. It must be built as an endeavor that can inform improvements to teaching practice in real time.

Post-observation conferences in the model districts

Hillsborough – Each observation is followed by a post-observation conference in which evaluators help the teachers reflect on the instruction that was observed.

Montgomery – All formal observations must be followed by a post-observation conference.

Pleasanton – All observations must be followed by a post-observation conference within 3 days. A written report is due within 10 days after the conference to provide teachers two opportunities to reflect on one observation.

It is critical then that evaluators be trained not only in observing teaching, but also in conducting purposeful coaching conversations. These conversations cannot be soliloquies, but must provide space for both the observer’s and the teacher’s voice.⁴⁵ High-quality, on-going feedback is the key resource for novice performers to become proficient and effective. Policymakers and education leaders should take concrete steps to ensure that observers can accurately judge classroom lessons in order to provide accurate feedback, know what high-quality feedback looks like, understand the “theory of action” on how feedback helps teachers grow, and provide the kind of feedback and “cognitive coaching” that improves measured effectiveness.⁴⁶

Detailed feedback after infrequent, full-lesson observations may be a “weak lever” for improving teacher performance.⁴⁷ Such an approach to teacher observation creates a huge workload for administrators and leaves less time for informal classroom visits and other interactions with teachers. Plus, administrators—even those trained as skilled evaluators—don’t always possess the full wisdom about effective teaching, especially when it comes to subject-specific pedagogy. The National Comprehensive Center on Teacher Quality’s *Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Teacher Evaluation Systems* suggests that “trained

evaluators with knowledge of specialist roles and subject-matter competence may be seen as more credible and pick up on nuances in instruction that other raters would miss.”⁴⁸

Illinois may be missing the mark by minimizing the respective roles of informal observations in PERA and by not requiring induction programs that provide formative assessment opportunities for all new teachers. Important benefits derive from unscheduled, informal, or “pop in” visits to teachers’ classrooms, the main one being the feedback that a teacher receives from more frequent observations and interactions. Concerns that teachers can “game” the evaluation process by showing their best face during scheduled observations may be overstated however. In fact, a 2011 Consortium of Chicago Schools Research report on teacher evaluation in Chicago Public Schools found that “the extra care that teachers put into lesson planning for a scheduled observation may result in better classroom management, but not necessarily better instruction.”⁴⁹

This analysis of the policy and research literature strongly suggests that the frequency of structured (and informal) observations and pre- and post-conferences required by PERA is insufficient to meet the developmental needs of beginning teachers. A 2010 report (The Status of Professional Development in the United States) by the National Staff Development Council and the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education shows that “sustained and intensive professional development for teachers is related to student achievement and gains.”⁵⁰ Such structured support is most impactful for beginning teachers.

The evidence demonstrates that comprehensive induction programs accelerate the effectiveness of beginning teachers.

What The Evidence Suggests About Induction

Research tells us that, on average, beginning teachers are less effective than their more veteran colleagues.⁵¹ Improvements in individual teaching practices tend to occur during these early years in the classroom, when teachers are applying lessons learned during preparation and developing their own pedagogical approach and style. In fact, research suggests that most learning about instruction through mentoring happens during the second and third years of teaching.⁵² The evidence also demonstrates that comprehensive induction programs accelerate the effectiveness of beginning teachers. A federally funded, randomized controlled trial found that new teachers who received two years of comprehensive induction support produced greater student learning gains in mathematics and reading compared with peers who were provided prevailing, less intensive support.⁵³

In order to have such impact, induction must have a number of key characteristics. A review of the research demonstrates positive impact (on teacher commitment and retention, teacher classroom instructional practices, and student achievement) of teacher induction programs that utilize “bundles or packages of multiple induction components,” including elements such as a multi-year program, working with a mentor, common planning time with other teachers, ongoing communication and support from school leaders, and a reduced teaching load.⁵⁴

Release time for mentors/coaches in the model districts

Hillsborough – In the 2012-13 school year, 84 carefully selected teachers are released from classroom duties to serve as full-time mentors and evaluators.

Montgomery – In the 2012-13 school year, 29 expert teachers were released from classroom duties to serve as full-time consulting teachers.

Pleasanton – In the current school year, the district’s program has an equivalent of 7 full-time coaches, 1 director, and 1 secretary.

evaluations found a positive impact on teacher retention and student achievement from induction programs that featured weekly mentor contact equivalent to about one hour per week.⁵⁶ A 2007 cost-benefit study found a positive return on investment from a comprehensive induction program that included weekly mentor contact of at least two hours.⁵⁷ Research also shows benefits that accrue from mentor release time from classroom duties.⁵⁸ For example, a 2009 study demonstrated greater student achievement gains among the students of beginning teachers supported by full-time mentors.⁵⁹ There is a danger that such impacts will not materialize if beginning teachers are not provided such continuous, sustained support from a qualified mentor with time to do his or her job.

While data indicate that the frequency of mentoring has expanded markedly over the last twenty years, the quality of the support provided remains disparate. The percentage of first-year teachers reporting that they have been assigned a mentor teacher has doubled from about 40 percent in 1990 to almost 80 percent in 2011.⁶⁰ However, only one percent of beginning teachers currently receive the ongoing training and support that constitutes comprehensive induction.⁶¹

Training and support for evaluators, mentors and coaches in the model districts

Hillsborough – Mentors are trained to be evaluators and to serve as mentors. To serve as evaluators they receive 4 days of classroom training and 2 days of 1-on-1 training in the field. The district has partnered with the New Teacher Center to provide mentor training that consists of 3-day academies 4 times a year. Additionally, mentors participate in forums 1-4 times a month.

Montgomery – Consulting teachers and other qualified observers must complete two 6-day courses. The courses focus on conducting observations, strategies for providing feedback, and the use of multiple sources of data for evaluation. Additionally, consulting teachers meet regularly in small learning communities to reflect on their work with the teachers they support.

Pleasanton – Training for induction coaches is based on the New Teacher Center’s mentor training. Induction coaches also meet in small learning communities for 4 hours every other week to work on problem posing, problem solving, reflect on data of the teachers they support, and share best practices for mentoring.

Mentoring time is a critical variable in the success of teacher induction programs, both the frequency and amount of mentoring time as well as the provision of release time to mentor teachers. In the above-mentioned federal evaluation, first- and second-year teachers in the treatment group in the study received, on average, 85 minutes per week of contact with a mentor.⁵⁵ Numerous studies and

To strengthen beginning teachers’ instructional practices, mentors must focus on more than simply providing emotional or logistical support. Unfortunately, many have never been asked, given sufficient time, or trained to perform the role of an instructional mentor. Where such mentors exist, they focus their support on teaching and learning. They have a clear picture of effective teaching, are able to talk about best pedagogical practice and content, balance beginning teachers’ immediate concerns and long term growth, and collaboratively build inquiry and reflection as a part of best practice.⁶²

Formative assessment is another key component in induction.⁶³ It is ongoing, responsive to teacher developmental needs, collaborative, aligned with professional teaching standards, and based on multiple data sources.⁶⁴ Valuable summative assessment has similar characteristics. Often, formative assessment systems within induction programs are separate from district evaluation systems. There are a number of ways, however, that principals and mentors can integrate these two forms of teacher assessment. First, they can align professional goal setting by mirroring the process in the district's induction program and evaluation system. Second, principals can assess beginning teacher growth and effectiveness through both summative (high-stakes evaluation) as well as formative means.

The power of formative assessment, once recognized and supported, can serve as an important tool for ongoing learning to improve teacher effectiveness and accelerate growth. Regular classroom visits focused on individual teacher goals and sanctioned time for self-assessment, send the message of the district's commitment to effective instruction and optimal learning for all students.⁶⁵

One key to aligning evaluation and professional development is identifying concrete points of articulation that allow one area to support and reinforce the other.⁶⁶ Results from evaluation can be used to plan professional-development activities for groups of teachers and to tailor professional development to individual teachers. For example, if new teachers in a given school or district are collectively struggling with differentiating instruction, there is then an opportunity to design professional development around that need. Likewise, if an individual special education teacher has a content-specific professional learning need, an expert mentor or instructional coach can focus on that, as directed by an individualized learning plan initiated within the evaluation system.

Alignment of goals between evaluation and induction in the model districts

Hillsborough – The district has a PAR program for veteran teachers and an induction program for new teachers where mentors also serve as evaluators. To evaluate, mentors “swap” mentees three times a year. Because mentors also serve as evaluators, they are more acutely aware of the evaluation system and are better able to help new teachers develop toward the goals and expectations of the evaluation. It is up to new teachers to communicate outcomes of their evaluation to their mentor.

Montgomery – The district has a PAR program where consulting teachers support and evaluate new teachers. Consulting teachers develop a Summative Report and an administrator develops a separate Evaluation Report creating checks and balances to the system. The two sets of data inform the recommendation made by a separate panel (PAR Panel) to the superintendent regarding a teacher's contract renewal, need for continued assistance, or termination.

Pleasanton – School principals are responsible for teacher evaluation while induction coaches support new teachers. There are predetermined expectations for teachers in their first and second year. Coaches help new teachers work toward meeting those expectations and administrators evaluate the teachers' performance on the same set of expectations.

Expectations for new teachers in the model districts

Hillsborough – New teachers are held to the same standards as all other teachers, but are supported through an intensive induction program.

Montgomery – New teachers are held to the same standards as all other teachers, but are supported by a peer assistance and review program.

Pleasanton – While new teachers are held to the same standards as all teachers, the induction program focuses the first year on pedagogy and the second year on universal access (English language learners and special populations).

three years in the classroom—the time when the greatest amount of improvement typically occurs. This will allow for an easy assessment of an early-career teacher’s development trajectory, so that school leaders can determine whether the teacher is on track to meet the district’s ultimate expectations within a reasonable amount of time.”⁶⁷

We must hold beginning teachers to a high standard of performance. But we also must recognize their steeper and unique learning curve within the design and management of evaluation systems. As TNTP wrote in *Teacher Evaluation 2.0*, “[I]t is unrealistic to expect even talented novice teachers to meet the same expectations as more practiced educators. For this reason, expectations should increase steadily during a teacher’s first

Three Models of Evaluation Systems that Support New Teacher Development

In the Appendix of this Guide, we describe three school districts—Hillsborough County Public Schools (Florida), Montgomery County Public Schools (Maryland), and Pleasanton Unified School District (California)—that have implemented teacher evaluation systems that are purposeful about supporting new teachers. These districts hold all teachers accountable while providing supports that help new teachers accelerate the mastery of their craft.

Alignment Between Induction and Evaluation

All three districts have taken strategic steps not only to evaluate new teachers but also to help them develop through a comprehensive induction program that clearly aligns with and supports the evaluation process.

In Hillsborough County, experienced teachers who serve as mentors and evaluators are carefully selected and provided common training. Candidates must have at least five years of teaching experience, high student test scores, high previous evaluation scores, and must be well versed in differentiation. All candidates go through one selection process and once selected determine if they would prefer to serve as mentors or evaluators. All evaluators, including principals, peer evaluators, and mentors of new teachers who also serve as evaluators, receive four days of classroom training on evaluation and two days of 1-on-1 training in the field. Teacher evaluation consists of principal ratings (35%), peer rating (25%), and student learning gains (40%). Mentors also serve as evaluators but, for the purpose of evaluation, mentors “swap” mentees three times a year so that no mentor evaluates his/her own mentees. The observation tools used for evaluation and mentoring are different but designed to guide teachers toward the same ultimate goal.

In Montgomery County, the induction support provided to new teachers through its Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program is strategically embedded within evaluation. The two programs were designed as one system to provide checks and balances to the teacher evaluation process. Consulting teachers (CTs) are selected by the PAR Panel through a rigorous selection process to ensure that they are able to communicate their knowledge of and share their strategies around best instructional practices. CTs and all qualified observers (evaluators) receive the same training. CTs gather data through different means, conduct pre- and post-observation conferences, maintain their own set of data about a teacher’s performance, and write a *Final Summative Report* for each teacher they support. The principal is responsible for writing a *Final Evaluation Report*, creating two sets of data for each teacher in the program. The data is presented to the PAR Panel—a team of teachers and principals recommended by their respective unions and confirmed by the superintendent—who assess the data and make recommendations to the superintendent regarding contract renewal, recommendation for a second year in PAR, or termination.

In Pleasanton Unified, the Assessment and Professional Development System and the TriValley Teacher Induction Program are two separate programs. School principals and assistant principals assess new teachers for employment purposes, while full-time induction coaches support new teachers. However, coaches meet with administrators three times a year to reflect on the teachers they support. Administrators share information about observations they made in the teacher’s classroom and induction coaches

The three districts have taken strategic steps not only to evaluate new teachers but also to help them develop through a comprehensive induction program that clearly aligns and supports the evaluation process.

Initially, it can be difficult for teachers, particularly experienced ones, to accept the feedback of peers as genuine guidance to improve practice.

incorporate this information into their coaching of that particular teacher. The two programs have one set of predetermined standards that new teachers are to address in their first and second year. New teachers work with their induction coach to determine specific goals to achieve each year and principals use the same goals for assessment purposes. This process helps align the expectations for new teachers and eliminates the possibility of competing or conflicting expectations and guidance.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Leaders in all three districts shared challenges and lessons learned in the process of developing and implementing these systems. Some of these include:

- ♦ *Credibility* – Initially, it can be difficult for teachers, particularly experienced ones, to accept the feedback of peers as genuine guidance to improve practice. Hillsborough addressed the issue by conducting strategic messaging, pairing evaluators with teachers by subject area as much as possible, and having peer evaluators complete paperwork at school sites to be available for questions. A leader in Montgomery County reported that once teachers adjust to the system, they understand that peers can provide more extensive feedback and constructive support. Overall, it may be easier for new teachers to accept the system than it is for experienced teachers who must first be convinced of the need for change.
- ♦ *Communication between evaluators and mentors* – In Hillsborough, evaluators and mentors are not allowed to communicate about an individual teacher’s performance. Most new teachers share evaluation information with their mentors but communication relies heavily on the trust established between the mentor and mentee. In Pleasanton USD, on the other hand, coaches and administrators meet three times a year specifically to discuss the new teacher’s performance and coaches incorporate this information in their coaching for that particular teacher.
- ♦ *Including all stakeholders* – Having various stakeholders at the table helps to build buy-in from all parties. All three districts used such an inclusive strategy to develop and implement the program. Union leaders in Pleasanton help union members to understand the process, help communicate the purpose and rationale to other teachers, and help build trust in the system. In Montgomery County, the whole program is overseen by a partnership between the teachers’ and administrators’ unions.
- ♦ *Integrating new members* – Districts should be intentional about creating support systems for new mentors and staff. Leaders in Hillsborough suggest that districts must develop strategies to find and retain new mentors and help them excel in their role. They need to constantly revise these strategies, taking into account how they will advertise, screen, train, and assign new mentors. Leaders in Pleasanton USD suggest that with new administrators, in particular, districts should weave information about the system into their initial training and include strategies that they can use to communicate about the system with their staff.
- ♦ *Maintaining support* – With changing and competing priorities, there should be a strategic effort to help new district leaders and partner organizations understand the value of the program in order to maintain the investment, particularly in times of difficult budget cuts.

Table 3. Key Characteristics of the Three Model Programs

Hillsborough	Montgomery	Pleasanton
<i>Duration of induction support</i>		
Two years	One year	Two years
<i>Support providers vs. evaluators</i>		
Mentors support new teachers and “swap” mentees with other mentors to evaluate new teachers. Mentors do not evaluate their own mentees.	Consulting teachers support and evaluate novice teachers and experienced teachers not performing to standard.	Administrators evaluate new teachers. Induction coaches support new teachers and collaborate with administrators to monitor new teachers’ progress, but do not evaluate teachers.
<i>Program embedded in or supported by</i>		
The Teacher Evaluation System includes a teacher induction/ mentoring program that provides support for new teachers.	The PAR program that provides support for new teachers is strategically embedded in the Teacher Professional Growth System. The two programs work in tangent to provide checks and balances to the evaluation process.	Teacher assessment and induction are two separate programs. However, principals and induction coaches work together to help new teachers achieve the pre-established goals for their first and second year in the profession.
<i>Number of observations per year</i>		
“Swap” mentors (expert teachers serving as evaluators) observe new teachers 3 times a year. School principals conduct an additional 3 observations per year for a total of 6 annual observations that are used for evaluation purposes. Full-time mentors also visit new teachers regularly solely for the purpose of providing support and mentorship. A teacher’s planning period is often used for mentoring to take place within the school day.	For new teachers, administrators conduct a least 2 formal observations per year, and consulting teachers conduct at least 3, adding to at least 5 formal observations used for evaluation. Each formal observation must be at least 30 minutes. Teachers are often observed more times than the minimum requirement for the purpose of providing them instructional support.	New teachers and other teachers in the Administrative-Mandated evaluation are observed no more than 3 times a year by an administrator. Additionally, induction coaches conduct observations, model lessons, and provide support in planning, problem solving, and reflecting multiple times a month.
<i>Observers</i>		
Observations are conducted by “swap” mentors, school principals and assistant principals. Mentors may conduct additional observations for the purpose of mentoring.	Observations are conducted by school administrators, qualified observers, and consulting teachers.	School principals conduct observations of elementary teachers and school principal or assistant principals conduct observations of secondary teachers. Induction coaches conduct additional observations for coaching purposes.

Table 3. Key Characteristics of the Three Model Programs (continued)

Hillsborough	Montgomery	Pleasanton
<i>Post-observation conferences</i>		
Each observation is followed by a post-observation conference in which evaluators help the teachers reflect on the instruction that was observed.	All formal observations must be followed by a post-observation conference.	All observations must be followed by a post-observation conference that must take place within 3 days of the observation, and a written report is due within 10 days after the conference to provide teachers two opportunities to reflect on one observation.
<i>Expectations for new teachers</i>		
New teachers are held to the same standards as all other teachers, but are supported through an intensive induction program.	New teachers are held to the same standards as all other teachers, but are supported by a peer assistance and review program.	While new teachers are held to the same standards as all teachers, the induction program focuses the first year on pedagogy and the second year on universal access (English language learners and special populations).
<i>Confidentiality</i>		
“Swap” mentors and mentees do not communicate about a teacher’s performance. It is up to each individual teacher to share evaluation data with his/her mentor.	Consulting teachers mentor and evaluate, so they must play a balancing act to maintain trust and an open line of communication with a mentee while also collecting data for evaluation.	Induction coaches do not evaluate the teachers they coach. Coaches and administrators meet three times a year to discuss the teacher’s progress, but coaches maintain the teacher’s confidential information.
<i>Alignment goals between evaluation and induction</i>		
The district has a PAR program for veteran teachers and an induction program for new teachers where mentors also serve as evaluators of different beginning teachers. To evaluate, mentors “swap” mentees three times a year. Because mentors also serve as evaluators, they are more acutely aware of the evaluation system and are better able to help new teachers develop toward the goals and expectations of the evaluation. It is up to new teachers to communicate outcomes of their evaluation to their mentor.	The district has a PAR program where consulting teachers support and evaluate new teachers. Consulting teachers develop a <i>Summative Report</i> and an administrator develops a separate <i>Evaluation Report</i> creating checks and balances to the system. The two sets of data inform the recommendation made by a separate PAR Panel to the superintendent regarding a teacher’s contract renewal, need for continued assistance, or termination.	School principals are responsible for teacher evaluation while induction coaches support new teachers. There are predetermined expectations for teachers in their first and second year. Coaches help new teachers work toward meeting those expectations and administrators evaluate the teachers’ performance on the same set of expectations.

Table 3. Key Characteristics of the Three Model Programs (continued)

Hillsborough	Montgomery	Pleasanton
<i>Training and support for evaluators, mentors and coaches</i>		
<p>Mentors are trained to be evaluators and to serve as mentors. To serve as evaluators they receive 4 days of classroom training and 2 days of 1-on-1 training in the field. The district has partnered with the New Teacher Center to provide mentor training that consists of 3-day academies 4 times a year. Additionally, mentors participate in forums 1-4 times a month.</p>	<p>Consulting teachers and other qualified observers complete two 6-day courses developed by Research for Better Teaching, Inc. The courses focus on conducting observations, strategies for providing feedback, and the use of multiple sources of data for evaluation. Additionally, consulting teachers meet regularly in small learning communities to reflect on their work with the teachers they support.</p>	<p>Training for induction coaches is based on the New Teacher Center’s mentor training. Induction coaches also meet in small learning communities for 4 hours every other week to work on problem posing, problem solving, reflect on data of the teachers they support, and share best practices for mentoring.</p>
<i>Release time for mentors/coaches</i>		
<p>In the 2012-13 school year, 84 carefully selected teachers are released from classroom duties to serve as full-time mentors and evaluators.</p>	<p>In the 2012-13 school year, 29 expert teachers were released from classroom duties to serve as full-time consulting teachers.</p>	<p>Release time for mentors/coaches In the current school year, the district has an equivalent of 7 full-time coaches, 1 director, and 1 secretary.</p>

Recommendations for Improving PERA Design and Implementation

Like many other states addressing educator evaluation, a challenge for Illinois is to ensure that its Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) generates more effective instruction and meaningfully informs individual teacher learning. While Illinois is moving in the right direction, it is critical that its system is intentionally constructed to meet the unique needs of new teachers.

Illinois' approach to evaluation system design and its timeline for implementation have been deliberately balanced, careful and considered. This bodes well for the state's continued course toward full implementation and for its willingness to tweak and change its system to ensure that it elevates and improves the practice of teaching. With this in mind, NTC has identified two broad priorities for Illinois and local implementers of PERA evaluation systems:

1. **Design a comprehensive educator effectiveness system that encompasses both evaluation and robust instructional feedback and support. For new teachers, this system must include induction support aligned with PERA's evaluation requirements.**
2. **Encourage and enable teacher leaders to serve as teacher mentors and as peer evaluators. Instructional improvement is a collective responsibility and is too critical and time intensive an endeavor to leave solely to school administrators.**

Aligning New Teacher Induction with Evaluation Systems

A recent task force report from the National Association of State Boards of Education emphasized the importance of creating a more aligned educator effectiveness system, beginning with recruitment and preparation and continuing through evaluation and career development.⁶⁸ States such as Colorado, engaged in similar policy reform work as Illinois, have focused on designing and communicating a comprehensive state system to promote teaching excellence.⁶⁹

For new teachers, Illinois state policy is like an unfinished puzzle.

For new teachers, Illinois state policy is like an unfinished puzzle. It is not fully formed, but the necessary pieces are already on the table. However, the state has exhibited a political reluctance to create an unfunded mandate around induction support for beginning teachers, despite evidence that such a state-level requirement can enhance the frequency and quality of induction and mentoring.⁷⁰ At the same time, Illinois has not shied away from requiring the *evaluation* of new teacher performance.

Undoubtedly pressure from the federal government and the education reform community has pushed progress on evaluation. Similar internal or external pressure ought to be brought to bear with regard to providing mentoring support and formative assessment of new teachers' practice. Illinois has a tremendous opportunity to successfully implement PERA as a model approach to educator evaluation. To fully meet the developmental needs of new teachers, Illinois must complete the puzzle.

Involving Teachers in Peer Observation and Evaluation

Evaluation is a role traditionally reserved for school principals and other administrators. The early implementation of Illinois' PERA law would suggest that tradition reigns. Most of the educators participating in and completing the state's PERA evaluator certification training are school administrators—not teachers. Emerging research, including from the Gates Foundation's MET Project, suggests that teachers may benefit from being evaluated by other teachers and that multiple observers may produce more accurate and useful feedback for classroom teachers.⁷¹ Most observation instruments, including Danielson's Framework for Teaching, are designed to evaluate teachers without regard to content area. When it comes to providing rich, content-specific feedback however, instructional mentors with such expertise could excel in this role, either as mentors or possibly as observers and evaluators (such as through a "mentor swap" model as utilized in Hillsborough County Public Schools in Florida).

The state of Illinois and its school districts should encourage and enable the participation of teacher leaders within evaluation systems and induction programs. In doing so, it should consider how the existing pool of teacher leaders, instructional coaches, and trained mentors might support the evaluation process. Expert teachers of teachers have capability to observe teaching and provide rich feedback. But how the role of evaluator and mentor differ and intersect deserves greater consideration and articulation in policy and practice.

PERA requirements alone do not provide the necessary depth and frequency of instructional feedback for beginning teachers.

Recommendations for State Policymakers

Aligning Induction with Evaluation Systems

- ♦ **The Governor and the Illinois General Assembly should require school districts to provide induction and mentoring support to all first- and second-year teachers and provide dedicated state funding for new teacher induction and mentoring programs.**

State policymakers should revisit existing state law to ensure that beginning teacher induction is expected and required—not desired or optional. Illinois should join the ranks of 27 other states that require new teacher support.⁷² Since the state's induction law was enacted in 2002, education leaders (especially ISBE), funders (such as The Joyce Foundation) and experts (including NTC) have led the development of policy tools and tried to strengthen the application of existing policy. New ISBE rules on new teacher induction would ensure that future state funds would be directed only to standards-based programs (through a criteria-based selection process if funding is insufficient for all eligible programs). State funding is needed to bring these new rules to life across the state. ISBE's FY 2014 budget request is notable in that it proposes re-investing \$5 million in the state's Teacher and Administrator Mentoring Program.⁷³

PERA requirements alone do not provide the necessary depth and frequency of instructional feedback for beginning teachers. While PERA establishes a slightly more frequent observation schedule for non-tenured teachers, three observation cycles per year does not rise to the level of research-based, continuous feedback that new teachers need to accelerate their development and demonstrate professional growth. If evaluation is to strengthen new teacher effectiveness, then feedback should be provided on a weekly basis. Induction, as defined within Illinois state policy, would provide that regular feedback to new teachers, in addition to observations that occur as part of the evaluation process.

- ♦ **State policymakers should formalize requirements for the frequency and regularity of instructional feedback to new teachers.**

If Illinois brought its existing teacher-induction law to life (by removing the “unfunded mandate” provision), a robust level of feedback for all new teachers—well beyond what PERA independently requires—would become an expectation. Reformed state law would require induction programs to assign a mentor to each first- and second-year teacher and provide “sufficient time for the mentor and beginning teacher to engage in mentoring activities.” New ISBE induction rules define “sufficient time” as “at least 40 hours per year”—the equivalent of about one hour per week. That time would include “formative assessment designed to ensure feedback and reflection”—on-going, non-evaluative, evidence-based measurement of teaching growth over time, involving a variety of sources of data, including mentor observations of the beginning teacher’s classroom. Induction would also include at least two annual opportunities for new teachers to observe “teaching practices modeled by veteran teachers” and the development of an individual learning plan.

The frequency of observations and other interactions with beginning teachers is heavily influenced by the dedicated time that mentors are given to provide support. Mentors fully released from classroom duties are able to focus their full energy on their work with new teachers and use the school day for classroom visits and meetings with school administrators. Full-time classroom teachers asked to work as mentors have a much more difficult time observing teaching and providing the same intensity of support.

Other states and school districts have set a higher bar with regard to the number of times a classroom teacher will be observed.

A complimentary strategy to strengthening state policy on new teacher induction could include increasing the number of observations of new teachers required under PERA. The intensive nature of formal observations (comprised of pre-conference, classroom observation and post-conference) may make those difficult to require more of. Through subsequent recommendations in this Guide (including the certification and utilization of teacher leaders as evaluators), Illinois may have an opportunity to increase the number of informal observations of beginning teachers conducted by school principals and other trained observers.

Other states and school districts have set a higher bar with regard to the number of times a classroom teacher will be observed. At the district level, an approach that embraces more informal observations can provide more frequent opportunities for beginning teachers to receive feedback. New York City’s Teacher Effectiveness Program handbook contends that “[f]ull-period observations can provide a comprehensive view of a single lesson, while partial-period observations allow for a larger number of snapshots that collectively paint a broader picture of teachers’ practice.”⁷⁴

Table 4. Frequency of Observation in Other States and Districts

<i>State Requirements</i>	<i>District Requirements</i>
<p>Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires a minimum of 4 classroom observations for beginning teachers in the 2012-2013 school year, scaled back from 6 in its initial year of implementation.⁷⁵ <p>Massachusetts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The evaluation system is comprised of “unannounced observations for varied duration” and “formative evaluations.”⁷⁶ The state’s planning and implementation guide suggests that an evaluator can make as many as eight 10-15 minute, unannounced observations and provide useful feedback for each teacher in the time it could have taken to do a single traditional full-period announced observation with scheduled pre- and post-conferences and lesson write up.⁷⁷ 	<p>Harrison School District 2, Colorado (<i>a federal Teacher Incentive Fund grant recipient</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School principals conduct spot observations (between 10 and 15 minutes each) of probationary teachers’ classrooms 8 times each semester.⁷⁸ <p>New York City’s Teacher Effectiveness Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the Danielson Framework 6 annual observations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 formal full-period observations that provide a comprehensive view of a single lesson. 4 informal observations of no less than 15 minutes allowing for a larger number of snapshots that collectively paint a broader picture of teachers’ practice.⁷⁹

From our three national district models: For new teachers, Hillsborough County provides six formal observations with ongoing support (including additional observations) provided by full-time mentors. Montgomery County requires five observations and consulting teachers conduct additional observations throughout the year. Pleasanton USD requires three formal observations a year, but induction coaches conduct additional observations and meet with novice teachers to provide additional support several times a month.

- ◆ **PEAC should recommend that ISBE establish clear expectations for the evaluation and support of new teachers as a distinct class of educators.**

In addition to, or in lieu of, state policy action (as recommended above), the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) should recommend that ISBE design and communicate an aligned system of feedback and support for new teachers. This system would incorporate elements of both the PERA law and the state’s teacher induction law (and associated rules and standards). Guidance from PEAC or ISBE might include a model program design that aligns induction and evaluation and establishes a course of formative and summative feedback and observations throughout the school year for beginning teachers. From approaches currently used in Illinois school districts, the guidance also might suggest “building block” teaching skills (mapped against state teaching standards and elements within the Danielson Domains) that districts should initially focus on in evaluating and supporting new teachers.

- ♦ **ISBE should communicate and model the relationship between teacher induction and teacher evaluation within a broader system of educator effectiveness.**

ISBE can improve its overall efforts to communicate the state’s vision for educator effectiveness—beyond the design and implementation of evaluation systems alone. The establishment of PEAC as an advisory body was an important signal to educational stakeholders that they would have a seat at the table and a role in shaping PERA design and implementation. But, in comparison to other states, what appears lacking in Illinois is a high-profile communications effort that articulates the connections between evaluation and related elements, such as induction.

New teacher success in Illinois won’t be achieved by a narrow focus on PERA implementation alone.

As suggested by a recent American Institutes for Research communications primer, messaging is critical in order to create a shared and coherent vision around teacher evaluation, to promote an accurate understanding for how the system is intended to work, and to achieve support for the new system.⁸⁰ Given the overwhelming evidence on the impact of high-quality induction programs on new teacher effectiveness, Illinois education leaders must communicate that induction is necessary to achieve the aims for improving new teacher performance. Existing tools such as the New Teacher Induction Advocacy Toolkit, developed in part by NTC, could be leveraged to assist in this effort as well.⁸¹

New teacher success in Illinois won’t be achieved by a narrow focus on PERA implementation alone. But Illinois leaders need to communicate this message more clearly through state policy—and the bully pulpit. High-quality support for new teachers is not just desirable, but intrinsically connected to the state’s vision to accelerate teacher effectiveness and strengthen student learning. The state needs to do it—and say it.

Involving Teachers in Peer Observation and Evaluation

- ♦ **The state should encourage the utilization of existing teacher leaders (instructional coaches, mentors, National Board certified teachers) as peer observers and evaluators.**

ISBE and PEAC should encourage the participation of *teacher* leaders in PERA evaluation systems (as well as induction programs). First, it would promote an important avenue for leadership within the teaching profession and leverage existing expertise within Illinois schools and districts. Second, it would be responsive to the evidence that suggests that teachers can sometimes provide more beneficial instructional feedback than school administrators. (Illinois recognizes this with regard to the state’s Race to the Top districts that are required to employ a peer component within summative teacher ratings.) Third, it would respond to research that suggests multiple evaluators can generate more accurate and actionable feedback to improve teaching performance. Fourth, it would free up time for school principals and administrators to provide more regular feedback to all educators by allowing them to conduct more frequent informal classroom observations.

Illinois has a Teacher Leader Endorsement in its teacher certification rules that could be used as a lever here.⁸² Colleges and universities could make becoming a PERA-qualified peer evaluator an option or requirement for Teacher Leaders. School districts might also choose to use the endorsement as a prerequisite or qualification to become a trained observer and evaluator. ISBE might encourage the

participation of teacher leaders in PERA evaluator certification trainings by providing a discount or a competitive pool of funding for non-administrators seeking to become PERA qualified as well.

- ♦ **ISBE and PEAC should ensure that evaluators are effectively trained not only in observing teaching, but also in conducting purposeful coaching conversations.**

The state's selected training protocol (Growth Through Learning Illinois) to pre-qualify PERA evaluators appears comprehensive and aimed at developing critical skills needed by teacher evaluators and observers. Module 3 (conferencing skills, professional conversations) and Module 4 (reflect, measure and evaluate with teachers) of the five-part training are arguably the most important in informing changes to individual teachers' classroom practices.⁸³ ISBE and PEAC should take steps to assess the effectiveness of evaluators in leading coaching conversations following classroom observations. The state may wish to employ a broader educator survey, such as the Illinois 5Essentials Survey, or a more focused assessment vehicle to discern whether classroom teachers feel that the post-conference conversations are providing value. Perhaps this question could be investigated within the study of the effectiveness of school district evaluation systems slated for completion by fall 2014.

Recommendations for PERA Implementers

Aligning Induction with Evaluation Systems

- ♦ **Every Illinois school district should operate a standards-based teacher induction program and align it with their PERA-mandated evaluation system.**

In the absence of an active state induction requirement, each Illinois school district should voluntarily implement a new teacher induction program alongside its PERA evaluation system. Districts should use Illinois induction program standards as guidance and utilize the induction program continuum as a resource to assess the depth of program implementation. Small districts could join into consortia programs with other districts or through Regional Offices of Education. Like the induction program in Elgin (School District U-46) and the three national programs profiled in this Guide, local implementation of high-quality induction throughout Illinois would broaden the opportunities that beginning teachers receive for continuous feedback.

Districts might align evaluator priorities and mentoring priorities by designing both systems around the Danielson Framework. This would require a shared protocol for assessing teaching shared by the induction program and the evaluation system. But this connection gives the evaluator the support from mentor teachers to focus on providing more frequent and focused support to new teachers.

In the absence of an active state induction requirement, each Illinois school district should voluntarily implement a new teacher induction program alongside its PERA evaluation system.

- ♦ **School districts should pay special consideration to design elements that help align teacher evaluation and induction.**

Key design components can help integrate and align evaluation and induction. The three model districts highlighted in this Guide demonstrate the importance of specific ones, including the frequency of observations, the use of peer observers, training and support for mentors and evaluators, and release time for mentors and coaches. Hillsborough, for example, requires six classroom observations and regular visits from mentors during which mentors conduct additional observations and provide instructional support. In Pleasanton, administrators collaborate with peer teachers who support the development of new teachers by serving as induction coaches who conduct observations, demonstrate model lessons, and help new teacher reflect on their practice. These three districts are purposeful about providing mentors with ongoing training on evaluation and mentoring strategies. They also release mentors from their classroom duties to help develop new teachers.

- ♦ **School districts should clarify the relationship between formative and summative assessment—and the purpose of classroom observations associated with each.**

Formative assessment is a key component in successful induction. It is ongoing, responsive to teacher developmental needs, collaborative, aligned with professional teaching standards and based on multiple data sources. A mentor's contact with new teachers is more regular and more sustained and the focus goes deeper than an evaluator because of the scale of the job and the time available. As a recent Consortium on Chicago School Research report suggests, detailed feedback after infrequent, full-lesson observations may be a "weak lever" for improving teacher performance.⁸⁴ An overreliance on such occasional, time-intensive teacher observations will not provide the sufficiently formative or frequent enough feedback to inform changes to teaching practices.

Detailed feedback after infrequent, full-lesson observations may be a "weak lever" for improving teacher performance.

A key decision for districts then is what the relationship is between formative assessment and evaluation. NTC's experience with formative assessment (including through design and implementation of the NTC Formative Assessment System⁸⁵) and evaluation suggests that there should be a one-way firewall—one that preserves the confidentiality of the data collected between a new teacher and mentor (and their non-evaluative relationship) but which allows for such evidence to be shared by a new teacher to inform his or her evaluation and individual growth plan.

- ♦ **School superintendents and principals should schedule regular meetings between evaluators and mentor teachers.**

Beginning teachers can greatly benefit from an alignment between the principal (or other evaluators) and mentor. School principals should schedule regular meetings with mentors and other support providers, such as instructional coaches. These meetings can be brief check-ins or longer conferences that let principals know the types of support their new teachers are receiving and needing, and can offer an opportunity to provide suggestions, informally compare notes, and ask questions. Information can be shared about the challenges and needs of beginning teachers without violating the one-way firewall approach to data and evidence sharing suggested above.

Involving Teachers in Peer Observation and Evaluation

- ♦ **School districts should consider utilizing teacher leaders as classroom observers within PERA evaluation systems.**

First, Illinois school districts should seek to certify teacher leaders, in addition to principals and school administrators, as classroom observers through state-required PERA training.⁸⁶ Secondly, district leaders should consider tapping into existing human capital, including trained mentors and instructional coaches, to strengthen the observational components of their evaluation system. Such an approach could potentially utilize blended mentor/evaluator roles, or “swap” mentors, such as employed by Hillsborough County Public Schools (as profiled in this Guide). Thirdly, local evaluation systems should consider using at least two different observers for formal classroom observations of new teachers. This would enable principals and administrators the opportunity to conduct more frequent informal observations of new teachers, would provide more accurate observational feedback, and would generate more accurate performance ratings of beginning teachers.

Illinois school districts should seek to certify teacher leaders, in addition to principals and school administrators, as teacher evaluators and observers through state-required PERA training.

Conclusion

Beginning teachers need more intensive support and more frequent feedback to grow into highly effective practitioners than most evaluation systems are designed to provide. Some might suggest that this is a condemnation of teacher training, but the reality is that even the best-prepared teachers need time and assistance to apply their knowledge and skills to their individual school and classroom context. If evaluation is truly to serve as the centerpiece of a performance management and talent development system that meets the needs of beginning teachers, it needs to be paired with the structured support and on-going, actionable feedback that comprehensive induction programs provide.

Beginning teachers need more intensive support and more frequent feedback to grow into highly effective practitioners than most evaluation systems are designed to provide.

Illinois' methodical approach to PERA implementation provides it a tremendous opportunity to troubleshoot and tweak its system prior to full-scale implementation. This is a luxury that states with rocket-speed implementation timelines have not afforded themselves. This Guide challenges Illinois to build a stronger developmental focus within its educator effectiveness system, leveraging strengths of PERA (such as evaluator certification training) and strong components of state induction policy (such as induction program standards and the new induction and mentoring rules).

Illinois need not rebuild the house, but should make sure to utilize the panoply of tools it already has in its policy toolbox to strengthen PERA's foundation and structures. The three school districts we profiled within this Guide are examples of promising practices that might help Illinois to envision how an aligned new teacher development system might look.

Evaluation in the absence of individualized, sustained support for new teachers will not achieve desired instructional improvement. Through strong local leadership and thoughtful implementation, evaluation can serve as a critical performance management tool, can accelerate educator development, can identify highly effective and ineffective teachers, and can pinpoint high-impact teaching practices. State policy that bridges both evaluation and support can help to place Illinois teachers at the center of a high-performing educational system built for success.

Appendix

In this Appendix, we present profiles of three school districts—Hillsborough County Public Schools (Florida), Montgomery County Public Schools (Maryland), and Pleasanton Unified School District (California)—as examples of districts that have nested their teacher evaluation systems within supportive systems that strategically nurture the development of new teachers. These districts hold all teachers accountable while providing supports that help new teachers accelerate the mastery of their craft.

Key Characteristics of the Three Sample Programs		
Hillsborough	Montgomery	Pleasanton
<i>Duration of induction support</i>		
Two years	One year	Two years
<i>Support providers vs. evaluators</i>		
Mentors support new teachers and “swap” mentees with other mentors to evaluate new teachers. Mentors do not evaluate their own mentees.	Consulting teachers support and evaluate novice teachers and experienced teachers not performing to standard.	Administrators evaluate new teachers. Induction coaches support new teachers and collaborate with administrators to monitor new teachers’ progress, but do not evaluate teachers.
<i>Program embedded in or supported by</i>		
The Teacher Evaluation System includes a teacher induction/mentoring program that provides support for new teachers.	The PAR program that provides support for new teachers is strategically embedded in the Teacher Professional Growth System. The two programs work in tangent to provide checks and balances to the evaluation process.	Teacher assessment and induction are two separate programs. However, principals and induction coaches work together to help new teachers achieve the pre-established goals for their first and second year in the profession.
<i>Number of observations per year</i>		
“Swap” mentors (expert teachers serving as evaluators) observe new teachers 3 times a year. School principals conduct an additional 3 observations per year for a total of 6 annual observations that are used for evaluation purposes. Full-time mentors also visit new teachers regularly solely for the purpose of providing support and mentorship. A teacher’s planning period is often used for mentoring to take place within the school day.	For new teachers, administrators conduct a least 2 formal observations per year, and consulting teachers conduct at least 3, adding to at least 5 formal observations used for evaluation. Each formal observation must be at least 30 minutes. Teachers are often observed more times than the minimum requirement for the purpose of providing them instructional support.	New teachers and other teachers in the Administrative-Mandated evaluation are observed no more than 3 times a year by an administrator. Additionally, induction coaches conduct observations, model lessons, and provide support in planning, problem solving, and reflecting multiple times a month.

Key Characteristics of the Three Sample Programs (continued)

Hillsborough	Montgomery	Pleasanton
Observers		
Observations are conducted by “swap” mentors, school principals and assistant principals. Mentors may conduct additional observations for the purpose of mentoring.	Observations are conducted by school administrators, qualified observers, and consulting teachers.	School principals conduct observations of elementary teachers and school principal or assistant principals conduct observations of secondary teachers. Induction coaches conduct additional observations for coaching purposes.
Post-observation conferences		
Each observation is followed by a post-observation conference in which evaluators help the teachers reflect on the instruction that was observed.	All formal observations must be followed by a post-observation conference.	All observations must be followed by a post-observation conference that must take place within 3 days of the observation, and a written report is due within 10 days after the conference to provide teachers two opportunities to reflect on one observation.
Expectations for new teachers		
New teachers are held to the same standards as all other teachers, but are supported through an intensive induction program.	New teachers are held to the same standards as all other teachers, but are supported by a peer assistance and review program.	While new teachers are held to the same standards as all teachers, the induction program focuses the first year on pedagogy and the second year on universal access (English language learners and special populations).
Confidentiality		
“Swap” mentors and mentors do not communicate about a teacher’s performance. It is up to each individual teacher to share evaluation data with his/her mentor.	Consulting teachers mentor and evaluate, so they must play a balancing act to maintain trust and an open line of communication with a mentee while also collecting data for evaluation.	Induction coaches do not evaluate the teachers they coach. Coaches and administrators meet three times a year to discuss the teacher’s progress, but coaches maintain the teacher’s confidential information.

Key Characteristics of the Three Sample Programs (continued)		
Hillsborough	Montgomery	Pleasanton
<i>Alignment goals between evaluation and induction</i>		
The district has a PAR program for veteran teachers and an induction program for new teachers where mentors also serve as evaluators. To evaluate, mentors “swap” mentees three times a year. Because mentors also serve as evaluators, they are more acutely aware of the evaluation system and are better able to help new teachers develop toward the goals and expectations of the evaluation. It is up to new teachers to communicate outcomes of their evaluation to their mentor.	The district has a PAR program where consulting teachers support and evaluate new teachers. Consulting teachers develop a <i>Summative Report</i> and an administrator develops a separate <i>Evaluation Report</i> creating checks and balances to the system. The two sets of data inform the recommendation made by a separate PAR Panel to the superintendent regarding a teacher’s contract renewal, need for continued assistance, or termination.	School principals are responsible for teacher evaluation while induction coaches support new teachers. There are predetermined expectations for teachers in their first and second year. Coaches help new teachers work toward meeting those expectations and administrators evaluate the teachers’ performance on the same set of expectations.
<i>Training and support for evaluators, mentors and coaches</i>		
Mentors are trained to be evaluators and to serve as mentors. To serve as evaluators they receive 4 days of classroom training and 2 days of 1-on-1 training in the field. The district has partnered with the New Teacher Center to provide mentor training that consists of 3-day academies 4 times a year. Additionally, mentors participate in forums 1-4 times a month.	Consulting teachers and other qualified observers complete two 6-day courses developed by Research for Better Teaching, Inc. The courses focus on conducting observations, strategies for providing feedback, and the use of multiple sources of data for evaluation. Additionally, consulting teachers meet regularly in small learning communities to reflect on their work with the teachers they support.	Training for induction coaches is based on the New Teacher Center’s mentor training. Induction coaches also meet in small learning communities for 4 hours every other week to work on problem posing, problem solving, reflect on data of the teachers they support, and share best practices for mentoring.
<i>Release time for mentors/coaches</i>		
In the 2012-13 school year, 84 carefully selected teachers are released from classroom duties to serve as full-time mentors and evaluators.	In the 2012-13 school year, 29 expert teachers were released from classroom duties to serve as full-time consulting teachers.	In the current school year, the district has an equivalent of 7 full-time coaches, 1 director, and 1 secretary.

Teacher Induction and Evaluation in Hillsborough County Public Schools

Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) is the third largest district in the state of Florida and the 8th largest district in the nation. In the 2012 school year, the district served 197,150 students in 295 schools with a total of 25,403 employees of which 15,383 were teachers.

Hillsborough County Public Schools, 2012

Grade span	PK-12
White students	39.4%
Black students	21.06%
Hispanic students	30.40%
Asian students	3.61%
Indian students	0.25%
Multi-race students	5.28%
Exceptional students	19.00%
Free/reduced lunch	57.20%
English language learners	11.90%

Teacher Evaluation

The Teacher Evaluation System at HCPS was developed by the district in partnership with the Hillsborough County Teachers Association and Cambridge Education, with a \$100 million funding commitment over seven years from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.⁸⁷

The new evaluation system is based on Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. It is a combination of observations and student performance measures in which 35% of the total evaluation is determined by principal rating, 25% is determined by peer rating, and 40% is determined by student learning gains.

The number of times teachers are observed for the purpose of evaluation varies. Swap mentors⁸⁸ observe new teachers three times a year. Veteran teachers may have two to eight peer observations in a year.⁸⁹ Additionally, principals and assistant principals conduct three observations per year with principals completing one and assistant principals completing the other two. At least one observation must be announced and the others can be unannounced. The assessments used to determine student-learning gains also vary according to the grade and subject taught by a teacher. The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) is used for teachers who teach core classes and grades assessed by FCAT.

In the 2012-13 school year, there are 240 full-time peer evaluators. Teachers of all subjects and all grades participate in the assessment system and receive one of four ratings: requires action, progressing, accomplished, and exemplary.

Supporting New Teachers Through Induction/Mentoring

HCPS recognizes the unique needs of new teachers. New teachers are held to the same rigorous standards as all teachers, but the particular needs of new teachers are supported through an intensive induction program. Some of the most essential needs of new teachers include:

Capacity and Focus - New teachers often struggle determining where to focus their improvement efforts.

They are often assigned challenging tasks (i.e. classes that require multiple preps, struggling students, challenging schools, etc.). To help focus and guide their efforts, districts should strive to assign them fewer preps, less subject crossover, and minimal extracurricular responsibilities.

Acclimation – New teachers need help becoming familiar with the school system. They need help decrypting acronyms and sorting through multiple requirements (i.e. reports to complete, forms to fill out, new employee documents, verification of rosters, enrollment, student information cards, etc.).

Fully released mentors – New teachers need someone who can provide ongoing support without the interruption of a full teaching load.

Time – Districts need to facilitate time for mentoring to take place within the school day. In HCPS, teachers have a planning period that is often used for mentoring.

The HCPS's Teacher Evaluation System includes a teacher induction/mentoring program for new teachers. All teachers who are new to the district and have 6 months or less of teaching experience, not including an internship, receive two years of mentoring. Mentors are carefully selected for annual full-time appointment.⁹⁰ In the 2012-13 school year, there are 84 full-time mentors who also evaluate new teachers.

Aligning and Differentiating Induction with/from Evaluation

HCPS has taken several steps to create clear alignment and differentiation between the evaluation system and the induction program. Alignment begins with the selection of mentors and evaluators and is followed by common training. HCPS has concluded that the characteristics of good mentors (including ability to bond, build relationships quickly, and empathize) are also characteristics of good evaluators. Consequently, all candidates go through one selection process and once selected determine if they would prefer to serve as mentors, evaluators, or are open to either job. NTC's guidelines for mentor selection informed the current selection process. Candidates must have at least 5 years of teaching experience, high student test scores, high previous evaluation scores, and must be well versed in differentiation. All evaluators, including principals and peer evaluators, receive the same training for evaluating teachers.⁹¹

Only mentors receive ongoing training to be effective mentors. HCPS has partnered with NTC to provide mentor training. Mentors participate in 3-day academies four times a year and forums 1-4 times per month. The support provided by NTC does not differentiate between helping mentors become better evaluators or mentors. In fact, it has become evident that because they are evaluating, mentors are more acutely aware of the evaluation system and are better equipped to help new teachers develop toward the goals and expectations of the evaluation. Principals and peer evaluators not serving as mentors do not participate in ongoing mentor training. Peer evaluators participate in separate learning communities that meet throughout the school year with evaluation training occurring at the beginning of the school year.

While all mentors evaluate new teachers, no mentor evaluates his/her own mentee. Mentors visit new teachers regularly solely for the purpose of mentoring. Information gathered through these visits is not used for evaluation. To evaluate, mentors "swap" mentees three times a year. Evaluation information is not shared with a new teacher's mentor. However, mentors work to establish a relationship of trust, which often results in new teachers sharing evaluation results.

The tools used for observation and mentoring are different but designed to guide teachers toward the same ultimate goals. Mentors have access to additional tools in order to work with mentees on specific needs (i.e. lesson planning). The feedback that mentors provide to mentees is also different because it builds upon the teacher's work and individual needs. The reflective process⁹², however, is similar in mentoring and evaluation because the general goal of both is to help teachers become reflective practitioners.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

In the process of implementing the two systems, HCPS has faced a few challenges and learned a few lessons worth sharing.

Credibility and buy-in from veteran teachers – At first, there was skepticism particularly from veteran teachers regarding the credibility of evaluators. To address the issue, HCPS conducted strategic messaging, paired evaluators with teachers by subject area as much as possible, and peer evaluators completed paperwork at school sites to be available for questions. It is easier for new teachers to accept the system than it is for veteran teachers who must first be convinced of the need for change.

Communication between evaluators and mentors – In HCPS, evaluators and mentors are not allowed to communicate with one another about a teacher's performance. In the absence of such a communication system, it is up to new teachers to communicate outcomes of their evaluation to their mentor. Most new teachers share this information but communication relies heavily on the trust established between the mentor and mentee.

Support for all teachers – As districts develop evaluation systems, it is important to keep in mind the need to support all teachers, including veteran teachers, to further develop their skills.

Include all stakeholders – Having various stakeholders at the table from the start will help build buy-in from all parties.

New Teacher Assignment – Districts must consider: What teaching assignments will new teachers receive? What students will be in their classrooms? What will be their responsibilities? What is a reasonable assignment for each new teacher?

New mentors and ongoing support for mentors – Districts need to develop strategies to find and retain new mentors and help them develop skills to be good mentors. They will need to constantly revise these strategies by considering the following: How will they advertise for new mentors? What will be the screening process? How will new mentors be trained and brought up to speed with more experienced mentors? How will mentors be assigned? Will there be a cut off date for assigning mentors to new teachers hired after the start of the year? Additionally, there should be someone responsible for overseeing the ongoing professional development and support for mentors.

New teacher Orientation program – The program will benefit from new teacher orientation. HCPS offers new teachers a 3-5 day Initial Orientation focused on teaching practice, classroom management, code of ethics, etc.

Teacher Induction and Evaluation in Montgomery County Public Schools

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is the largest district in the state of Maryland and the 17th largest in the nation. In 2012, with 11,836 teachers, the district served 148,779 students in 202 schools.

Teacher Professional Growth System

The Teacher Professional Growth System (TPGS) at MCPS focuses on continuous improvement of teachers and shared accountability for student achievement. MCPS designed the system in partnership with the Montgomery County Education Association and the Montgomery County Association of Administrators and Principals. As described by a leader in the district it is a partnership between the district and teachers' union, the district and principals' union, and the teachers' and principals' union.

The key elements of the TPGS are: (1) Six clear standards for teacher performance, based on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; (2) Training for evaluators and teachers; (3) A multi-year professional growth cycle that incorporates continual reflection; (4) Formal evaluation that provides qualitative feedback; (5) A Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program with Consulting Teachers (CTs) who support novice teachers and experienced teachers not performing to standard; and (6) Professional development years that incorporate individual growth plans into school plans and data that demonstrate student achievement.⁹³

This summary focuses on the PAR program, the part of the TPGS system that directly affects new teachers. PAR is a one-year program in which new teachers have at least two formal observations by an administrator or qualified observers and at least three by a CT. Experienced teachers recommended for the PAR program have at least one formal observation by an administrator and two by a CT.⁹⁴ In reality, teachers in the program are observed more often than the minimum requirement. Formal observations must be at least 30 minutes, at least one must be announced and include a pre-observation conference, and must all be followed by a post-observation conference.

All new teachers with no prior teaching experience and experienced teachers not meeting the standards participate in the PAR program. The program has two components: the CTs and the PAR Panel. CTs support all teachers participating in PAR. They gather data through different means, conduct pre-observation and post-observation conferences, maintain their own set of data about a teacher's performance, and write a *Final Summative Report* for each teacher they support. The principal is responsible for writing a *Final Evaluation Report*, creating two sets of data for each teacher in the program. The data is presented to the PAR Panel—a team of eight teachers and eight principals recommended by their respective unions and confirmed by the superintendent—which assesses the data and make recommendations to the superintendent regarding contract renewal, recommendation for a second year in PAR, or termination.

Montgomery County Public Schools, 2012

Grade span	PK-12
White students	33.0%
African American	21.3%
Hispanic	26.7%
Asian	14.3%
American Indian	0.2%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.1%
Two or more races	4.6%
Free & Reduced Lunch	33.7%
English Language Learners	13.1%
Special Education	11.9%

The PAR program currently has 29 full-time CTs and is estimated to cost \$2.4 million per year. The evaluation looks at each teacher's data holistically without assigning specific percentages to each piece of information, and yields one of two results: Meets Standard or Below Standard.

Supporting New Teachers Through Induction/Mentoring

New teachers are held to the same rigorous standards as all teachers, but their particular needs are supported through the PAR program. The most essential needs of new teachers include:

Setting up positive learning environments – One of MCPS's standards holds teachers accountable for creating a positive learning environment. New teachers often struggle with this standard; consequently mentors strategically provide support in this area.

Planning for instruction – New teachers need help with short term and long term planning for instruction (i.e. determining what students can achieve in a day versus a week).

In MCPS, all new teachers of all grades and subjects must participate in the PAR program in their first year of teaching.

Aligning and Differentiating Evaluation with/from Induction

In MCPS, the induction support provided to new teachers through the PAR program is strategically embedded within the TPGS. The two programs were designed as one system to provide checks and balances to the teacher evaluation process.

CTs are experienced teaching professionals selected by the PAR Panel through a rigorous selection process that ensures they are knowledgeable and able to communicate their knowledge and strategies of best instructional practices. Their primary job is to support and provide instructional feedback based on classroom observations and other data. They also gather data about a teacher's performance to strike a balance that helps teachers develop.

Consulting teachers, all qualified observers, and members of the PAR Panel are required to complete two six-day courses—*Observing and Analyzing Teaching* (OAT) 1 and 2—developed by Research for Better Teaching, Inc. OAT1 focuses on the process for conducting observations and strategies for providing feedback. OAT2 focuses on the use of multiple sources of data in evaluation. Furthermore, there are two companion courses—*Studying Skillful Teaching* (SST) 1 and 2—for all teachers in MCPS that focus on the same content as OAT 1 and 2 but on the recipient (teacher) side. SST 1 and 2 are not required but all teachers are encouraged to complete the courses.⁹⁵

The PAR Panel consists of eight teachers and eight administrators, who split into pairs of one teacher and one administrator. Each pair works with 3 to 4 CTs and meet monthly as small learning communities for CTs to reflect on their work with teachers they support. CTs also meet in learning communities based on the grade level of teachers they support (elementary and secondary). Each team has a lead CT responsible

for managing the team, the coaching and supporting aspect of the CT's role. This process helps CTs reflect on the particular needs of teachers and ensures that the strategies they use help teachers improve their practice, and meet the standards. School principals and CTs create two distinct reports for each teacher in the PAR program, creating checks and balances to the process.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

The MCPS has had the TPGS for about 13 years. In this time, the district and the partner unions have faced a few challenges and learned a few lessons worth sharing.

Credibility – At first, it might be difficult for teachers to accept peer feedback as genuine guidance to improve practice. However, once teachers adjust to the system, they understand that peers provide more extensive feedback and constructive support. Feedback is better received when CTs match the teachers they support by grade level and content area.

Focusing on support – Teachers need to believe that the system aims to support their craft and is respectful of their profession. Important steps include: assigning a dedicated person to coordinate support and create opportunities for teachers to reflect on performance. At MCPS, CTs coordinate support for teachers in the PAR program. Additionally, post-observation conferences must be completed within 3 days of the observation, and a written report within 10 days of the conference, providing teachers two opportunities to reflect on one observation.

Consistency – Districts should strive to create consistency across the system. MCPS offers common training for CTs, qualified observers and PAR Panel members, and training for all teachers in the district that helps create an understanding of the structure, procedures and a common language. The procedures must be consistent to help develop trust in the process.

Maintaining the integrity of the program – Maintaining the integrity of the program through new and changing state policies may be a challenge. The TPGS has two performance levels, but new state policy requires a three-tiered system. The district and unions agreed that three distinct levels are harder to distinguish, but they worked together to modify the system and recently created a four-tiered system that includes an “emerging” category and “lead teacher” designation. The second will be attained through an application and selection process.

Incorporating new employees – There needs to be a system in place to help new teachers, administrators and leaders understand the processes and procedures.

Maintaining support for the system – District leaders and partner organizations must value the program and maintain the investment, particularly in times of difficult budget cuts.

Teacher Induction and Evaluation in Pleasanton Unified School District

Pleasanton Unified School District (PUSD) is a small district in California. In 2012, with 365 teachers, the district served about 15,000 students in 15 schools.

Pleasanton Unified School District, 2012

Grade span	K-12
White students	53.28%
Black students	2.43%
Latino students	9.29%
Asian students	34.36%
Native American students	0.65%
Exceptional students	11.00%
English language learners	11.00%
Free/reduced lunch	6.90%

Assessment and Professional Development

PUDF developed the Assessment and Professional Development (APD) system in partnership with the Association of Pleasanton Teachers and school principals.⁹⁶ The district, union, and administrators used the word “assessment” to emphasize the purpose of the system—to assess in order to identify where teachers fall on the continuum of teacher development and provide them the support to move further along the continuum.

APD is based on the Continuum of Teacher Practice (CTP) and aligned with the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP). There are four options for assessment: Administrative-Mandated, Administrative Choice, Partner, Portfolio. All probationary teachers⁹⁷, temporary teachers, and permanent teachers determined by the district to need formal assistance must participate in the Administrative-Mandated option. Permanent teachers who have not been identified as needing formal assistance may choose from the other three options.

Teachers in the Administrative-Mandated, Administrative Choice, and Partner options are assessed on a series of classroom observations. Teachers are observed no more than 3 times prior to the professional assessment report. A pre-observation conference⁹⁸ must precede the first observation and all observations are followed by a post-observation conference. Under Administrative-Mandated, observations of elementary teachers are conducted by the school principal and observations of secondary teachers may be conducted by the principal or assistant principals.

Teachers of all subjects and grades participate in APD and receive one of five ratings: emerging, exploring, applying, integrating, or innovating. Teachers must perform at level 3 – applying.

Supporting New Teachers Through Induction/Mentoring

PUSD recognizes the unique needs of new teachers and supports them through an intensive induction program. Some of the most essential needs of new teachers include:

A coach - New teachers need a non-judgmental guide to problem solve and figure out the nuances and complexities of teaching.

School leadership - New teachers crave an active administrator who provides ongoing feedback.

PUSD participates in the TriValley Teacher Induction Project (TVTIP)⁹⁹ in partnership with four districts¹⁰⁰ and with leadership and ongoing support from the New Teacher Center (NTC). Working in consortia, the districts supports new teachers in their first two years in the profession through an induction program. While new teachers are held to the same rigorous standards as all teachers, TVTIP has identified sub-parts of the CSTP to help new teachers accelerate through the Continuum of Teacher Practice.¹⁰¹ The first year of the induction program focuses on pedagogy. The second year focuses on universal access – equity for all students, particularly focusing on the needs of English language learners and special populations. TVTIP is funded by a \$763,175 grant from the California Teacher Credentialing Block Grant that is shared by the five participating districts.¹⁰²

Induction coaches are carefully selected using criteria modeled after NTC’s criteria for mentors. Candidates must have a valid California teaching credential, a minimum of five years of successful teaching experience, effective interpersonal, organizational, communication, and leadership skills, demonstrated commitment to personal and professional growth, and knowledge of the CSTP. Districts in TVTIP have one selection process and induction coaches are shared across districts lines. There is no term limit for serving as a coach. PUSD currently has the equivalent of 7 full-time coaches, 1 director, and 1 secretary.

Each induction coach is assigned 17 new teachers. The coaches guide their new teachers through the NTC Formative Assessment System (FAS). The coach and new teacher enter into a process of inquiry, characterized by a plan-teach-reflect-apply cycle. The processes are meaningfully embedded into the instructional day. Each formative assessment process is essential and supports the advancement of both the coach and new teachers’ practice. NTC FAS protocols support three central processes:

- ♦ Understanding Context
- ♦ Setting and Reflecting on Professional Goals
- ♦ Examining practice Through Inquiry

Coaches conduct observations, model lessons, and provide support in planning, problem solving, and reflecting multiple times a month.

Aligning and Differentiating Induction with/from Evaluation

In PUSD, the APD system and TVTIP are two separate programs. School principals and/or assistant principals assess new teachers for employment purposes, while full-time induction coaches support new teachers. However, there are systems in place for principals and induction coaches to work together to help new teachers accelerate their progress on the Continuum of Teacher Practice.

Districts in TVTIP have predetermined the standards that new teachers will address on their first and second year. Consequently, new teachers typically work with their induction coach to determine specific goals to achieve each year and principals use the same goals for assessment purposes. This process helps align the expectations for new teachers and eliminates the possibility of competing or conflicting expectations and guidance. Additionally, coaches meet with administrators three times a year to reflect on the teachers they support. TVTIP has a common protocol that all induction coaches use for these meetings. Administrators share information about observations they made in the teacher’s classroom and induction coaches incorporate this information into their coaching of that particular teacher. Coaches may

also facilitate a triad-conversation with the administrator and new teacher to ensure that everyone is in agreement regarding the goals for that particular teacher.

TVTIP provides professional development for induction coaches based on NTC's training for mentors and a series of professional development opportunities for new teachers. While administrators do not receive the same depth of training as induction coaches, some components are provided to administrators throughout the year. TVTIP also provides a number of trainings throughout the school year aligned to CSTP that address issues such as classroom management, active learning strategies, literacy best practices, Backwards Lesson Design, and strategies to support English learners and students with exceptionalities. Induction coaches facilitate these open trainings with many veteran teachers in attendance. Induction coaches also participate in a professional learning community to advance their mentoring practice meeting as a team four hours every other week. During these forums, they engage in problem solving; they analyze and reflect on data to inform their coaching practice; they share coaching best practices and study current education research.

Furthermore, PUSD has a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program for veteran teachers who voluntarily ask for support or are identified by the district to be in need of Formal Assistance. Teachers in the PAR program are assigned a peer coach who, unlike induction coaches, is a full-time teacher. While peer coaches do not receive the same depth of training as induction coaches, they do receive components of the training. The PAR program has a joint panel of decision makers consisting of elementary, middle and high school teachers. This year, the panel is comprised of former induction coaches who recommend integrating more elements of the induction program into the PAR program.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

In the process of implementing the APD system and TVTIP, Pleasanton USD has faced a few challenges and learned a few lessons worth sharing.

Include all stakeholders – Including various stakeholders in the design and development of the system will help create buy-in. For example, union representation will ensure that teacher leaders understand the process, can better communicate the purpose and rationale to other teachers, and help develop trust in the system.

Ongoing effort to bring in new staff – Districts should be intentional about creating the support system for new staff to understand the system. With new administrators, in particular, weave information about the system into their initial training and include strategies that they can use to communicate about the system with their staff.

Keep sight of the ultimate goal – With changing and competing priorities, it is important to not lose sight of the goal and the purpose of the program—teacher development in order to increase student learning. In PUSD, there is a deliberate effort to ground all conversations in the CSTP reinforcing the notion of continuous improvement.

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88. *Swap mentors*: Peer evaluators who also serve as mentors for new teachers, referred to as “swap mentors” to distinguish them from *peer evaluators* who evaluate veteran teachers but do not serve the dual role of evaluators and mentors.
89. The exact number is determined by the prior year’s evaluation, such that teachers who receive lower ratings are observed more often the following year.
90. At the end of a year, mentors can opt to return to the classroom but many stay to serve as mentors for multiple years.

91. Four days of classroom training and two days of 1-on-1 coached training in the field.
92. Reflection revolves around four questions: What is working? What are areas of challenge? What are the next steps? What support can the mentor/evaluator provide?
93. *Teacher Professional Growth System Handbook* (revised August 20, 2011) outlines the structures and procedures of the system. http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/development/documents/TeacherPGS_handbook.pdf
94. Experience teachers in PAR have at least three formal observations by a CT if the teacher will be rated below standard.
95. Teachers receive graduate credit for these courses that count toward recertification.
96. The Assessment and Professional Development system has been in place since 2005.
97. Probationary Teachers are those in their first two years in the profession.
98. A Pre-observation conference is conducted to schedule the first observation, establish goals, and share lesson plans.
99. The TriValley Teacher Induction Project has been in place since 2003.
100. The districts participating in the TriValley Teacher Induction Project are: Castro Valley Unified School District, Dublin Unified School District, Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District, Sunol Glen Unified School District, and Pleasanton Unified School District.
101. TriValley Teacher Induction Project, *Program Handbook 2011-2012*, page 22, outlines the standards of focus for years 1 and 2 of the induction program, http://www.tvtip.org/PTHandbook11_12.pdf.
102. The grant is flexible on how districts use these funds, consortia leaders determined the funds be invested on teacher induction.

About New Teacher Center

New Teacher Center focuses on improving student learning by accelerating the effectiveness of new teachers. NTC partners with states, school districts, and policymakers to design and implement systems that create sustainable, high-quality mentoring and professional development; build leadership capacity; work to enhance teaching conditions; improve retention; and transform schools in vibrant learning communities where all students succeed.

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