

INTC Data Brief #6

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This Data Brief, the sixth of six short reports, is intended to provide a snapshot of data on the 64 induction and mentoring programs that received funding in FY 2010. It describes trainings and professional development for administrators, mentors, and novices.

INTC will next provide an end-of-year final report:

- September 30: Final report
Summary of the preceding six data briefs; INTC commentary on program progress to date and policy recommendations

OVERVIEW OF DATA AND ORGANIZATION OF DATA BRIEF

This Data Brief provides highlights of data obtained from the spring 2010 Common Data Elements (CDE) reporting forms by the 64 programs that received grant funding in FY 2010. This Data Brief is organized into three sections:

- Program self-rankings on the Continuum, Standards 1-9: summary of tables 1.1 through 1.10 in the appendix
- Programs' plans for future improvement: summary of table 2.1 in the appendix
- Impact of programs on teacher quality, student achievement, and teacher retention: summary of tables 3.1 through 3.3 in the appendix

The Appendix, which is available in a separate document, provides complete tables of all quantitative and qualitative data.

The spring CDEs included multiple-choice, short-response, and extended-response questions. The information in this brief is based on program self-reports only.

The Chicago New Teacher Center #299, Areas 3, 7, 13, 14, & 17 encompassed four separate grants. This program filled out a single CDE reporting form, so INTC received 61 spring 2010 CDEs although ISBE funds 64 programs.

The tables disaggregate the data in three ways: district-based programs vs. consortium-based programs; new programs (those initially funded in 2009) vs. continuing programs (those initially funded in 2006 or 2008); and larger programs (serving 75 or more first- and second-year teachers) vs. smaller programs.

PROGRAM SELF-RANKINGS ON THE CONTINUUM

These CDE questions asked programs to rank themselves on a four-point scale, from "establishing" to "systematizing", for each criterion on the Illinois Induction Program Continuum. The Continuum is organized around the nine Illinois Induction Program Standards, each of which has between three and six criteria.

These CDE questions were optional, and 19 programs (13 districts, 6 consortia; 5 new programs, 14 continuing; 4 large programs and 14 small) chose to respond. Thus, the results may not be representative of programs as a whole. In order to display the programs' responses numerically, each descriptor on the scale was assigned a number, from 1 (establishing) through 4 (systematizing); higher numbers, therefore, represent programs that consider themselves more advanced.

The average score for all criteria and all programs was a 2.3, just over the “applying” level. The consortium-based programs rated themselves slightly higher overall than district-based programs (2.4 vs. 2.2), and continuing programs rated themselves higher overall than new programs (2.4 vs. 2.0).

Lowest- and highest-ranking items. The five lowest-rated individual criteria—those with overall scores of 2.0 or lower—all concerned program evaluation and use of data, or the involvement of site administrators. Similarly, both Standard 4 (Site Administrator Responsibilities) and Standard 9 (Program Evaluation) received overall self-rankings of 2.0. District-based programs and new programs gave themselves particularly low scores for these standards (Standard 4: 1.8 and 1.5; Standard 9: 1.8 and 1.7, respectively). Programs rated themselves highest, with average scores of 2.5, on four standards: Standard 1 (Program Leadership), Standard 3 (Resources), Standard 6 (Mentor Training), and Standard 7 (Development of Beginning Teacher Practice).

Internal variation. The average scores mask much internal variation between types of programs. Overall, the largest variations occurred between new and continuing programs. New programs rated themselves lower than continuing programs on all but three of the 39 individual criteria. In several cases, the scores were at least a whole integer apart. The criteria of greatest discrepancy include:

- Criterion 7.4, which concerns the provision of sanctioned time for induction and mentoring (1.8 for new, 3.0 for continuing),
- Criterion 7.2, which concerns providing opportunities for beginning teachers to network and participate in collaborative cultures (scores of 1.4 for new programs, 2.6 for continuing),
- Criterion 7.3, which concerns professional development for beginning teachers (1.8 for new, 2.9 for continuing), and
- Criterion 8.3, which concerns documentation of formative assessment to gather evidence of impact on student learning (1.6 for new, 2.6 for continuing).

District-based programs rated themselves lower than consortia on all but nine of the 39 individual criteria. The two areas of greatest discrepancy include:

- Criterion 5.1, which concerns the selection of mentors via clear, rigorous criteria (scores of 1.8 for single-district programs, 2.8 for consortia), and
- Criterion 4.4, which concerns program communication with site administrators (1.8 for districts, 2.7 for consortia).

All of the above should be considered with caution, however. These questions were voluntary and responders were thus subject to self-selection bias. Perhaps responding programs were more likely than average to feel comfortable using the Continuum, or they were more confident than average that their programs were strong and their scores would be high. Also, only six consortium-based programs and only five new programs responded to the questions, making these subgroups particularly susceptible to the influence of a few outliers. (Tables 1.1 – 1.10)

PROGRAMS' PLANS FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENT

Programs were asked to select two Illinois Induction Program Standards to focus on for next year and to describe what program improvements they planned to make under those standards.

Most- and least-popular standards. More programs (34%) said they wanted to focus on Standard 9, Program Evaluation, than any other standard. The next three were Standard 2 (Program Goals and Design, 29%); Standard 4 (Site Administrator Responsibilities, 29%); and Standard 7 (Development of Beginning Teacher Practice, 28%). Programs were least likely to plan improvements around Standard 3 (Resources, 9%); Standard 1 (Program Leadership, 10%); and Standard 8 (Formative Assessment, 14%).

The standards that programs identified most as areas for improvement are those which received the lowest self-ratings on the Continuum, and vice-versa. The only exception is Standard 7 (Development of Beginning Teacher Practice), which received among the highest self-ratings on the Continuum, but which was a popular choice for self-improvement. This unusual finding is particularly true for continuing programs; they gave Standard 7 their highest self-rating on the Continuum (2.8), but this was among the two most popular standards for planned improvements (31%, along with Standard 9: Program Evaluation). (Tables 1.10 & 2.1)

Internal variation. Different types of programs planned to focus in different areas. Small programs were more likely than large ones to focus on Standard 4, Administrator Responsibilities (36% vs. 14%) and Standard 6, Mentor Selection and Assignment (22% vs. 10%), but less likely to focus on Standard 8, Formative Assessment (8% vs. 24%) and Standard 9, Program Evaluation (31% vs. 43%). New programs were more likely than continuing ones to focus on Standard 1, Program Leadership (17% vs. 6%), but less likely to focus on Standard 3, Resources (0% vs. 14%). District-based programs were more likely than consortia to focus on Standard 2, Program Goals and Design (36% vs. 20%) and less likely to focus on Standard 3, Resources (0% vs. 20%) and Standard 5, Mentor Selection and Assignment (21% vs. 32%). (Table 2.10)

Themes across the standards. Each program is unique, so their individual planned improvements also showed great variation. One common theme was the need to revise elements of the program in response to budget cuts and/or projected lower numbers of new teachers. Programs also wanted to better communicate with and educate administrators; have a more standardized mentor selection process; better differentiate training for novice teachers; and improve their program evaluation instruments, analysis, and focus on impact.

IMPACT OF PROGRAMS ON TEACHER QUALITY, STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, & RETENTION

Impact on teacher quality. Seven programs indicated that they had some data on program impact on teacher quality. They noted the difficulty in defining this area and in collecting meaningful data that is easily analyzed. Data includes teacher and mentor surveys, collaborative assessment logs, ratings of novice teacher growth on the ICTD continuum or the Danielson framework, some examination of student progress, and a comparison of recordings of novice teachers at the beginning and end of the year. Programs typically concluded that teachers showed positive growth and increased quality during the year. None of the programs described using a control group, so it is impossible to tell whether the novice teachers improved because of the program or because they simply matured over the year. (Table 3.1)

Impact on student achievement. Three programs indicated that they had some data on program impact on student achievement. They looked at teacher surveys, change in student MAP scores, and evaluation forms and other formative assessment data. None of the programs was willing to assert a link between program activities and student achievement, and they noted the difficulty in analyzing this data and the complexity involved in examining student achievement and development. (Table 3.2)

Impact on teacher retention. Twenty programs indicated that they had some data on program impact on teacher retention. They used retention data, surveys, and interviews with teachers. Four programs described looking at longitudinal retention data over a period of years, including prior to receiving grant funding. Nine

programs noted that budget problems were having a big impact on retention figures, largely through RIFing of new teachers. Seven programs concluded that the program had a positive impact on teacher retention, and one noted that teachers who do not take the program seriously or complete all aspects of the mentor program are those who do not stay in the district.

Two programs also noted that, despite the best efforts of mentors and the entire program, they believed that some of the new teacher hires should not be working as teachers. One program noted that the positive impact of the induction program was not strong enough to outweigh the negative teacher climate in some buildings. Finally, one program noted that some new teachers will always leave the district for personal reasons despite the quality of the induction program. (Table 3.3)