

INTC Report on Previously Funded Programs

Fall 2012

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This Data Report serves to convey information related to data collected on induction and mentoring programs within the state of Illinois who had, prior to the 2011-12 academic year, received Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) induction grant funding. Effective 2011-12, this funding was eliminated. INTC staff administered a survey (the Previously Funded Programs Survey) in spring 2012 to these programs to discover the impact (if any) of the funding cuts.

Whenever possible, the data from the Previously Funded Programs Survey were compared to those of two other surveys. This allowed comparisons between three groups:

- Induction and mentoring programs receiving state funding (the “**Funded**” survey, 2010-11¹)
- Programs which previously received state funding² (the “**Previously Funded**” survey, spring 2012)
- Illinois districts which never received state funding and were never served by a funded program (the “**Unfunded**” survey, spring 2011)

The Funded and Previously Funded Surveys included induction programs run by districts as well as ROEs, universities, and other service providers. The Unfunded Survey was only of local school districts.

Tables and graphs of raw data appear in the Appendix, which is a separate document and is organized around the same sections as in this report. A detailed methodology section can also be found in the Appendix.

OVERVIEW OF DATA AND ORGANIZATION OF DATA REPORT

This report is organized into the following sections:

- Section 1: Program Characteristics
- Section 2: Impacts of Reduction in Funding
- Section 3: Additional Program Characteristics
- Section 4: Additional Program Successes and Challenges
- Section 5: Discussion

The Previously Funded Programs Survey consisted of two parts: the first part was completed by all participants and is represented in Sections 1 and 2; completion of the second part was optional and is represented in Sections 3 and 4. Data from Sections 1 and 3 were quantitatively collected through survey questions. Data from Sections 2 and 4 include qualitative data collected through open-ended survey items.

¹ This survey was in two parts: one submitted in fall 2010, and one in spring 2011.

² All of these programs had participated in the Funded survey the previous year when they still had ISBE induction grant funding.

SECTION 1: PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

Induction Components. For first-year teachers, induction components (i.e. new teacher-mentor pairing, new teacher workshops, etc.) were more likely to be required by the funded programs than by the previously funded or unfunded programs. The latter two types of programs more frequently reported such activities to be optional for first-year teachers or not offered at all, with the previously funded programs offering more components in general than the unfunded programs.

For second-year teachers, the previously funded programs required more induction components than the unfunded programs, and higher percentages of the unfunded programs had components that were not offered at all. The funded programs were not surveyed about components offered to second-year teachers.

Regarding experienced teachers new to the district, most previously funded programs reported offering orientation/training/workshops before school and having new teachers attend workshops specifically designed for new teachers. However, many other components, like formal mentor/mentee observations and the development of professional growth plans were reported as not being offered. Funded and unfunded programs were not surveyed about this information.

Induction Activity Coordinators. Unfunded programs overwhelmingly (74%) reported using administrators as their induction program coordinator. Coordinators in previously funded programs were split between an administrator and a program coordinator (30% each), and most of the funded programs reported using a team approach (31%) or an administrator or program coordinator (22% each).

Active Mentors. Most (79%) previously funded programs reported having between 1-50 new teachers in their program and between 1-40 mentors. This suggests there may be fewer mentors than novice teachers in these programs, with a mentor/novice ratio slightly larger than 1:1. Both the previously funded and unfunded programs report utilizing full time teachers as mentors considerably more than any other type (i.e. a full time administrator, retired teacher, full release mentor).

Initial Mentor Training. All three types of programs were asked to report the amount of time their mentors spent in initial training sessions for mentoring skills. Unfunded programs required significantly less training than funded and previously funded programs. Most (45%) unfunded programs required 8 hours or less with an additional 30% not requiring training at all. Additionally, 70% of funded and previously funded programs required between 8-10 hours of training. Only 10% of previously funded programs do not require it at all, and all of the funded programs have it as a requirement. Funding is clearly important to mentor training.

Meeting Frequency. All three types of programs required their mentors to meet with their mentees an average of once a week. There was not a significant difference in meeting times across the three types of programs.

Mentee Observation. Of the three types of programs, unfunded programs were less likely to require a specified amount of time that mentors need to observe mentees teach. Funded programs were slightly more likely to meet more frequently, with 51% requiring observations to occur once a month or once a quarter, compared to only 33% of unfunded programs and 41% of previously funded programs.

Mentor Training Attendance. Roughly half of the previously funded and funded programs required their mentors to attend training or workshops once a month or once a quarter, compared to 19% of unfunded programs. Most (50%) of the unfunded programs did not have a specified requirement for training attendance.

Record Submission. Programs were asked how often mentors and mentees had to submit a record of mentoring activities. Forty-one percent of unfunded programs reported that they did not require a specific frequency of record submission or did not require it at all, compared with 17% of previously funded programs and 5% of funded programs. More than a third of both funded and previously funded programs required documentation submission once a month or once a quarter, compared with 22% of unfunded programs.

Participation in Evaluation. When asked how often the mentors in each program were expected to participate in a formative or summative evaluation of their mentoring skills, 43% of funded programs required mentors to participate once a semester or once a year, compared with 30% of previously funded programs and 26% of unfunded programs. Additionally, 48% of the previously funded programs and 67% of unfunded programs either did not require participation in evaluation or did not have a specified frequency requirement.

Mentor Compensation. The previously funded and unfunded programs were asked to identify the types of compensation that mentors received. Both the previously funded and unfunded programs offered stipends as the main form of compensation. However, more unfunded programs offered no compensation (29%) than did previously funded programs (14%).

Discussion. Funding seems to have a noteworthy impact on the following areas: required induction components, time spent in initial mentor training, mentor training attendance requirements, and mentee observation requirements. To a lesser extent, it also impacts: record submission, mentors' participation in evaluation of mentoring skills, and mentor compensation.

SECTION 2: IMPACTS OF REDUCTIONS IN FUNDING

Data in this section were collected through the use of open-ended survey questions.

Program Adaptations. Participants were asked, "How have you managed to keep the program running without ISBE induction grant funding?" Most programs (64%) reported finding alternative funding sources, ranging from organizational funds to ROE funding. Other adaptations reported included staff member actions:

Our mentors have been willing to step up for little compensation and use their planning times because of no substitutes money for classroom observations, etc.

Internal training:

Our trained mentors have developed training modules which our building administrators present to all new teachers. This is done in very large groups, once per month.

Although this question was intended to elicit adaptations the programs had implemented, 52% of respondents took the opportunity to identify constraints they faced or specific ways the program had been cut. These included comments related to funding and the future of the program:

We have been using district funds, but I anticipate that after this round of new teachers complete the program, the program will be discontinued due to funding issues.

We are struggling to keep the New Teacher Mentor Program going. The lack of funds has had a negative impact on our program. The way we sustained the program this year was to go to half-day training sessions. Without funding, we may find that the program may not be sustainable. This program is valuable to new teachers and also to the mentors who participate.

This also included comments regarding specific program cuts:

Accountability for the total number of mentor-mentee meeting hours has been dropped.

Impacted Areas. Programs were asked, “Which areas of your program have been impacted the most by the loss of funding?” The areas of impact cited most included a reduction in time and resources dedicated to professional development and training, reduced stipends/monetary compensation, and a reduction in release time/substitute teacher coverage (for mentor-related activities like observations and training). A few responses included more general comments (i.e. “Programs are operating on a more limited basis”) relating to program cuts.

Minimal Impact. The survey asked participants, “Which areas of your program have not been impacted by the loss of funding or have been impacted the least?” The areas most cited were: the use of mentors as support for new teachers, the implementation of professional development and training for new teachers and mentors, and the continuation of monetary compensation for mentors. Four of the 27 indicated that all areas have been affected by the reduction in funding.

Desired Support. The survey asked participants, “What sort of assistance, support, or information would you most appreciate receiving regarding new teacher induction?” The responses were equally split between support related to: professional development/mentor training, access to resources/materials, and funding. There were also additional responses that included more general needs including:

We’d like support around ensuring new teachers understand it is their professional responsibility to take part in induction/mentoring program when Districts invest valuable resources into them.

Discussion. Although previously funded programs reported continued implementation of their induction programs, many utilized the open-ended survey questions to voice concern over the sustainability of their programs in light of the lack of ISBE funding. Most previously funded programs were not able to completely replace the money they lost when funding was eliminated. Even though many diverted district funds from other

activities, cut mentor compensation, and reduced program activities, they still described their funding situation as “unsustainable” and suggested that the programs may be “eliminated in the near future.”

Additionally, though several previously funded programs felt that they were still able to provide high-quality professional development, many reported cutting back on the amount and duration of these training sessions as a result of funding cuts. Likewise, though many reported compensating mentors, many also indicated they were not able to do so indefinitely. Induction programs could benefit from training that includes strategies for finding alternative funding, how to maximize professional development sessions, and tips for self-sustainability. Though this would not solve programs’ concerns regarding a decrease in release time, resources available to mentors, or staffing, it might help them find additional funding that would allow them to implement some of these items.

SECTION 3: ADDITIONAL PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

This section is the first of two representing data collected through questions in an optional survey continuation.

First-Year Supports. The survey asked, “Which additional supports do all or most of your first-year teachers receive?” Funded programs offered more additional year one supports than the unfunded and previously funded programs. These supports included (but are not limited to): the opportunity to network with teachers outside their individual schools, formally scheduled time to network with other new teachers, and videotaped observation for later reflection/discussion.

First-Year Compensation. Respondents were asked if first-year teachers were compensated for participation in induction and mentoring activities. Unfunded programs were more likely not to compensate first-year teachers than the funded or previously funded programs. Funded programs were more likely to utilize stipends as compensation, whereas previously funded programs used other incentives. All three reported using CPDUs as compensation.

Mentor Requirements. Respondents were asked to identify requirements necessary for becoming a mentor in their program. All three program types required their mentors to complete a successful minimum number of years teaching, though the funded and previously funded programs were more likely to do so than unfunded programs. The funded and previously funded programs were also more likely than the unfunded programs to require the following: formal application to the program, completion of mentor training program, letter(s) of recommendation, and a Master’s degree. Twenty-three percent of unfunded programs required potential mentors’ classrooms to be observed, compared to 11% of previously funded programs and only 3% of funded programs.

Ongoing Mentor Support. Programs were asked to identify the ongoing supports mentors receive. Funded programs were not asked this question. The previously funded programs reported more ongoing support for their mentors, occurring on a monthly

basis. Unfunded programs reported support occurring once or a few times a year, but 33% of the unfunded programs indicated not providing any ongoing support, compared with only 22% of previously funded programs.

Mentor/Mentee Meeting Provisions. Programs were asked, “How is time provided for regularly-scheduled meeting times between mentors and new teachers?” Over 80% of all three types of programs reported pairs meeting before/after school, during planning periods or during lunch only. Funded programs were more likely than the other two to provide additional meeting times like common planning periods or special meeting times each week.

Induction Responsibilities. Previously funded programs were asked to identify which entity—individual schools, districts, ROEs, universities, or other—was responsible for each induction activity. For all but one activity (Pays new teacher stipends), programs reported the district as being the main unit responsible. This is particularly relevant to the loss of state funding because most of the activities surveyed require monetary backing and several also require staffing.

Discussion. With districts being the main source of most of the induction activities occurring within the previously-funded programs, funding is of particular importance. With the onus on the districts, the loss of state funding forces districts to come up with alternative sources to fund items like mentor and new teacher training and mentor stipends. If alternative sources cannot be found, districts may be forced to cut the activities that may be most expensive or the ones that they feel are less impactful.

SECTION 4: ADDITIONAL PROGRAM SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

This section is the second of two representing data collected through questions in an optional survey continuation. Data in this section were collected through the use of open-ended survey questions. These responses were only collected from the previously-funded programs.

Successful Program Elements. The survey asked previously-funded programs, “What are the most successful elements of your induction program/new teacher induction activities?” Nearly half of the responses included mentors and/or professional development and training as a main strength. Others reported an improvement in school climate/professional relations among teachers and specific strengths like data collection and use of the Danielson Framework.

Specific Program Challenges. The survey asked previously-funded programs, “What specific challenges is your program facing?” A majority of the programs (69%) reported funding as the main hurdle, with fewer programs mentioning staffing (19%) or training (13%), which could be related to the decrease in funding.

Discussion. Consistent with data from Section 2, previously-funded programs identified their use and quality of mentors and professional development sessions as the main strength of their programs. They also identified funding as the main hurdle to overcome, noting that it affects other areas staffing and training time.

SECTION 5: DISCUSSION

This report shows that the previously funded programs were able to continue at nearly the same level of intensity they had when they were funded, albeit with significant sacrifice. For example:

- many mentors worked with little compensation,
- new teachers did not receive stipends,
- new teachers received less professional development,
- release time was not available for mentors and mentees who had to meet during their planning periods or after school, and
- programs relied on district funds which had been diverted from other valuable activities and which may be cut even further in the future.

This report also shows that the previously funded programs were able to provide more supports and services than did the unfunded programs. Our concern—and one voiced by many of the survey respondents—is that the previously funded programs will not be able to maintain their current levels of service for long. Many of those programs were operating with much the same staff as when they were funded: they already had trained mentors, were run by the same program coordinators, and had schools managed by the same principals. These people maintained institutional memory of what a quality induction program looks like and were aware of the importance of induction.

However, in a few years, the mentors and program coordinators and administrators may retire or change jobs. At that point, the programs may not be able to afford trainings for a new cadre of mentors. New principals may be hired who do not make induction a priority and have no background in supporting new teachers. It may be a challenge to find someone willing to coordinate an induction program with little release time or pay. At this point, the previously funded programs may start to look far more like the never-funded programs or even revert to a buddy-style mentoring system.

That outcome would also mean that the millions of dollars that Illinois invested in these programs have been wasted. From 2007-2012, Illinois spent \$36 million on induction. These funds were used to start new induction programs or fine-tune existing ones. Those programs served as models and resources for all of Illinois.

INTC is concerned about the impact of the funding loss and is doing much to fill the breach. Without state funding itself, INTC has been working to secure private grants, sponsorships, and other sources of income to allow it to provide no-cost and low-cost services across the state. Following is a list of INTC activities and plans for sustaining and nurturing current induction activities in Illinois.

Annual Induction Conference. INTC has received funding from the State Farm Companies Foundation to enable it to offer its annual Induction and Mentoring Conference in 2013 and 2014. This conference brings together induction programs from across Illinois to share ideas and learn from each other and from the conference presentations and keynotes. Thanks to generous sponsorship from the State Farm Companies Foundation, registration fees are only \$50, which should enable even cash-strapped programs to attend.

In 2013, the conference theme is “New Teacher Induction and the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA)”, which is very timely, and we expect to have good attendance due to broad interest in this important topic. The conference also has two special strands: one for new or developing programs, and one for small and/or rural programs. Both of these groups have special needs, and their new teachers often do not receive enough support. Finally, INTC will be offering free, one-on-one consulting at the conference. It is our expectation that the theme, strands, and consulting will draw programs to the conference and will also give them the knowledge and skills they need to enhance their support of new teachers.

Beginning Teacher Conferences. INTC also works directly with new teachers to provide an additional level of support. In 2013, we will be hosting two conferences: one in June for teachers finishing their first year in the classroom, and one in July with a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) focus. The June conference, “Y2: Moving Beyond Survival”, is currently in its fourth year. It has been very well received and its footprint forms the basis for the second new teacher conference. The new STEM conference is for all teachers who are finishing their first through fourth year in the classroom who teach any of the STEM content areas. This includes elementary teachers as well as middle and high school STEM teachers, and their mentors. Both conferences offer a motivating keynote speaker, content-area breakout sessions with expert presenters, and plenty of time for planning and networking. Thanks to generous funding from the State Farm Companies Foundation and local Illinois sponsors, the registration, meals, and overnight hotel room should be offered at no charge to attendees for both conferences.

Regional Induction Specialists. INTC has on staff five Induction Specialists, located across the state, who are available for direct work with districts, ROEs, and other induction providers. The Induction Specialists are able to provide a range of services including trainings (for mentors and administrators), one-on-one consulting, assistance in setting up a new program or improving an existing program, and program evaluation.

Local Induction Networks. INTC’s Induction Specialists have received a University of Illinois Public Engagement Grant to allow them to set up two local induction networks—one in the Peoria area and one near Champaign-Urbana. Approximately seven mentoring and induction programs—specifically including ones from smaller and rural districts—will be eligible for participation in each network. Each program will commit to at least one administrator, a program coordinator, and two mentors attending all three networking meetings. They will also commit to using the Illinois Induction Program Continuum for self-assessment and program development. Each networking session will contain introductory activities, professional development presentations, small group discussions, large group sharing, and structured work team time. Program participants will work together in district teams as well as network with other programs. A major goal of this project is to create a networking model that can be continued—and replicated—after the duration of the grant, thereby ensuring sustainability with local funding support.

Higher Education Induction Group. INTC has organized a group of faculty and staff from universities across Illinois to consider how their institutions can be more involved in induction. The group met during summer 2012 in a two-day Higher Education Induction Summit and has since held and scheduled follow-up conference calls and face-to-face meetings. Some universities are already providing induction support to their graduates;

others are considering individual or collective action to support new teachers in their own areas or across the state. The group recognizes the responsibility that universities have to ensure the continuing professional development of recent teacher education graduates. It also recognizes that quality induction is too important—and too expensive—to leave solely in the hands of local school districts.

Illinois Induction Guide. INTC has organized a statewide team of writers who are creating an online Illinois Induction Guide (IIG). The IIG is organized around the nine standards in the Illinois Induction Program Continuum and is intended to provide state-specific information that would be of use to both new and veteran induction programs. This free resource will be available in spring 2013 and will include advice, case studies, and downloadable resources. The IIG also includes a “Start-Up Guide”, which provides advice for new programs, and is already available on the IIG website inductionillinois.com.

Collaboration. INTC would also like to recognize the efforts made by many other organizations across Illinois to further the work of induction—providing support to novice teachers in their own districts, to regions, or across the state; advocating for the needs of new teachers; and doing research. INTC recognizes that institutions are stronger when they work together, and in keeping with the “Collaborative” spirit of our organization, we will continue serving as a convener of organizations and as a catalyst for cooperation.

The research in this report highlights the importance of funding and points to the dangers of benign neglect, so we look forward to a time when Illinois is able to restore induction funding. In the meantime, there is much work to be done but also many people and institutions committed to supporting new teachers. INTC is motivated to remain a driving force to help sustain induction across Illinois.