

# STATE-FUNDED INDUCTION AND MENTORING PROGRAMS IN ILLINOIS REPORT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NOVEMBER, 2009

### **Purpose of the Report**

This report includes information regarding activities conducted within state funded induction and mentoring programs in Illinois from October 1, 2008 to May 31, 2009. Similar reports are submitted biannually to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) by the Illinois New Teacher Collaborative (INTC) as evidence of the projects and progress within the individual sites funded by the ISBE Beginning Teacher Induction Program grants. These funded program sites are located throughout the state and represent the varying demographics found within school locations (urban, urban fringe, suburban, mid-sized and small town, and rural).

### **Content of the Report**

INTC staff collected and analyzed data for this report from 39 funded program sites which serve 198 school districts, 2,881 beginning teachers (first- and second-year teachers) and 1,813 mentors. Twenty-three funded programs are within single districts; 16 programs use a consortium structure. Funded programs submitted data electronically using survey questions referred to as Common Data Elements (CDE). In the spring of 2009, ISBE awarded 28 more program grants; however, no CDE data are available from them as yet. Their planned funding use is articulated in an appendix to the report.

The report includes data about specific work done as well as reflections by individual site representatives on their program progress and their plans for continued improvement during the 2009-2010 school year.

The report is divided into six sections based on specific CDE responses: conditions impacting programs; overviews of program structure, variations, and funding sources; professional development for beginning teachers, mentors, and administrators; and program evaluation. Perceived impact and planned improvements were included in each of these sections. The report concludes with a summary of promising practices found across programs, common challenges faced, and recommendations for further action.

### **Promising Practices/Common Threads**

The report documents several continuous improvement efforts of the programs since their initial funding, including:

- The importance and benefits of increased networking between beginning teachers and experienced teachers
- Formative assessments as an integral aspect of new teacher development
- Professional development opportunities for beginning teachers (both first- and second-year)

- Collaborative leadership increases across program sites
- An increased emphasis on data use in determining program effectiveness and in planning for continued program improvement

### **Challenges**

Common challenges were also mentioned by a number of funded programs including:

- Differentiation in induction and mentoring topics for new teachers can lead to greater understanding of developmental stages of teachers, revisions in training programs for mentors and administrators, and potential increase in program cost
- Differences in formative assessment, program evaluation and data collection and use across programs
- Improving or proving student achievement
- Budgetary and funding concerns

### **Recommendations**

This report makes three recommendations using the *Illinois Standards for Quality and Effectiveness for Beginning Teacher Induction Programs* as an important resource document.

Recommendation #1: Program assistance as well as teacher and administrator development should be organized around the *Illinois Standards for Quality and Effectiveness for Beginning Teacher Induction Programs*. The standards should be used as a resource for program self-assessment and as a basis for action planning in regards to the following recommendations.

Recommendation #2: Strong administrator professional development programs in relation to induction and mentoring should be articulated and shared throughout the state. Online training can be a component of this professional development. Training should include topics such as administrative roles in induction and mentoring, responsibilities of stakeholders, mentor activities, mentor tools, developmental stages of new teachers, funding, and research.

Recommendation #3: INTC, ISBE, SRI, and Illinois Education Research Council (IERC) can coordinate efforts in data collection and analysis. Currently, INTC, SRI International, and the IERC all function as agencies of data collection and analysis in relation to the ISBE induction and mentoring funded programs. While INTC examines the data collected by SRI and IERC, they are not used in the biannual reports. A collaborative effort among these three organizations could establish common expectations for data reporting that result in organized, synchronized results that are more practical and timely for funded program and INTC use.

The full report is available on the INTC website at:

**<http://intc.education.illinois.edu/>**