INTC Data Brief #4   July 2010

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This Data Brief, the fourth of five 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 resources, mentor/novice interactions, and formative assessment.

INTC will provide one more data brief concerning FY 2010 and an end-of-year final report:

- August 15:   Mentor, administrator, and novice trainings: spring CDE data
                  Standards 4, 6, and 7
- September 30:   Final report
                  Summary of the preceding five data briefs; standard 9; self-ratings for each standard; program summary & impact; plus 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 fall 2009 and 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:

- Standard 3, Resources: summary of tables 1.1 through 1.3 in the appendix
- Standard 7, Mentor/Novice Interactions: summary of tables 2.1 through 2.9 in the appendix
- Standard 8, Formative Assessment: summary of tables 3.1 through 3.11 in the appendix

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

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

One program, Will County, declined to seek continuation funding for the FY10 fiscal year. It filled out the fall 2009 CDE, but not the spring 2010 CDE. For internal consistency, none of Will County's responses on the fall 2009 CDE are included in this Data Brief. 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. For this data brief, INTC is only reporting on the 61 CDEs it received in spring 2010

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.

STANDARD 3: RESOURCES

Program costs, by category. Programs spent, on average, more money on mentor salaries and benefits than any other category of expenses. The average program spent 40% of its overall program costs on mentor salaries; although, the percentages varied from 0 (3 programs) to 96%. Programs spent an average of 16% of their total budget on coordinator salary and benefits (range: 0 to 60%); 13% on training expenses (range: 0 to 87%); and 8% each on supplies and materials (range: 0 to 25%) and new teacher stipends and benefits (range: 0 to 43%). Substitute teachers were also a moderately significant expense, with a 6% average (range: 0 to 52%). Programs spent, on average, 2% or less of the total budget on meals, clerical expense, mileage, evaluation, space rental, and other supports. Disaggregating the data reveals few differences between different types of programs. Perhaps the most obvious distinction is that district-based programs spent more than consortia on mentor salary and benefits (49% vs. 29%), and slightly less than consortia on coordinator salaries and benefits (12% vs. 20%). (Tables 1.1 & 1.2[1])

Impact of the ISBE grant funding process. An open-ended question asked programs how the ISBE grant funding process impacted their program design and implementation. Every respondent used the opportunity to describe how elements of the process negatively impacted their program in some major way. One third of programs complained that reduced funding from FY09 to FY10 meant that program elements had to be cut back, resulting in a loss of quality, and left programs scrambling for money mid-year. This was particularly difficult for new programs (mentioned by 40% of new programs vs. 29% of continuing programs). More than a quarter of programs (34% of district-based programs vs. 20% of consortia) wrote that program planning and implementation is difficult because grant cycle dates do not correspond with school academic years—especially because programs did not discover whether they would be funded until after the beginning of the fiscal and academic year. One quarter of programs (40% of new programs vs. 14% of continuing programs) described how difficult it is to plan for the future because of uncertainties regarding future funding availability and levels. One fourth of programs also described how delays in disbursement resulted in difficulties (from minor to "devastating") in planning or program implementation.

Other concerns—each raised by 7% of programs—include: future funding cuts would greatly reduce the quality of the program, or the program might cease to exist; even with continued funding, the program may not exist next year, or might exist in a greatly reduced state; and districts have had to pick up a much greater share of program costs. Because this question was open-ended, programs only listed their main concern or two, and may not have mentioned all of their difficulties. Overall, new programs seem to have been more negatively impacted by funding cuts and uncertainties.

Some programs also used the opportunity to write positive comments. Nearly half of all programs noted that, without the grant, the program—or specific key elements—would not exist. Also, 7% of programs noted that the grant and proposal process have been quite easy. (Table 1.3)

STANDARD 7: MENTOR/NOVICE INTERACTIONS

Expectations for novice/mentor interactions. Programs were far more likely to require that mentors spend a certain amount of time with first-year teachers than with second-year teachers (84% vs. 57%). In programs with some requirement, mentors had to spend slightly more time, on average, with first-year teachers than with second-year teachers (5.4 hours vs. 4.5 hours). This may be a sign of some program differentiation for first- and second-year teachers. (Tables 2.1, 2.2, & 2.3)

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[1] All tables referenced in this document are in the Data Brief #4 Appendix, a separate document.

Content requirements for novice / mentor interactions. All programs (among the 57 responding to this question) required that mentors cover certain topics with their protégées. The main topics were learning environment, reflection and professional growth, planning for instruction, and instructional delivery (required for first-year teachers by 95% or more of programs). A high percentage of programs selected nearly all of the multiple-choice options for this question; this raises the possibility that some program coordinators may have simply checked everything without consulting the actual requirements. Programs were least likely to check diversity (77% of programs) and human development and learning (68% of programs). There were few differences between requirements for first- and second-year teachers, suggesting some lack of differentiation. One main difference is that programs were more likely to require mentors of first-year teachers to cover "learning environment" (98% vs. 88% of mentors of second-year teachers). There were somewhat more differences between district-based and consortium-based programs, and between continuing and new programs, with the second member of each pair being more likely to have more required topics. This may reflect either real differences or simply the ease of checking every item on a multiple-choice list. (Tables 2.4 & 2.5)

Time provisions for novice / mentor meetings. For 77% of all programs, first-year teachers met with their mentors before or after school, during their planning periods, or during lunch. Some programs also ensured that first-year teachers had the same planning period as their mentor (44%), provided release time (43%), or provided meeting times each week, such as early dismissal days (33%). These provisions were much more common for consortia than for district-based programs (at least a 20-percentage-point difference for each), and consortia were also significantly less likely to state that these provisions were common across the entire program (12% vs. 57% for district-based programs). All percentages for second-year teachers are within a few percentage points as those for first-year teachers, suggesting that programs make similar provisions for both.

Table 2.8 shows that providing mentor/novice pairs with common planning periods or regularly scheduled meeting times were much more likely to occur in individual schools or districts than to be required for entire programs. (Tables 2.6, 2.7, & 2.8)

Other assistance for first-year teachers. Most programs provided first-year teachers with the opportunity to network with new teachers from other schools (in 73% of programs it occurred program-wide; in 22% it occurred in individual schools or districts). However, first-year teachers were much less likely to receive:

- a reduced number of course preparations (0 programs required; did not occur at all in 85%)
- a special classroom aide (0 programs required; did not occur in 92%)
- a prohibition against teaching the most demanding/undesirable courses (2% required, did not occur in 65%)
- and a prohibition from leading extra-curricular activities (3% required; did not occur in 68%).

These four activities are recommended by induction documents including Fulton, Yoon, & Lee (2005)[2]. Across the board, consortium-based and large programs were more likely than districts and small programs to have internal variation in requirements. (Table 2.9)

STANDARD 8: FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

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[2] Fulton, K., Yoon, I., & Lee, C. (2005). *Induction into learning communities*. Washington, DC: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. Retrieved November 19, 2005 from http://nctaf.org/documents/NCTAF_Induction_Paper_2005.pdf

Formative assessment process and format. All programs provided first-year teachers with some form of formative assessment, most typically through mentor observation reports (98%), novice self-reflection (85%), analysis of student work (74%), and analysis of student assessment data (72%). Fewer than half of programs used other mentor reports, administrator reports, analysis of other artifacts, or a portfolio. Again, the requirements for second-year teachers are quite similar to those of first-year teachers. This could imply that no differentiation is occurring. However, it is just as probable that second-year teachers participate in these formative assessment activities at a different level of depth than first-year teachers. The formative assessment process was typically formal, with around 60% of programs providing specific guidelines and requiring documentation for first- and second-year teachers. (Tables 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, & 3.4)

Mentor observations of novice teachers. All reporting programs required mentors to do classroom observations of their protégées. The number of observations varied by program, from once per year to once per week. On average, first-year teachers were observed somewhat more often than second-year teachers (5.4 times annually vs. 4.5 times). Around three-quarters of programs required pre/post conferences each time a mentor observed a beginning teacher; however, programs requiring more than six observations per year were much less likely (by 27 percentage points, for first-year teachers) to require such formality for every observation. One assumes that, as programs require a greater number of observations, they must demand less time and documentation for each one. Second-year teachers had similar requirements as first-year teachers, although only 71% of them received pre/post conferences for each observation. (Tables 3.5, 3.6, 3.7., & 3.8)

Time provisions for mentor observations of novice teachers. To provide time for mentors to perform classroom observation of first-year teachers, programs allowed them to use: release time on request (73%), planning periods (67%), regularly-scheduled release time (27%), full-release mentors (22%), and flexible-schedule (e.g. retired) mentors (22%). District-based programs were more likely to use full-release mentors (34% of districts vs. 4% of consortia), while consortia were more likely to provide release time, either on request (87% of consortia vs. 63% of districts) or regularly scheduled (39% of consortia vs. 19% of districts). However, consortia were much less likely to mandate the same provisions across the entire program (17% of consortia vs. 59% of districts), and instead allowed individual schools or districts to provide time to best fit in their individual contexts. Most percentages for second-year teachers were within a few percentage points as those for first-year teachers; although, a greater percentage of programs provided full-release mentors for first-year teachers than for second-year teachers (22% vs. 14%) This difference could perhaps be impacted by the number of programs which do not yet have any second-year teachers.

Table 3.11 compares programs that mandated the same observation provisions for all participants and those that allowed schools or districts to set their own provisions. Full-release mentors were more likely to be used in programs with common provisions, while all other provisions were more common for programs in which provisions vary internally. (Tables 3.9, 3.10, & 3.11)