New Teacher Center

Making a Case for Policy Investments that Help New Teachers Succeed

Research shows that teacher quality is the single most critical factor in whether students succeed.[1] However, efforts to improve teacher quality are often thwarted by the high rates of turnover, with 40-50 percent of public school teachers leaving within the first five years[2], and even higher rates in schools serving less advantaged students.[3] Such levels of attrition have significant consequences for our nation's schools.

The Question:

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF TEACHER TURNOVER?

- **Perpetuating Inequity**
  New teachers are disproportionately assigned to the most challenging schools and classrooms disproportionately populated by low-income and minority students.[4] Despite wonderful intentions, these new teachers have yet to develop their skills and knowledge. As a result, they are often less effective than experienced colleagues in helping students learn.[5] Thus, the students most in need of the most highly accomplished teachers are more likely to be taught by the least effective ones.

- **Loss of Highest Quality Teachers**
  It is not the least qualified, but the most promising teachers that usually leave the profession first. Teachers with the highest scores on certification tests are twice as likely to leave as those with the lowest scores.[6] Without guidance and support, these promising teachers fail to reach their peak level of effectiveness and generally leave out of frustration.[7]

- **Loss of Education Dollars**
  The inability to retain new teachers has a significant fiscal impact on school budgets. For example, Houston Public Schools loses $35 million in costs related to teacher turnover, while New York City public schools lose about $115 million each year. The National Commission on Teaching & America's Future estimates that the nation loses $7.3 billion annually due to teacher turnover.[8] This represents billions of lost taxpayer dollars due to inefficiencies in our system and our inability to hold onto teachers.

- **Reduced School Capacity**
  A revolving door of staff inhibits the ability of schools to develop human capital, create strong instructional programs, and create educational environments where kids can thrive.[9] While some level of attrition may be desirable, high levels of turnover among the best new teachers significantly impede our efforts to provide a high-quality education for all students.

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Supporting new teachers is a critical strategy for improving retention and achieving excellence in teacher quality. High-quality mentoring and induction can reduce the rate of new teacher attrition, accelerate the professional growth of new teachers, and provide a positive return on the investment through reduced personnel costs and greater student learning gains.

The Answer:

HIGH-QUALITY INDUCTION CAN HELP PROVIDE A SOLUTION

- **Reduced New Teacher Attrition**
  One of the principal benefits of high-quality teacher induction is the reduction in the rate of teacher turnover, enabling schools to hold onto their best and brightest teachers. Two studies have shown that 88% of new teachers remain in teaching after six years after participating in a support program that incorporates the key elements of effective induction. Retention rates increase to 94% when including teachers who move into school and district leadership positions.[10]

- **Improved Student Learning**
  High-quality induction improves teacher effectiveness and contributes to greater student learning. Two studies have shown that students taught by teachers who receive comprehensive induction support for two years demonstrate significantly greater learning gains. New teachers in these programs are about as effective as their more experienced peers, despite being assigned to classrooms with more challenging students.[11]

- **Return on Investment/Cost Savings**
  An upfront investment in high-quality induction yields cost savings and improved student outcomes. A recent analysis found that, in Chicago, the cost of recruiting and training a replacement for each teacher who leaves the classroom is between $17,000 and $22,000.[12] New teacher support programs cut those costs dramatically by slashing attrition rates and accelerating the growth of new teacher effectiveness. A NTC cost-benefit study shows that every **$1.00** spent on high-quality induction provides a return on investment of **$1.66** over a period of five years.[13] These potential savings make the cost of high-quality induction models a wise and affordable investment.

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