

Comprehensive Induction Support in MPS: Aligning District-wide and School-based Mentoring

The goal of comprehensive induction in MPS is to provide continuous support to new teachers by (1) building capacity at the local school to ensure that new teachers are part of a supportive, thriving professional community and (2) providing direct individual support to new teachers. Recent studies of induction have indicated that it is not enough simply to provide individual mentor support to new teachers decontextualized from their local school site, but instead, that the quality of the individual school context matters a great deal in a new teacher's decision to stay or leave (Humphrey, Wechsler, Bosetti, Park, & Tiffany-Morales, 2008). An individual district appointed mentor, no matter how talented he or she may be, cannot alone be expected to make up for a school culture and climate that is not a viable, positive professional learning community for its teachers, and especially for its new teachers. Creating a supportive environment for new teachers so they will stay at the school, in the district, and in the profession is the whole school's responsibility.

This comprehensive vision for induction in MPS is defined in the *Teacher Induction for Urban Education Handbook*. This Handbook describes the roles of all of the major stakeholders in induction, including the district, the school, the Learning Team, the MTEA, and institutions of higher education—all of whom have an interest in supporting and retaining new teachers. The MPS vision for induction specifically includes both building a supportive school environment and providing a district-based mentor. Aligning these various kinds of support for new teachers is critical to the success of a comprehensive system of induction support.

Within the district, the first level of support, *school-based induction support*, is focused on building capacity at the school to which new teachers are assigned. School-based support is based on the philosophy that induction is a function of school climate. It draws on the resources of the school's administrator, the school's Learning Team, and the entire staff of the school as having responsibility for welcoming and supporting new teachers and making their entry into teaching as smooth as possible. At each school, a school-based mentor should be identified to spearhead building capacity at the school for supporting new teachers.

The most important function of school-based induction is to assure that new teachers are on the minds of everyone in the school and are successful in their work. School-based induction support may take several forms. It may be an individual teacher from the school building who is identified and released or reimbursed to lead this work, or it may be an individual that the building administrator hires specifically for the purpose

of supporting new teachers within the school context. It may be a team that pulls together to make sure a new teacher's needs are met. Whoever has assigned responsibility for helping to establish a climate of support for new teachers also helps the school staff understand the requirements of PI34 and encourages staff participation in the PDP process.

The second level of induction support is an *individually designated district-based mentor* who provides one-on-one support to new teachers. These mentors are assigned from the district and have specified caseloads of new teachers. The success of district-based mentors depends on their ability to provide specific support in the subject and/or grade level or assignment in which their new teacher mentees are working.

Alignment and Training for Induction Support

It is critical that induction support across these two levels is aligned and coordinated at the district level. This will require that the newly-appointed Coordinator of mentoring and induction in Human Resources work collaboratively with other district-level mentors, district staff that have direct responsibility for school-based induction support, the Mentor Board, and the Teacher and Principal Quality Workgroup of the Milwaukee Partnership Academy. District wide mentoring and school-based induction support should work in relationship to one another to ensure that each new teacher has a positive experience, feels comfortable asking for assistance, and has the opportunity to work with highly skilled teachers who have demonstrated their expertise in the classroom.

The training of district and school-based mentors should take into account both their common and different purposes. The heart of mentoring is supporting new teachers so that they can be effective in fostering their students' learning. The central question that drives all induction activities is:

What will it take to support and sustain new teachers so that they and their students will succeed?

This means that induction support is focused not only on helping new teachers navigate "the system" of the school and the district, but that such support is essentially concerned with (1) helping new teachers create classrooms where learning takes place and where good classroom management is a function of the high quality of teaching and learning, and (2) creating capacity at the school itself to support new teachers as part of a functional, effective professional learning community.

The Critical Role of the School-based Induction Support in Relationship to District-based Mentoring

District-based mentors have many important responsibilities, including providing direct classroom modeling and support to the new teacher, sharing important content and pedagogical expertise, using a “hands-on approach” to ensuring that classrooms are well equipped and a classroom climate established to meet students’ needs, implementing district and school curriculum initiatives and practices and working with other district mentors to plan professional development opportunities for new teachers. Additionally, district level mentors have the responsibility for assuring that the initial educators they work with know about PI34, the PDP process, and the resources provided by MPS to support them in meeting these PI34 obligations.

While the district-based mentor will collaborate with the school to ensure that the new teacher is welcomed and becomes a part of the school, the school itself must have a well developed process for supporting new teachers and other staff. This is the capacity-building aspect of induction support in MPS. It is recommended that the DPI Mentor resource dollars (\$375 per new teacher, to be matched by the school) continue to be used to support these school-based induction efforts.

The chart below provides guidance for the important role of school-based support for new teachers.

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| <p>A leadership structure is in place that routinely reviews the induction of new staff and addresses their needs.</p> | <p><i>Primary role:</i> Learning Team has induction as an agenda item, reviews progress, and plans school-based activities for new teachers as needed. DPI resources might be used to support a particular workshop, or planning session.</p> |
| <p>A school-based mentor is designated for each new teacher. This means that new teachers will have someone in the</p> | <p><i>Primary role:</i> To help build capacity by aligning school practices to support new staff and to ensure that one’s designated mentee has a “go to” person and is becoming a part of the school. The school-based mentor will help the new teacher negotiate school policies and be a part of a positive force—sometimes despite challenging circumstances. Preferably, this person is a teacher who does work similar to the mentee; is acknowledged as</p> |

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| <p>building looking out for them, as well as a district-mentor who provides direct, in classroom, teaching support.</p> | <p>teacher leader in their school based on skill in the classroom and skill as a leader; has strong collaborative skills; and is committed to induction. The process of selecting the school-based mentor could occur through self and peer nominations and be used to elevate and emphasize the importance of this position. DPI resources might be used for release or comp time for mentor and mentee meetings, observations, and special training events.</p> |
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Core responsibilities for school-based mentors include:

- support assigned new teachers in their building and help them with the school’s unique mission, practices and procedures (including *Teacher Induction for Urban Education Handbook*)
- work with district-based mentors, principal, and Learning Team to build capacity in the building to support new teachers based on the *MPS Teacher Induction for Urban Education Handbook* (e.g., advocate for positive treatment of new teachers, ensure that new teachers do not have most challenging students, make PD opportunities available).
- check-in with mentee regularly to see how things are going – providing social, emotional or instructional support as needed and connecting with other resources in the building (e.g., literacy coach, math teacher leader).
- Support the PDP process required for the building’s initial educators; have the opportunity to be trained as a PDP reviewer; may serve on the PDP team of new teachers other than those they formally mentor
- in cases where there is more than one school-based mentor, join other school-based mentors in the building to ensure that instructional resources are available to new teachers and that the interests of new teachers are regularly considered at staff meetings, in routine decision-making, etc.

Evaluation of Comprehensive Induction Support

Just as induction support itself should be aligned and coordinated, so should the evaluation of its components. Specifically, there is a need to evaluate the effectiveness of mentors in a consistent manner, irrespective of the source of funding. Further, such evaluations should be both formative and summative. This includes data regarding

both inputs and outcomes. A short quarterly, web-based survey could be given, for example, to each new teacher to provide ongoing feedback to district mentors and those who provide school-based induction support.

Evaluation questions regarding *inputs* might focus on, for example:

Time Issues

- How much time do mentors spend with their mentees? *Does each mentee get the same amount of time? Do mentors spend more time with a struggling mentee, and how would that affect their caseload?*
- How much time are mentees and mentors given for professional development/spend in professional development?
- How much time is allowed for developing a professional relationship between principal/administration and mentor?
- How much time is allotted for school-based mentor and mentee?
- Is the school-based mentor given release time with and without the mentee, or just with the mentee?
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Communication Issues

- How and what kind of information is shared from and to all stakeholders: mentors, mentees, district, school, community?
- What relationships exist between principal and mentor, principal and mentee, mentor and mentee, staff and mentor (including Learning Teams, math teacher leader, literacy coach, etc.)?

Alignment

- Is there coordinated planning and delivering of curriculum and instruction among the following: a school's administration and mentor; Literacy coach, math teacher leader, and school-based mentor; MPS mentors and MTEC/UWM mentors; mentors/induction programs and local IHEs?

Evaluation questions regarding *outputs* might include, for example:

New Teacher retention: Experts say if teachers stay past five years, they will stay in the district.

- Does mentoring improve retention rates in the school?
- Does mentoring improve retention rates in the district?

Improved Teacher Quality

- What characteristics do new teachers who are mentored demonstrate in the classroom? (*e.g., student engagement and motivation, high expectations set, made good use of state curriculum framework*)
- How do new teachers who are mentored develop as professionals? *Are teachers realizing their full potential and is this supported and respected by their staff at the school and district level?*
- What is the student learning of mentored new teachers? How does it compare across mentors?

Questions/issues needing further deliberation:

1. Where are potential overlaps in mentor support for initial educators?
2. Where are potential holes in support for initial educators?
3. How does the district assure that accurate records are kept regarding who being mentored by whom, including individual school-based?
4. How does the district provide targeted opportunities for all Literacy Coaches and Math Teacher Leaders to be trained as PDP reviewers?
5. How can electronic support best complement other forms of in-person mentoring?
6. What district oversight exists for mentoring?

Selected References on Induction

- Humphrey, D. C., Wechsler, M. E., & Bosetti, K. R. (2007, February). *Teacher induction in Illinois and Ohio: A preliminary analysis*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.
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Summary of MPS Mentor Programs for Teachers and Interns

| Mentor Type/ Numbers | Target Group | Source/Supervision | Funding Stream/ Resource Considerations |
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| Special Education Mentors for teachers in MRP classrooms (7) | Initial educators new to MPS (post intern status) or new to special ed in special ed MRP classrooms. Eligible to receive support for first 5 years of employment. | Supervised (Peggy Holtman and Claudia Weaver-Hendrickson) 1/10 mentor/intern ratio Minimum of 3 yrs expertise in the disability for which they are mentoring; responsible for providing information about PI34/PDP process These mentors serve for two years with the option for a third. | Contractual, MRP Mentor Board (separate from Mentor Board for District Mentor Program) |
| UWM Special Education Mentors (6) | Students in UWM special ed alternative teacher prep program (interns); Permit teachers are supported also. | Supervised by Dare Boling Try to have a caseload of 50% first-year and 50% second-year interns, but weighted toward first-year 1/10 mentor/intern ratio Can serve up to a 4-year term | Hired by MPS |
| MTEC Special Ed/ Bilingual Ed Mentors (4) | Students in MTEC alternative teacher prep program (interns); classes are provided by NTEC; mentors deliver curriculum and support one night a week | 3 Special Ed, 1 Bilingual 12 retired educators supporting interns 1/10 mentor/intern ratio Can serve up to a 4-year term Supervised by MTEC Leadership | 4 mentors hired by MPS 12 retired educators hired by MTEC |
| MTEC/SIFI Instructional Coaches | Teachers in SIFI schools not limited to initial educators; permit and special license teachers; For teachers 0-2 years in the district | Hired and supervised by MTEC Supervised by Patricia Colleton-Walsh | \$265,000 grant directly from DPI to MPS; DPI selected MTEC as vendor for MPS; funded for 2007-08 (second year of funding) Funding source; Title I Quality Professional Development and Teacher Retention Grant |

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| Other Mentors, including direct hiring of retired teachers and/or MTEC | Including but not limited to initial educators | Rehired retirees have no formal evaluation except at building level (building leadership decides to rehire or not); employed one year at a time | Contracted directly by schools using individual budgets; multiple purposes that may include support to initial educators |
| City-Wide (District) Mentors (15) | Initial Educators in Year 1 or 2; mentor caseloads may be filled out with permit teachers | Mentors selected by Mentor Board; director/supervisor hired by and housed in HR; district mentors responsible for providing information about PI34/PDP process | Contractual; director funded by board; Mentor Board separate from MRP Mentor Board |
| School-based Induction | Initial educators and teachers new-to-building | School-based support; Induction Plan supported by Learning Teams; provide support in all areas (Meeting PI 34 requirements) | \$25,000 grant from DPI used for training; WEAC provides training through DPI grant; Direct support from district/OILS for PD Supervisor, New Teacher Seminars, coordination of monthly orientation seminars (with HR, MTEA); \$375 per school per new teacher matched at school and used at discretion of building administrator for induction support |
| Online electronic/virtual induction support (VIP) | Self selected participation of new teachers Matrix used for self-assessing | Facilitated by N. Freeman-Peters and N. Moga Support provided | Direct support from district— Title IID funds |