

# SUPPORTING NEW TEACHERS:

## The Importance of the First Year in Ensuring Success and Retention

### A Report of the Prichard Committee's Team on Teacher Effectiveness

MAY 2013

#### BACKGROUND: THE WORK OF THE PRICHARD COMMITTEE'S TEAM ON TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS

The Prichard Committee's Team on Teacher Effectiveness (the Team) was created in the summer of 2012 to review current practices and make recommendations for comprehensive improvement in the way Kentucky prepares, recruits, supports, retains and compensates teachers. The team consists of members of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, policy leaders, advocates, educators and business representatives. This broad representation is meant to create and deepen understanding of the need to address multiple strategies to ensure a high-quality teacher workforce for Kentucky.

The team's agenda includes a review of the following areas and their impact on ensuring an effective teacher for every child:

- Teacher recruitment/Preparation
- Teacher hiring/Induction/Internship
- Teacher continuing education/Professional development/Leadership
- Teacher retention/Working conditions
- Teacher compensation/Tenure
- Teacher evaluation/Student achievement

This issue brief provides an overview of the team's initial findings related to Kentucky's efforts to support and enhance the success of beginning teachers. The information presented in this report reflects the Team's research and review of state policies and efforts. Specifically, this brief summarizes findings from the 2011 Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) Kentucky survey, review of Kentucky's mandatory Teacher Internship Program (KTIP) and input received directly from teachers through presentations and interviews with the Team.

The Team will consider this and other information in crafting its final recommendations for policy and practice changes to improve teaching quality in Kentucky. The Team's final report is to be published by the end of 2013.

#### SNAPSHOT OF KENTUCKY'S TEACHERS

- Kentucky has 30 teacher preparation programs.
- There were 42,708 practicing teachers in the state in the 2010-2011 school year.
- Kentucky produces about 3,200 new teachers and replaces about 5 percent of its teacher force each year.

#### GETTING STARTED AS A TEACHER: KENTUCKY'S MANDATORY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

##### KEY HIGHLIGHTS & FINDINGS OF KTIP REVIEW

- Mandatory one-year program for all new teachers
- Each new teacher intern assigned a beginning-teacher committee composed of school principal, resource teacher and teacher educator
- Beginning-teacher committee serves dual role as evaluator and support team
- One-year program that seeks to certify teachers and acclimate them to classroom may be ambitious; desire to extend the program not unanimous among teachers and has budgetary limitations
- Documentation requirements considered burdensome and unnecessary by many teachers
- Review process established by Education Professional Standards Board to respond to teacher concerns and to streamline processes

KTIP is a mandatory, one-year program all new teachers and out-of-state teachers with less than two-years experience must successfully complete to be eligible for certification. The requirements for KTIP are established by the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB).<sup>1</sup> These requirements align with the 12 teaching tasks of the Kentucky Teacher Standards.<sup>2</sup>

The tasks are organized into three categories:

##### 1. Classroom Teaching

- Teaching and Learning Context
- Lesson Plan
- Classroom Observation
- Lesson Analysis and Reflection

##### 2. Professional Responsibilities

- Collaborate to Address Special Learning Needs
- Assess and Manage Professional Growth
- Leadership

### 3. Instructional Unit

- Designing the Instructional Unit
- The Assessment Plan
- Designing Instructional Strategies and Activities
- Organizing and Analyzing the Results/Reflecting on the Impact of Instruction
- Communication and Follow-Up

### KTIP AS EVALUATION AND SUPPORT

Through KTIP each new teacher is assigned a beginning-teacher committee composed of the school principal, a resource teacher (generally a teacher with the same certification as the teacher intern) and a teacher educator appointed by a state-approved, teacher-training institution. Based on evaluation and observations conducted over the year, this committee ultimately decides whether a teacher should be recommended for state certification.

In addition to its evaluative role, the beginning-teacher committee also is tasked to help the new teacher become an effective educator. The EPSB notes that KTIP “is designed to provide assistance to new teachers and support them in experiencing a successful first year in the classroom. The program strives to strengthen effective teaching skills and assist the intern teacher in recognizing behaviors that are ineffective or counterproductive to student learning.”<sup>3</sup>

The resource teacher, who is required to spend at least 70 hours working with a new teacher, can play a particularly important role as mentor and guide. The Kentucky TELL survey results, which will be discussed in more detail further in this brief, indicate that not all new teachers are receiving the same high-level support.<sup>4</sup> In 2008 a KTIP Task Force established by the Advisory Committee on Internships recommended that the resource teacher not play the dual roles of evaluator and mentor. Rather, the KTIP program would be strengthened if the resource teacher served only as observer and mentor, explicitly to support the teacher’s growth and development.<sup>5</sup>

Determining that teachers have the skills needed to succeed in the classroom and helping them to acclimate to the profession are challenging tasks under the statutory timeline of one school year. A pilot program implemented from 2003-2006 extended the new-teacher internship to two years. Evaluation of this pilot program, as well as some evidence from the teacher quality enhancement grant, indicates that some teacher participants appreciated the extra year. Kentucky, however, was not able to sustain the two-year program due to budgetary limitations.

### KTIP DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS – A BALANCING ACT

The KTIP requires teacher interns to document completion of the 12 teaching-standard tasks. The EPSB provides teacher interns a handbook and templates<sup>6</sup> to guide the documentation and completion of these tasks.

These documentation requirements are a method of external validation, in part because of the high-stakes nature of the program linked to the recommendation for or against certification. When denied a recommendation for certification by the school-level committee, the teacher intern may request an appeal to the EPSB. If an EPSB appeal review also results in a negative ruling for the teacher, the teacher may appeal that finding to Circuit Court. Former EPSB Executive Director Phillip S. Rogers, in an interview with the Team, noted that the documentation of the 12 tasks is fundamental to the appeal review since the teacher intern’s case will be reviewed by a separate committee (or court) that will rely almost exclusively on the documentation provided.

Although the documentation requirements serve a legitimate and important programmatic role, many teachers in the KTIP view these paperwork requirements as overly burdensome. Teacher presenters to the Team referenced “five-inch notebooks” and noted the requirements resulted in diverting time and attention from tasks that would more directly improve classroom practice.

EPSB tries to respond to these teacher concerns through an on-going review process. Every two years a new-teacher survey is administered to gather information from interns and resource teachers. Findings from these surveys are shared with the Kentucky Advisory Council for Internships and the board. The board has also established focus groups to further understand teacher concerns and to streamline requirements. The EPSB was quick to respond to the concerns raised by teachers and worked to revise required tasks and task templates of the KTIP program. Members of the Prichard Committee were part of the group that led focus groups to review these updated task templates. The EPSB will review these modified tasks as part of their spring 2013 board retreat.

#### KEY HIGHLIGHTS & FINDINGS OF TELL SURVEY REVIEW

- The type of support teachers value differs based on experience level.
- New teachers find more direct support that fosters interaction with other teachers to be most valuable.
- Teachers report inconsistency in the quality of support provided.
- The level and quality of support has an impact on teachers’ career plans.
- Mentoring is an important support for new teachers.
- Like all supports, the quality of mentoring support varies.

## PROVIDING EFFECTIVE SUPPORT TO BEGINNING TEACHERS

Teacher presentations made to the Team and analysis of the 2011 TELL statewide survey underscore the importance of effective teacher support. Support for all teachers, beginning and experienced, is critical to their ability to succeed and influences their decisions to remain in the profession. These resources provide some insight into what constitutes effective support, and they can be used to advance the preparation and induction of beginning teachers. They can also be leveraged and translated into the training and support role of KTIP teacher-committee members.

## HELPFUL NEW TEACHER SUPPORTS

The survey results indicate that the exact type of support teachers feel is important depends on their level of experience. More seasoned teachers, for example, may feel “supported” when they are included in decision making. Beginning teachers are helped by more-targeted support that fosters interaction and direct learning opportunities with other teachers and school professionals, such as new teacher orientation, a formal mentor/new teacher relationship, interaction with school and teacher leaders, and common planning time with other teachers.

Although many beginning teachers participating in the TELL survey indicate that some supports are in place, the survey report notes that some teachers do not receive critical first-year support.

The inconsistency of support affects not only teacher success but also teachers’ employment plans. The survey report concluded: “New teachers who want to remain working in their current school are significantly more likely to have received support than those who want to remain teaching, but move to another school.”

The following table shows the type of support the teachers received as reported by those who plan to stay in their current school or move to another school.

## THE ROLE OF MENTORS

One key support system new teachers can receive is a high-quality mentor. An effective mentor can play a valuable role in a teacher’s early career experiences and success. As noted previously, the KTIP program is partially designed to provide beginning teachers with this mentor-like support through its teacher committee. The role of the resource teacher who is required to spend at least 70 hours with the new-teacher intern is particularly important. However, presentations to the committee and the TELL survey indicate inconsistencies in the mentor support for Kentucky’s new teachers.

First, **not all new teachers are assigned a mentor.** Fifteen percent of teachers who responded to the survey indicated that they were never assigned a mentor. Second, for those teachers who were assigned a mentor, teachers reported **varying levels of engagement and varying quality in the support received.** More than 10 percent of teachers responding to the survey indicated that they never met with their mentor on important activities such as developing lesson plans and reviewing student work. Further, nearly 40 percent of teachers indicated that their mentor did not provide effective emotional support or effective help in instructional strategies, and nearly half of teachers felt their mentor did not provide effective support in areas such as classroom management and compliance with policies and procedures.

New Teacher Support by Immediate Future Employment Plans			
New Teacher Support Offered	% Indicating They Received Support		
	Stayers	Leavers	Difference
Regular communication with principals, other administrator or department chair	88.5	64.0	24.5
Formal time to meet with mentor during school hours	52.8	32.7	20.1
Access to professional learning communities where I could discuss concerns with other teacher(s)	73.1	57.3	15.8
Common planning time with other teachers	74.2	62.4	11.8
Seminars specifically designed for new teachers	72.6	60.9	11.7
Release time to observe other teachers	44.8	34.5	10.3
Formally assigned mentor	86.1	76.2	9.9
Reduced workload	14.9	8.3	6.6
Orientation for new teachers	85.3	81.5	3.8
I received no additional support as a new teacher.	12.2	19.7	-7.5

The following table shows the mentoring activities reported by new teachers.

Frequency of Mentoring Activities Reported by New Teachers			
Mentoring Activity	Never	Sometimes	At Least Once Per Week
Observing my mentor's teaching	37.5	54.4	8.2
Analyzing student work	14.0	58.3	27.7
Reviewing results of student assessments	13.2	61.1	25.7
Aligning my lesson planning with the state curriculum and local curriculum	12.2	54.2	33.6
Developing lesson plans	11.1	56.3	32.6
Addressing student or classroom behavioral issues	7.3	54.8	38.0
Reflecting on effectiveness of my teaching together	5.6	57.2	37.2
Being observed teaching by my mentor	5.5	84.0	10.5

TELL Kentucky: Creating Supportive School Conditions for Enhancing Teacher Effectiveness

As Kentucky works to understand, interpret and address the findings from the TELL survey, it should consider the work done by the New Teacher Center which conducted the TELL survey. The Center has established a series of state policy recommendations to guide the development of effective teacher mentoring programs. This report highlights three general areas state policy should address which include the selection, training and assignment/caseload management of mentors.<sup>7</sup>

## CONCLUSION - CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADVANCING NEW-TEACHER INDUCTION AND SUPPORT

The final report of the Team on Teacher Effectiveness will evaluate the key highlights and findings across all policy areas and make recommendations for how Kentucky can enhance its efforts to support teacher success. Specific to the areas of new-teacher support and induction reviewed in this brief, the Team will consider the following questions:

- **How can EPSB ensure effective balance between the evaluative and supportive objectives of the KTIP program?**
  - Are the roles of teacher committee members effective in supporting and evaluating teachers?
  - What steps can be taken to ensure the consistent implementation of KTIP across all schools so all teachers receive a high-quality teacher committee?
  - Should the state consider expanding the program over a two-year period? What resources would be required?
- **Building on the changes EPSB has already put in place to reduce redundancies in tasks, how can EPSB establish clearer methods to continuously evaluate and streamline the documentation requirements for KTIP?**
  - How often should these processes and tasks be reviewed?

- **How can Kentucky help ensure that all teachers receive effective support?**
  - How can these findings be effectively leveraged and communicated to school leaders and integrated into teacher training programs as well as the training of KTIP teacher committee members?
- **How can the TELL survey results and teacher presentations be translated to help Kentucky advance the role and success of teacher mentors more consistently across the state?**
  - How can these findings be communicated to members of the KTIP beginning teacher committees to support more consistent implementation?

<sup>1</sup><http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/kar/016/007/010.htm>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.epsb.ky.gov/teacherprep/standards.asp>

<sup>3</sup>Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB).

<sup>4</sup>The TELL survey identifies a new teacher as 3 years experience or less; KTIP program is for first year teachers.

<sup>5</sup>Kentucky Advisory Council on Internships, Minutes, November 2008

<sup>6</sup>[http://www.epsb.ky.gov/internships/ktipforms11\\_12.asp](http://www.epsb.ky.gov/internships/ktipforms11_12.asp)

<sup>7</sup><http://www.newteachercenter.org/sites/default/files/ntc/main/resources/brf-ntc-policy-state-teacher-induction.pdf>



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**This issue brief is based on research funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.**

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