

# **Teacher Induction Program Evaluation (2010-2011)**

## **Executive Summary**

An evaluation of the Teacher Induction Program (TIP) for Duval County Public Schools was conducted in the summer of 2010 to determine the extent to which the current program is accomplishing its goal of *providing supervised support services that enable novice teachers to meet beginning teacher requirements as defined by Florida Statute 1012.56(7)b*. Although facilitating completion of beginning teacher requirements within specified timelines is important, the *effectiveness* of program services delivered to novice teachers and the resulting positive impact of these services on student achievement are more critically important. These program outcomes directly support the mission of the school district, and Goal 3 of the district's strategic plan which seeks to *hire, develop, support and retain the best teachers and principals in the nation for all schools*. The evaluation considered the following questions:

- How successful was TIP at facilitating the process of completing beginning teacher requirements within recommended timeframes (180 days) for teachers newly employed in the school district?
- What patterns of Florida Accomplished Practices were identified by principals as needs for improvement based on initial classroom observations of teachers in TIP?
- What feedback about program quality and services was received from the perspective of beginning teachers who participated in the 2009-2010 Teacher Induction Program (TIP)?
- How much and what kind of professional development was completed by beginning teachers who participated in TIP?
- What levels of student achievement were reported for students of novice teachers (1-3 years of experience) in Duval County Public Schools as measured by the FCAT in the spring of 2010?

Supporting new teachers as they complete certification requirements is essential for both assuring teacher quality and maintaining high levels of teacher retention in the district. Teaching quality is one of the most important factors in promoting student achievement\* and there is general agreement that the first three years of experience for “novice” teachers are critical.\* A policy brief published by the New

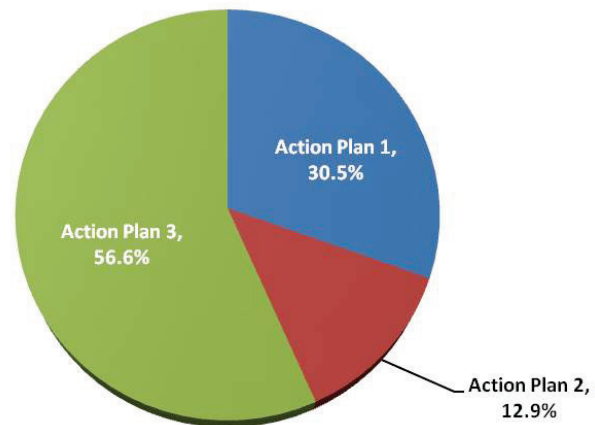
Teacher Center, a non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening the practice of beginning teachers, put it this way - *“The learning that takes place in a beginning teacher’s first few years on the job is different from their preparation experience and different from their subsequent professional learning. There is no period as formational to a teachers’ career as the initial years in the classroom.”* The demands on school districts are great to evaluate and strengthen the individual needs of novice teachers who come from widely differing backgrounds and preparation programs. Providing personnel and resources sufficient to the task extends well beyond previous versions of “teacher orientation” to the need today to design high quality “induction programs” that encompass multi-year programs with strong mentoring components, prescriptive use of professional development, and the coaching to develop both instructional skills and classroom management ability

This evaluation used a mixed methods approach to determining the extent to which the current system of support services and resources is able to meet the demands presented by incoming groups of newly hired teachers. A cohort of beginning teachers included for monitoring by TIP during school year 2009-2010 was used to represent a typical cross-section of beginning teachers. Quantitative data obtained by the TIP office was used to provide a means for determining how well the program was able to meet its goal of supporting novice teachers through completion of their certification requirements within the recommended timeframe of 180 days. A random sample of 100 teachers from the entire group monitored in the database (1099 teachers) was used to provide a source for a deeper analysis of records collected in the completion of this group’s Action Plans to better understand patterns of strength and instructional need that emerged, the type and number of hours of professional development completed by the group, and rates with which various groups of teachers completed requirements. Survey responses from the group of beginning teachers were also used to determine the level of satisfaction TIP participants expressed with the program, and their opinions about the quality, content, and relevance of the sessions offered to them throughout the year. Open-ended comments were analyzed with qualitative methods for content, analysis and confirming patterns noted from others sources of quantitative data used for analysis. Finally, student achievement data generated by novice teachers were analyzed using analysis of variance techniques to determine whether performance of TIP participants were similar to those of similar experience levels of teachers nationally, and whether the patterns of student performance in reading, mathematics, and science were consistent and similar across various groups of beginning teachers. Highlights of these analyses include the following;

- All beginning teachers without prior (recent) satisfactory teaching experience were assessed by principals and placed on one of three types of action plans guiding steps needed to complete Florida certification requirements. The decision about which type of action plan is made by principals with support by district cadre and the TIP office, and will depend on the type of certification the individual presents at

the time of hire, and results of the evaluation of teachers with the *Twelve Florida Accomplished Practices*. Among the group of 1099 teachers found in the TIP database, just over half (56.6%) were placed on an Action Plan 3, (30.5%) were completing an Action Plan 1, and the remainder (12.9%) were

Figure 1 – Beginning Teachers (2009-2010) by Action Plan Types



working on an Action Plan 2. Figure 1 to the right illustrates the distribution of teachers to these various plans of action. Obviously, the majority were working toward completion of *type 3* action plans, with fewer numbers working on either of the other two. Relative completion rates among the three plans during the school year also helped to illustrate that the groups were distinct in terms of the needs each group had for support. Action Plan 1 and 2 groups completes requirements within the school year at high levels (61% and 74%) and with far fewer completing an Action Plan 3 within the same timeframe (33.8%). Coupled with the fact that the majority of novice teachers in the study cohort were completing *type 3* Action Plans, it is clear that this group requires more extensive support and resources to assist them through the necessary steps.

- The evaluation of novice teachers at the beginning of the year also identified the fact that there are numerous areas of need identified by principals as requiring more attention and coaching for beginning teachers. The most commonly identified areas of need for beginning teachers were: *Assessment, Critical Thinking, Learning Environments, Role of the Teacher, and Planning*,
- TIP participants were generally positive and complimentary about the quality and relevance of the content they received in professional development opportunities offered to them and the support they received from cadre and mentors. However, the actual numbers of sessions attended by TIP participants, as compared to the potential number in the total group monitored in TIP was low. In addition to the well-attended TIP New Teacher Orientation, 10 different course topics were offered to beginning teachers, with several offered in multiple versions (elementary/secondary and face to face/online). On average, TIP participants completed an average of 1.7 TIP course offerings throughout the year.
- The levels of student achievement seen among students of novice teachers in Duval County were consistent with national studies of the same. In line with what is seen among teachers in other places, there were distinguishable differences seen in the student achievement of first year teachers as compared to teachers of all

experience levels. This trend is found across all subject matters – reading, mathematics, and science. More importantly, there are dramatic gains noted between the student achievement of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year teachers, and an additional, but smaller increase seen between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years. Further analyses of student achievement for groups of novice teachers in TIP were done to see whether subgroups of TIP teachers with characteristics in common seemed to experience different levels of student achievement. It was interesting to note that teachers participating in Alternative Certification programs experienced significantly higher levels of student achievement than other TIP participants across all three subject areas (Reading, Mathematics, and Science). There were also small scale but positive results seen in the student achievement of students whose TIP teachers were participating in the district’s pilot TIP Mentoring Project.

Results from this objectives-based analysis of the Teacher Induction Program indicate that, like Duval County as a whole, the program appears to be making the best possible use of its resources and even operating beyond its capacity. The large numbers of beginning teachers entering from varied backgrounds and preparation programs create tremendous variations in the skill sets of individuals who report to duty as beginning classroom teachers. The variable completion rates (within 180 days) among TIP participants who complete action plans “on schedule” is a clear indication that greater needs exist for certain TIP participants, and the program struggles to respond with the levels of support necessary to individually meet the needs of these teachers. Student achievement data confirm the critical importance of continuing to support and bolster efforts in the district to mentor and coach beginning teachers as they gain the confidence and skill to be effective classroom teachers.

\*References documented in full report.