Implementing Expert Practice in Induction and Mentoring for Special Education Teachers: A View from Two Districts
To improve teacher quality and increase commitment to teaching students with disabilities by

- informing special education policy and practice on induction and mentoring
- identifying and recommending induction and mentoring implementation strategies
Major Phases of Work

- Literature syntheses and policy analyses of induction and mentoring policies, practices, and related issues (see www.ncipp.org)

- Case descriptions of four school districts’ induction and mentoring programs, plus guidelines for conducting effective mentoring sessions

- Technical Assistance (ongoing)
  - Large scale dissemination
  - Technical assistance for LEA and IHE partnerships and state departments of education
Guidelines for Mentoring

- Mentors who are trained, accessible, and perceived as well-matched to the mentee
- Benefit from both formal and informal opportunities to interact
- Meet both instructional and emotional needs of mentees
- High quality mentoring programs exist in supportive contexts
Two Districts

- Special School District, St. Louis, MO: Program founded 1996
- Cincinnati Public Schools: Program founded 1985
SSD’s Layers of Support

Ros VanHecke and Kristin Zimmerman
District Overview

Founded in 1957, Special School District of St. Louis County (SSD) has two distinct functions. The district provides quality special education services to students with disabilities. In addition, SSD operates two technical high schools that offer a wide range of career and technical education opportunities to St. Louis County students.

The district’s staff annually educates more than 30,000 students and performs more than 100,000 hearing and speech screenings and diagnostic evaluations.

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SSD Service Area

- St. Louis County - 510 square miles
- 265 schools in 22 school districts
Special Education

• SSD serves more than 27,000 students with special needs.

• One in 5 public school students in St. Louis County receive special education services or technical education from SSD.

• Roughly 97 percent of the district’s special education students attend schools in the school district in which they live.

• SSD operates five special education schools throughout the St. Louis area.

• One in 5 students who receive special education services in Missouri are SSD students.
SSD Staff

SSD staff includes:

- Speech/Language Pathologists
- Social Workers
- Psychologists
- Audiologists
- Diagnosticians
- Nurses
- Occupational Therapists
- Physical Therapists
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing Staff
- Interpreters
### Academy I

**Special Education Teachers**

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<td>208</td>
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Organizational Support

Academy I Program: $5,500 over three years

Board of Education and Cabinet Priority

Recruiting, Screening and Hiring

Layers of Support

Performance Based Evaluation = Academy I skill sets
SSD Layers of Support

- Instructional Mentor
- School Based Mentor
- IEP Partner
- Administrator

SSD New Teachers
• Preparing for the beginning of the year
• Classroom Supports
• Data Based Decision
• Instructional Strategies

School Based Mentor
• Veteran teacher in same discipline on-site
• Provides emotional and instructional support
• Selected by beginning teacher supervisor

IEP Partners
• Veteran teacher with deep knowledge of IEP writing and procedures
• Selected by beginning teacher supervisor

Orientation and Academy I

Preparation and Support for all mentors
• On-line modules

Cognitive Coaching SM
• School-based mentor professional learning and coaching
• Job-embedded professional learning and coaching
Tools and Strategies

- Instructional Facilitators
- Protocols
- Continuum of Skill Development
- Critical Teaching Behaviors
- Coaching
- Modeling
- Observations
- Technology
Tools and Strategies

- **School-Based Mentors**
  - Log (frequency and type of conversations)
  - Content and strategies
    - Support Functions for balanced learning focused relationship. (Support, Creating Challenge, and Facilitating Professional Vision)
    - A Continuum of Support: Consulting, Collaborating, Coaching
    - Strategies per stance are identified
    - Mediational Mentoring: Third-Point focus
  - Maximizing Time and Attention

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Mentoring Matters: A Practical Guide to Learning-Focused Relationships {Wellman, B & Lipton, L (2003); MiraVia, LLC: Sherman, CT.}
Results/Evaluation…

- Retention Rate
- Implementation with Fidelity
  - New Teachers
  - Instructional Mentors
- Social Validity
  - Teachers
  - Mentors
  - Administrators
Retention Rate of Newly Hired Certified Staff

- 2005-2006: N=275
- 2006-2007: N=255
- 2007-2008: N=349
- 2008-2009: N=305

Retention Rate of Newly Hired Teachers

- 84%
- 86%
- 88%
- 90%
- 92%
- 94%
- 96%
The school level mentor professional learning this year...
(data Feb. 2010)  N=33

- Strongly Disagree: 1
- Somewhat Disagree: 2
- Disagree: 3
- Neutral: 4
- Agree: 5
- Somewhat Agree: 6
- Strongly Agree: 7

Bar chart showing:
- What was within my skill level to implement: 26
- Will have lasting and positive effects for myself as a teacher leader: 15
- Taught important skills: 13
- Improved teacher's overall performance: 13

Partners for student success (SSD) logo
Mentor Relationships: Self-Assessment rubric to identify and qualify the desired characteristics of a mentoring relationship (Rubric adapted from Mentoring Matters-Lipton and Wellman)

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<th>Number of Mentors</th>
<th>1=having less desired characteristics</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4 = Having most desired characteristics</th>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
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Mentors Participating in a Coaching Conversation (n=36)

Yes, 67%

No, 33%
Support Function Most Frequently Accessed
(When support functions were not balanced)

- Offering Support: 88%
- Creating Challenge: 0%
- Facilitating a Professional Vision: 12%
- No Response: 0%
Support Function Least Accessed

(When support functions were not balanced)

- Offering Support: 33%
- Creating Challenge: 8%
- Facilitating a Professional Vision: 46%
- Remaining 2 Support Functions Equal: 0%
Challenges

Effective
Focused
Efficient
Professional
Learning

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Cincinnati Public Schools

Teacher Evaluation System
CPS - Teacher Evaluation System

- Purpose: to ensure a high quality teaching staff for every student and every school
- Standards-based
- Based on Charlotte Danielson’s work, “Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching”
TES - Structure

◆ 4 domains
  1. Planning and Preparing for Student Learning
  2. Creating an Environment for Learning
  3. Teaching for Learning
  4. Professionalism

◆ 15 standards within these 4 domains
Peer Assistance and Evaluation Program (PAEP)

- All new hires and those teachers on Intervention are involved in the PAEP.
- Support and Evaluation is provided by Consulting Teachers.
- The PAEP is governed by a joint committee – the Peer Review Panel.
- The PRP has 10 members – 5 teachers and 5 administrators.
- PRP members are appointed by the Superintendent (Admins) OR the CFT President. There are currently no term limits.
What does Comprehensive Evaluation look like? (New Hires)

- For teachers new to the district
- Required PD – “Practicum”
- 2 informal + 2 formal observations as well as a demonstration lesson and visiting day prior to winter recess
- If scores not met, 4 additional evals are completed prior to March
- All observations conducted by a Consulting Teacher
- Assistance based on areas of deficiencies and continues throughout the year
- Reflections and lesson plan packets due within 5 days of the observation
- Collection of Evidence for Domain 4 (Professionalism) is used for formative assessment and feedback purposes only.
Consulting Teacher Support for New Intervention Specialists

- Classroom-based assistance
- Post-observation conferences after each formal observation
- Visiting Day
- Demonstration lesson – may be co-teaching
- Assistance targeted to deficiencies notes in observations – very individualized
- Professional Development – Practicum sessions, PD opportunities at Mayerson
- Support with technology, including assistive technology
Who are the New Hire Intervention Specialist Mentors?

- All new hires are matched as closely as possible with lead teachers in their fields of expertise.

- Intervention Specialists are matched with lead intervention specialists to provide support, training and evaluation.

- Lead IS have reached the highest rung of the Career Ladder in CPS and are selected for out of classroom positions in a rigorous and contractual process. These are three-year positions and there is an add’l stipend attached to these Consulting Teacher jobs.
Mentor/Evaluator Training, Calibration and Certification

- To ensure reliability and validity, building administrators and Consulting Teachers undergo professional development and must pass a performance exercise before they can evaluate any teacher.

- Certification training consists of 3 parts:
  1. TES Basics
  2. Evidence Collection
  3. Rubric Study/Levels of Performance.

- Following PD, each administrator or Consulting Teacher must pass the certification “exercises”/tests.
On-going Mentor Support

- Most mentors (Consulting Teachers) are full-time, out of classroom.

- Support comes from a myriad of sources – mainly peers, but also from the PAEP Facilitator, Teacher Programs Manager, and Peer Review Panel.

- CTs participate in both Staff meetings and Standards meetings bi-monthly to ensure information is shared amongst all stakeholders and that there is an opportunity for discourse around mechanics, processes and standards.
CPS Teacher Evaluation has undergone three major quantitative analysis in the past 8 years. Most recently Brown (John Tyler) and Harvard (Tom Kane) conducted a longitudinal study on the effectiveness of TES to predict success of student growth. This study showed an extremely high correlation between scores teachers rec’d on evaluation and the likelihood that there was student growth.
Holtzapple and Milanowski also studied the relationship between TES scores and student outcomes earlier in the decade and also showed a correlation of scores.

Harvard (Susan Moore Johnson) included CPS’s PAEP program in a qualitative review of PAR programs (Next Generation of Teachers project)
Program Evaluation - Formative

- Adjustments, modifications and adaptations are routinely made to the CT schedules, caseloads, processes, etc. as the PRP sees fit within the confines of the PAEP guidelines and Collective Bargaining Agreement.
Challenges

- Inter-rater reliability
- Consistency and interpretation of evidence collected
- Evaluating teachers of same or similar discipline
- Ensuring New Hires have all the supports they need to be successful
What we’ve learned

- Collaboration is key –
- Decreased caseloads for evaluators from earlier years
- Uniformity amongst evaluators – procedures and announced evaluations, etc.
- Evaluators have no more than 2-3 teachers in the same building when possible
- Differentiate evaluations
- Importance of documentation