THE INNOVATION EXCHANGE: EDUCATOR WORKFORCE ADVISORY TASK FORCE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Summary

AACTE members are dedicated to preparing high-quality teachers who can improve student learning, but because preparation alone is not sufficient to retain quality teachers in the workforce, institutions increasingly are partnering with their local schools and school districts to improve retention of novice teachers. AACTE is eager to promote successful strategies for such collaborative retention initiatives.

The goal of this project is to leverage the resources of various stakeholders in the education system to increase novice teacher retention in high-need school districts and schools. In the first phase of this project, a task force will examine challenges to new teacher retention and develop a conceptual framework for a collaborative initiative to address these challenges. Such an initiative might address induction models, the equitable distribution of teacher talent across schools, entry-level compensation, and other factors affecting new teachers. The task force will include teacher educators, teachers, principals, district administrators, school board members, state leaders, and others. In the second phase of this project, AACTE will pilot the initiative, based on the framework developed by the task force, through partnerships of teacher preparation programs, school districts, and PK-12 schools.

Rationale

Research shows teacher turnover undermines school stability, is harmful to school culture, and has a significant and negative impact on student achievement.[1] In particular, turnover is most harmful to underserved student populations in low-performing schools where recruiting and retaining qualified and experienced teachers—especially in poor urban and isolated rural areas—is difficult. These high-poverty schools have the highest proportion of teachers with less than 3 years of experience.[2]

---

[1] Ronfeldt, M., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2013). How teacher turnover harms student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, *50*(1), 4-36. Retrieved from http://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/4.full_.pdf

[2] Rice, J. K. (2010). The impact of teacher experience: Examining the evidence and policy implications. Washington, DC: Urban Institute, National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research. Retrieved from http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/1001455-impact-teacher-experience.pdf

Teacher turnover further compounds shortages of qualified and effective teachers in these hard-to-staff schools and in high-need subject areas, such as math and science. Research also suggests that attrition is particularly prevalent among beginning teachers, as nearly half of all teachers leave the profession within their first 5 years on the job.[3] Coupled with this "revolving door" phenomenon, demographic changes in the teaching workforce reflect a dramatic increase in the percentage of beginning teachers, which also increases the chance that students, particularly the ones with the greatest educational needs, will be taught by an inexperienced teacher. When it comes to student achievement, among school related-factors, teacher quality matters most, and empirical studies confirm that new teachers, on average, are less effective than their more experienced counterparts.[4] Therefore, effective retention strategies are needed that retain teacher talent and support the professional growth of beginning teachers during the first few years on the job, when early-career teachers show the greatest productivity gains.

Each of the stakeholder groups that will be represented on the task force is already implementing strategies aimed at reducing attrition among novice teachers. For example, teacher preparation programs design their programs to ensure candidates are profession-ready from Day One; districts establish system-wide professional development opportunities; and schools provide a culture of collaboration and support. Yet the quality and impact of these initiatives is uneven across the country, and these groups have not before come together to design collaborative and comprehensive programs to increase novice teacher retention.

Phase I Project Description

The task force will meet four times over the course of a year to develop a plan for increasing the retention of novice teachers.

At each of the meetings, members will engage in robust discussions about the challenges to and opportunities for increasing teacher retention, particularly of new teachers serving in high-poverty and high-minority schools and in high-need fields. These discussions will be complemented by presentations from education practitioners and researchers on the issue of attrition, such as its causes, barriers to solving this problem, and examples of successful initiatives to increase retention of effective teachers.

The primary outcome of Phase I will be a framework to provide guidance on programs that increase novice teacher retention. The framework will acknowledge common obstacles to implementing a collaborative initiative with meaningful participation from the school, the school district, the state, and the teacher preparation program. More important, the framework will offer suggestions for addressing these obstacles as well as key structures, policies, and processes of a successful initiative, including recommended roles and responsibilities for each of the stakeholders. The framework is intended to provide strategies that will be helpful at the ground level to facilitate the implementation of successful novice teacher retention initiatives.

---

[3] Ingersoll, R. M. (2012). Beginning teacher induction: What the data tell us. *Phi Delta Kappan, 93*(8), 47-51. Retrieved from http://www.kappanmagazine.org/content/93/8/47
[4] Rice, 2010.

<div align="center">Vision for Phase II</div>

Phase II of this project will lead to the broad dissemination of the framework developed by the task force and the recruitment of three to five partnerships—comprising educator preparation programs, schools, and districts—that will commit to using the framework to implement novice teacher retention initiatives.

Task force members will work together to secure funding, to select the pilot sites, and to support the project as necessary. AACTE will oversee the administration of the pilot program. During Phase II, formative and summative evaluations will be conducted to refine the framework to be transferable across educational contexts, improve implementation, and measure the effect of the pilot initiatives on novice teacher retention.

<div align="center">Task Force Member Expectations</div>

- Members of the task force will commit themselves and the appropriate staff at their organizations to at least 2 years of service.
- During Phase I, members are expected to attend four in-person meetings over 1 year and will also participate in a number of telework sessions, particularly between the final two sessions in order to finalize the framework.
- Members are expected to share the perspectives of their constituencies, and thus will be expected to engage in research activities and outreach to their members during Phase I through surveys, focus groups, and other avenues.
- Together, members will develop a framework for successful novice teacher retention strategies (with support from AACTE staff).
- Members will develop a communications plan and assist in the dissemination of the framework to their constituencies.
- Prior to Phase II, task force members and other stakeholders will work together to secure funding for pilot projects, thus enabling the task force's work to result in tangible outcomes.
- Task force members will recruit and select the partnerships for the pilot project. Partnerships will comprise teacher preparation programs, schools, and districts.
- During Phase II, the pilot project, members will engage as necessary. Frequency of meetings during Phase II will be determined by the task force and AACTE staff as the pilot project develops.