



NEGP MONTHLY

A monthly in-depth look at states and communities and their efforts to reach the National Education Goals
Published by the NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL

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NURTURING NEW TEACHERS

“I think [there was] a generation of people who didn’t have anyone there to help them when they walked in the door. They went into their room and shut the door. And every year some kids would come through, and however they [taught], that was what was done. The bottom line is, children come first. We are here for the children. We’re professional educators and are here to teach children. That is a driving factor of the Peer Assistance and Evaluation Program.” Carolyn Nellon, Peer Review Panel, director of Human Resources, Cincinnati Public Schools.

This Monthly explores what North Carolina, Florida, Pennsylvania, and several local districts are doing to provide first-year teachers with an experienced and well-trained mentor teacher.

Overview

Classroom teachers hold the key to increased student achievement. Statewide attempts to implement academic content standards as the vehicle for improved student performance have unveiled the critical role teachers play in education reform. The quality of teachers matters – a lot – according to several studies. “The research could not be more clear, consistent or compelling,” said Kati Haycock, director of the Education Trust and author of a report, *Good Teaching Matters – How Well-Qualified Teachers Can Close the Gap*. “It supports what parents have known all along: teacher quality matters a lot. Effective teachers can help students achieve enormous gains, while ineffective teachers can do great and lasting damage. The findings say clearly that we simply cannot tolerate anything less than the very best teachers – for all American students.”

Good Teaching Matters cites several research studies that conclude quality teaching leads to higher student achievement. For example, a large-scale Texas study conducted by Ronald Ferguson of Harvard University, found that teacher quality, measured by education, experience and test scores on initial teacher

NORTH CAROLINA

FLORIDA

PENNSYLVANIA

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licensing exams, has more impact on student achievement than any other single factor, including parent income and education. Another report on teacher quality, *Solving the Dilemmas of Teacher Supply, Demand and Standards: How We Can Ensure A Competent, Caring and Qualified Teacher for Every Child* by Linda Darling-Hammond, cites additional research conducted by Darling-Hammond that shows after controlling for student characteristics like poverty and language status, the strongest predictor of state-level student achievement in reading and math on the National Assessment of Education Progress was each state's proportion of well-qualified teachers.

Yet, finding and keeping high performing teachers is not an easy task. The dropout rate for teachers in their first few years of teaching is a "serious problem," according to the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). In the early 1990s, SREB examined data on teacher turnover for several of its member states. The group found that only half of a group of beginning teachers remained in teaching after five years

The National Education Goals Panel, to track Goal 4: Teacher Education and Professional Development, monitors progress made by the states and the nation on providing support for new teachers. Specifically, the Goals Panel examines data related to formal teacher induction programs for beginning teachers that assign a mentor teacher to assist the novice. Mentors are highlighted in numerous reports and research as a highly effective way to support new and veteran teachers. For example, Darling-Hammond writes that "beginning teachers who have access to intensive mentoring by expert colleagues are much less likely to leave teaching in the early years." She adds: "These young teachers not only stay in the profession at higher rates but become competent more quickly than those who must learn by trial and error."

This Monthly reports on efforts underway in North Carolina, Florida and Pennsylvania to provide a mentor for beginning teachers. North Carolina and Pennsylvania were the nation's two "most-improved" states from 1991 to 1994, according to Goals Panel data that measures the percentages of public school teachers who reported that during their first year of teaching they participated in a formal teacher induction program that assigned to them a mentor teacher. Florida was the nation's top-performing state in 1994. North Carolina was among both the top-performing and most-improved states on this indicator in 1994.

Mentoring New Teachers

While the concept of providing beginning teachers extra support, including a mentor, is undisputed, most state efforts are "underdeveloped and underfunded," according to EDUCATION WEEK'S report *Quality Counts 2000: Who Should Teach?* EDUCATION WEEK conducted an exhaustive study of state efforts to attract, screen and retain competent teachers. The section dedicated to new teachers revealed that while 28 states require or provide funds for districts to offer induction experiences for novices, only 19 mandate that districts offer the programs to all beginning teachers. Of those, only 10 states pay for some or all of the costs.

According to *Quality Counts 2000*, a "vital element of most induction programs is a mentor teacher, who provides advice and support to novices." In this area, EDUCATION WEEK found that six states require that a new teacher be assigned a whole "support team," including or in addition to the mentor.

SREB reports on creative ways to build mentoring programs in several Southern states:



The National Education Goals Panel

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Mississippi and North Carolina rely on retired teachers to serve as mentors. Mississippi also is using nationally certified teachers in a mentor program, while Delaware and Florida are developing similar programs. In Maryland, the superintendent of education has proposed \$16 million in grants to support districts' development or expansion of programs to support new teachers.

Local Efforts

Officials from the three states featured in this Monthly – North Carolina, Florida and Pennsylvania – all point out that the development and implementation of a mentoring program for new teachers rests primarily at the local level.

In her report *Solving the Dilemma of Teacher Supply, Demand and Standards*, Darling-Hammond also highlights several outstanding mentoring programs developed at the local level – in Cincinnati, Columbus and Toledo, Ohio, and Rochester, New York. She claims that beginning teachers who participate in intensive mentoring by “expert colleagues” are much less likely to leave teaching during their first few years. Attrition rates for new teachers in these local districts have been reduced by more than two-thirds due to mentoring programs, according to Darling-Hammond. In these areas, the mentor teachers are granted release time to work with fledgling teachers.

In all four locales, the mentoring programs emerged as part of a peer review and assistance program initiated by the local teacher unions. Each program was developed under collective bargaining and is administered by a panel of seven to ten teachers and administrators. The panel selects consulting or mentor teachers, after undergoing a “rigorous evaluation process that examines teaching skills and mentoring abilities,” notes Darling-Hammond.

North Carolina

North Carolina made the greatest gains in the percentage of public school teachers who reported that during their first year of teaching they participated in a formal teacher induction program to help beginning teachers by assigning them to a mentor teacher. In 1991, 24% of teachers surveyed said they had a mentor, rising to 36% in 1994. The improvement places North Carolina as one of the nation's highest-performing states in this area.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, on its web site (www.dpi.state.nc.us), boasts of the state's leading role in promoting and training mentor teachers. “Mentoring first-year teachers has a lot to do with keeping teachers in teaching,” said Eddie Ingram, licensure and mentoring official with the state's



Department of Public Instruction. "It gives teachers a direction early in their careers. We need to give them this support because we want them to be teaching five years from now," he added.

"The induction of novice teachers in North Carolina is of extreme importance," according to the state Department of Public Instruction's web site. "During the induction period, it is critical for novice teachers to receive the support provided by effective mentors. In addition, the process of becoming a mentor and serving in that role enables mentors to enhance their own professional growth."

Since 1986, the state has advanced a teacher/mentor program. Ingram explained that the mentoring program grew out of the state's concern over its students' poor performance on the SATs in the late 1980s. However, the earlier program was more informal and it was not funded, he said. It remained an unfunded mandate until three years ago. EDUCATION WEEK'S *Quality Counts* notes that North Carolina "continues to deploy a powerful tool for improving the quality of its teaching corps and schools: money." Now, mentor teachers are paid \$100 per month for two years, if they work with teachers with no experience. Ingram said the mentor teachers are paid for two years only, although they embark on a three-year mentor assignment. The Legislature currently is debating whether to increase funding to cover the third year

More recent efforts to ensure every new teacher is assigned a mentor teacher emerged from the 1997 Excellence Schools Act, explained Ingram. The purpose for the mentoring program is two-fold: Both to reward good teaching by assigning those teachers a novice teacher; but also to address a looming teaching shortage, with the hope that new teachers will stay in teaching longer if they receive support early on in their careers.

In North Carolina, mentor teachers are "pretty much selected by principals and the process varies from district to district," said Ingram. Principals also decide on whether to provide release time, which is not mandated by the state. At the minimal, principals "do creative things like help both teachers have the same planning period" explained Ingram, who was a school principal.

In order to assign qualified mentor teachers to assist new teachers, the Department of Public Instruction joined forces with the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching to develop an introductory-level training program called Mentoring North Carolina Novice Teachers. According to the Department, the purpose of the training is to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes essential to serve as a successful mentor of new teachers. A guidebook, *Mentoring North Carolina Novice Teachers*, is made available to all teachers and the public, at the Department of Public Instruction's web site: www.dpi.state.nc.us/mentoring_novice_teachers/

However, the state is in the midst of revamping its training program in response to a survey of beginning teachers. The new teachers want more help in content areas. Ingram noted that efforts to revise the mentor training program are focused on "providing academic help and support so new teachers can deliver the state's curriculum" to students. While the state is updating training information, it remains up to the local districts to provide that training to mentor teachers, added Ingram.

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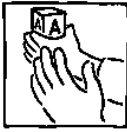


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THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS



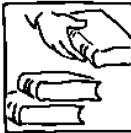
Goal 1: Ready to Learn



Goal 2: School Completion



Goal 3: Student Achievement and Citizenship



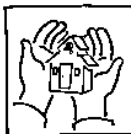
Goal 4: Teacher Education and Professional Development



Goal 5: Mathematics and Science



Goal 6: Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning



Goal 7: Safe, Disciplined and Alcohol- and Drug-free Schools



Goal 8: Parental Participation

Florida

Florida was the nation's top performing state in 1994, with the highest percentage (48%) of public school teachers who reported that during their first year of teaching they participated in a formal teacher induction program to help beginning teachers by assigning them to a mentor. The national average was 27%.

Ava Belitzky, bureau chief with the Florida Department of Education's bureau of educator recruitment and professional development, said the state legislature in 1981 adopted the Beginning Teacher Program, which was renamed the Professional Orientation Program. No funds were attached to the program, which was repealed in 1997. When it was in operation, the program provided a year of support and induction of new teachers, assigning them a support team that included the principal, a teacher teaching the same grade and subject and another educator. Belitzky: "The statewide effort spearheaded local efforts." At least 60% of the state's school districts continued the program at the local level after the legislature repealed it, she added.

Belitzky said the state is engaged in several efforts to support new teachers in the classroom. Novice teachers, for example, have access to all professional development programs offered throughout the state. The Department of Education also is developing an "electronic briefcase," which will provide new teachers with an array of resources from how to write letters to parents to how to produce a newsletter. The state teacher of the year is heading up this project, which will come in the form of a CD-ROM. The legislature also is examining several budget issues that relate to a "massive mentoring program," said Belitzky.

However, the state's primary effort to improve the quality of new teachers currently is focused on teacher preparation programs. Commissioner of Education Tom Gallagher last week proposed changes in the way the state approves teacher-preparation programs. The document released by Gallagher provides a core curriculum for teacher candidates. Gallagher also released a "customer satisfaction survey" of first-year teachers in Florida. A startling 45% said they were inadequately prepared to teach to the state's academic standards for students, with 75% reporting they were only minimally prepared to assess students' progress.



What is the National Education Goals Panel?

The National Education Goals Panel is a unique bipartisan body of state and federal officials created in 1990 by President Bush and the nation's Governors to report state and national progress and urge education improvement efforts to reach a set of National Education Goals.

Who serves on the National Education Goals Panel and how are they chosen?

Eight governors, four state legislators, four members of the U.S. Congress, and two members appointed by the President serve on the Goals Panel. Members are appointed by the leadership of the National Governors' Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the U.S. Senate and House, and the President.

What does the Goals Panel do?

The Goals Panel has been charged to:

- Report state and national progress toward the National Education Goals.
- Work to establish a system of high academic standards and assessments.
- Identify promising and effective reform strategies.
- Recommend actions for state, federal and local governments to take.
- Build a nationwide, bipartisan consensus to achieve the Goals.

The annual Goals Report and other publications of the Panel are available without charge upon request from the Goals Panel or at its web site www.negp.gov. Publications requests can be made by mail, fax, or e-mail, or by Internet.

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Pennsylvania

The percentage of public school teachers in Pennsylvania who reported that during their first year of teaching they participated in a formal teacher induction program to help beginning teachers by assigning them to a mentor teacher rose 11 percentage points from 1991 to 1994. In 1991, 24% of teachers reported being assigned a mentor, rising to 31% in 1994, making Pennsylvania one of the nation's most-improved states in this area. The national average was 27% in 1994.

Carol Bellew, professional development coordinator for the Pennsylvania Department of Education, points out that Pennsylvania has had a state induction program "on the books" since 1987 for new teachers. The program is being expanded to include education specialists, such as guidance counselors and librarians. Although the regulations, which were adopted by the State Board of Education in 1984 and became effective in 1987, do not require a mentor teacher per se, it does call for a "mentoring relationship, which may be someone besides another teacher," explains Bellew. However, she also added that the state "does not have any set-aside money for mentoring, so districts must take care of this from their state subsidy."

For example, in Pittsburgh a collaborative arrangement exists between the local union, the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers (PFT), and the school district. Besides a comprehensive induction program, new teachers are offered two types of mentoring programs, said Mary Van Horn, vice president and director of education research and development with the PFT. Once school begins, new teachers are assigned an instructional teacher leader from their building to serve as a mentor. The mentor receives release time and teaches a partial schedule.

However, the challenge is not having enough mentor teachers. "When you have too many new teachers in a building and only one or two instructional leaders (mentors), it causes a real problem," concedes Van Horn. To ensure that each new teacher re-



RESOURCES

American Federation of Teachers. 555 New Jersey Avenue NW. Washington, D.C. 20001. (202)879-4400. www.aft.org.

Education Trust. *Good Teaching Matters – How Well-Qualified Teachers Can Close the Gap*. 1725 K Street NW. Suite 200. Washington, D.C. 20006. (202)293-1217. www.edtrust.org

Education Week. *QUALITY COUNTS 2000: WHO SHOULD TEACH*. 6935 Arlington Road. Suite 100. Bethesda, Maryland 20814. (301)280-3100 www.edweek.com.

George Lucas Educational Foundation. *Edutopia*. P.O. Box 3494. San Rafael, California 94912. (415)507-0399. www.gleef.org/edutopia

National Commission on Teaching & America's Future. *Solving the Dilemmas of Teacher Supply, Demand and Standards: How We Can Ensure A competent, Caring and Qualified Teacher for Every Child*. Columbia University. www.tc.columbia.edu/~teachcomm

National Education Association. 1201 16th Street NW. Washington, D.C. 20036-3290. (202)833-4000. www.nea.org

ceives some mentoring, Van Horn points out that beginning teachers benefit from group mentoring sessions that are offered once a month. On a monthly basis throughout the school year, new teachers attend sessions that focus on different topics – from what to do the first three weeks of school to how to maintain an orderly classroom. At each of these sessions, teachers also meet in grade-level teams, led by a mentor teacher from the same level. These sessions ensure that each new teacher benefits from the expertise of a veteran and shares ideas and concerns with his or her peers. “All the while the monthly meetings are going on, new teachers also are receiving support from their on-site mentors,” said Van Horn.

It’s also up to the local districts to provide a training program for mentors, although “new guidelines point out that mentors need training because that is a weakness in the programs,” said Bellew. She also highlighted that the state will unveil a new state law regarding professional development sometime in March or April.

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Recommendations

Linda Darling-Hammond presents action steps for state and local officials and university and K-12 educators for improving teacher quality. Mentoring first-year teachers is cited in the following areas:

- Governors and State Legislators: Create mentoring programs for first-year teachers to reduce attrition and enhance competence.
- State Boards of Education, State Education Agencies and Professional Standards Boards: Design mentoring programs that provide sustained support to



RESOURCES (cont'd)

National Education Goals Panel. 1255 22nd Street NW. Suite 500. Washington, D.C. 20037. (202)724-0015. www.negp.gov.

Southern Regional Education Board. *Getting Beyond Talk: State Leadership Needed to Improve teacher Quality*. 592 10th Street NW. Atlanta, Georgia 30318. (404)875-9211. www.sreb.org.

Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. *The Quest for Better Teachers: Grading The States*. 1627 K Street NW. Suite 600. Washington, D.C. 20006. (202)223-5452. www.edexcellence.net.

beginning teachers and evaluate their teaching skills prior to granting a long-term professional license.

- Local School Boards and Superintendents: Place beginning teachers in professional practice schools with reduced teaching loads under the supervision of mentors.
- Subject Matter Associations: Assist teacher education programs, mentors and staff developers in applying subject matter standards to pre-service curricula and advanced degree programs, induction programs and professional development.
- Teachers' Unions: Work with school district officials to develop induction programs for beginning teachers, incorporating internships in professional practice schools and mentoring through peer review and assistance programs.

“State and local education leaders are the gatekeepers,” writes Darling-Hammond. “They can use policies to encourage highly qualified people to enter teaching careers, assure quality in teacher preparation programs and set high standards for licensing and certification.” One key component to ensuring first-year teachers hone their teaching abilities, understand and teach to high standards and stay in the classroom is providing the novices with mentor teachers. According to EDUCATION WEEK’S analysis, however, states need to beef up support for policies guiding first-year teachers, especially mentoring programs.

Upcoming Goals Panel Events and Products

February 26, 2000:

NEGP meeting, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., Holeman Lounge, National Press Club, Washington, D.C.

- Announcement of Governor Tommy Thompson (R-Wisconsin) as new NEGP chairman for 2000.
- Release of NEGP’s *10th Anniversary Proceedings*, an illustrated summary of the December 1-2, 1999 conference, awards dinner, NEGP meeting and press conference.
- Launch first of four regional hearings on how to bring all students to high standards. The first hearing will be hosted by U.S. Representative Matthew Martinez (D-Calif.) in Los Ange-



April 13, 2000: NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL NATIONWIDE TELECONFERENCE

The National Education Goals Panel is sponsoring a nationwide teleconference on **April 13, 2000 at 1 P.M.. EST**. The teleconference, "Creating a Framework for High Achieving Schools," will focus on the implementation of Total Quality Management and the Baldrige criteria in education. Quality practices are well established in the business world, yet these same principles are nothing short of revolutionary in the educational arena.

The application of Baldrige criteria in education creates a new framework for students to set their own goals and plans for achieving success. Where they are being successfully employed, quality principles and the Baldrige criteria are producing dramatic and rapid gains in student achievement.

The teleconference will showcase successful education initiatives in Florida, Indiana, Maine, North Carolina and Texas. Chief state school officers, district superintendents, principals, teachers and students will talk about how they have implemented Baldrige criteria and raised student achievement.

Governors, state legislators, Board of Education members, and chief state school officers are invited to participate, as are superintendents, principals, teachers, members of the business community and other interested in education improvement efforts.

We need your support! If you are interested in attending or hosting a downlink site, please call Burt Glassman at 202/724-0078 or e-mail at burt_glassman@ed.gov. For additional information, please visit our Web site at **WWW.NEGP.GOV**.