

June 28, 2010

Statement on Year 3 Mathematica Induction Study

Mathematica Policy Research Inc.'s randomized controlled trial of comprehensive teacher induction shows a statistically significant and sizeable impact on student achievement in mathematics and reading. As [reported](#) in *Impacts of Comprehensive Teacher Induction: Final Results from a Randomized Controlled Study*, funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences, beginning teachers who received two years of comprehensive induction support produced greater student learning gains—the equivalent of a student moving from the 50th to 58th percentile in math achievement and from the 50th to 54th percentile in reading achievement.

This research underscores the importance of a high-quality approach to new teacher induction and provides critical lessons for policymakers and educational leaders:

- First, **new teachers need more than a single year of instructionally-focused assistance.** The study found no statistically significant impact in districts where only a single year of induction was provided. Impacts on student learning were found only after two years of intensive support.
- Second, **there needs to be sufficient and regular time for teacher mentors to meet with and observe new teachers.** It is not surprising that no impact was found between the treatment and control groups in districts providing only one year of induction. Those treatment-group teachers supposedly getting more intensive support actually were *less* likely to be assigned a mentor and meet regularly in their second year than peers in the control group. In the districts providing two years of induction, more frequent mentoring was provided and significant gains in achievement resulted.
- Third, **one-on-one mentoring alone is insufficient.** Mentoring is but one component of comprehensive new teacher induction. In this study, induction also included *full-time* mentors; a curriculum of intensive and structured support for beginning teachers that included orientation, regular professional development, and weekly meetings with mentors; and formative assessment tools that permitted on-going evaluation of teaching practice. When these were provided over two years, students learned significantly more.

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The Mathematica study reinforces for us at the New Teacher Center that, to improve new teacher effectiveness, a program of induction and mentoring must be faithful to a rigorous, comprehensive approach. New teachers must work in schools with positive teaching conditions led by supportive school leaders who accelerate the critical work of mentors in improving instruction. We recognize that the Mathematica study was an experiment, not an induction program. We believe that it does not reflect the even more significant outcomes that can be achieved when districts have the time, capacity and willingness to focus on an in-depth, universal implementation of comprehensive, high-quality induction.

We continue to believe that the study suffered from flaws in its design and implementation. [We articulate many of these concerns in our [statement](#) on the first-year report.]

- The control group received many of the same, if not more, supports than the treatment group supposedly receiving more intensive induction in many districts.
- The study did not attend to or account for critical aspects of induction program implementation.

It speaks volumes about the quality of induction and mentoring provided and the necessity of new teacher support that student achievement gains were documented despite these important limitations to the study.

Since 1998, the New Teacher Center has served over 49,000 teachers and 5,000 mentors, touching millions of students across the country through comprehensive mentoring and professional development programs. As a national not-for-profit, we are committed to strengthening and expanding our work to ensure that every new teacher in America receives the on-the-job support they need to be successful.

Our mentors encourage new teachers to use data to reflect upon and improve their practice. And we hold ourselves to that same standard. We will use this study and other research to assess our program as we strive to ensure that every new teacher in America has access to the professional supports that can help them be more effective in the classroom. We are encouraged by the robustness of the documented gains in student growth found when such support is provided.

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