

# Education News & Notes

## Supporting New Teachers Improves Teacher Quality

by Kurt Landgraf, President and CEO, Educational Testing Service (ETS)

(NAPSA)—Good teachers produce good students. But how do we produce good teachers? And how do we keep them? One important way is to improve teacher professional development, starting with “induction” programs for beginning teachers.



**Kurt Landgraf**

Effective induction programs are built around a well-defined learning curriculum, combining mentoring with high-quality professional development to help new teachers reflect on and improve their classroom practice. Recent research shows the importance of such programs.

Examining the issue in a study for the Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy at the University of Washington, researcher Richard Ingersoll found a 40 percent turnover rate among first-year teachers who did not participate in induction programs. This was more than twice the turnover rate of teachers who had received high-quality induction support.

ETS’s research on the California Formative Assessment and Support System for Teachers complements Ingersoll’s findings. In the California program, experienced teachers who were trained as mentors worked with beginning teachers on critical aspects of teaching. Our results show that high-quality, mentor-based induction programs can help improve

teacher practices and bolster student achievement.

But induction programs need to be taken seriously to be effective. It isn’t enough to assign a new teacher an informal mentor and hope the two get together.

Schools need to train and support their mentors to be coaches who understand the elements of good teaching. They need to equip mentors and beginning teachers with a learning curriculum so that they learn to analyze and improve classroom instruction. And they need to provide time and support for beginning teachers and mentors to work together effectively.

Given current teacher shortages, teacher retention is critical. High-quality induction programs work. Yet only 15 states both require and finance mentoring programs for all novice teachers, despite the availability of funds for the purpose.

As stated in “Where We Stand on Teacher Quality,” ETS believes all states should establish induction programs as part of a continuous, high-quality professional development program designed to support teachers throughout their career.

Teaching is one of the most challenging—and one of the most important—jobs in our society. It’s time that we equipped educators with the tools they need to get the job done.

At ETS, we’re listening to educators, parents and policy-makers. We’re learning from sound research.

And we’re leading the effort to achieve both informed public policy and informed educational practice.