



CONSORTIUM ON
CHICAGO SCHOOL RESEARCH
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

1313 East 60th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637

Contacts: Lura Forcum
(773) 834-8036
William Harms
(773) 702-8356

New report shows that high-quality induction can help keep teachers on the job

A broad range of people, including many who are switching careers, are becoming Chicago Public School (CPS) teachers, but the new teachers are finding their orientation to their new jobs to be an uneven experience, depending on their own backgrounds, classroom and school factors, and the kind of induction they receive, according to a new report by the Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) at the University of Chicago.

“The report shows that new CPS teachers who receive high-quality induction—through mentoring activities such as observation of and feedback on their teaching; guidance with regard to CPS rules, policies, and procedures; and classroom management strategies—are more likely to intend to continue teaching and report a good experience than teachers who do not receive such induction into the teaching profession,” said John Easton, CCSR Executive Director.

Easton assisted in preparing the report, *Keeping New Teachers: A First Look at the Influence of Induction in the Chicago Public Schools*, which was co-authored by CCSR researchers Kavita Kapadia and Vanessa Coca. It was based on surveys of teachers and CPS data from the 2004-05 school year.

The researchers found that teacher background played an important role in whether teachers remained in the profession. The study reported that 27 percent of new elementary school teachers and 21 percent of new high school teachers were CPS graduates, compared with 40 percent of all elementary school teachers and 37 percent of all high school teachers. The study also found that:

- For novice elementary school teachers, being male, having prior work experience, and being a graduate of CPS are associated with reporting a good teaching experience.
- Results among novice high school teachers suggest that having a master’s degree or higher and being a graduate of CPS are associated with being less likely to remain in the profession.

Just as they all have different backgrounds entering the field, not all of the new teachers have the same experience once they enter schools. The study showed:

- At the classroom level, teachers working in classrooms with a higher percentage of students with behavior problems are less likely to report a good teaching experience, to intend to continue teaching, and to plan to remain in the same school.
- At the school level, a welcoming staff and strong school leadership were associated with more positive outcomes for novice teachers.

Formal induction programs, which are intended to orient, assist, and guide beginning teachers, can improve teacher retention rates, and thus reduce costs and disruptions caused by teacher turnover, other research has found. To this end, the CPS provides formal induction programs for all new teachers. The report finds that almost 20 percent of new teachers report that they do not participate, however. The report also finds that participation in an induction program alone does not improve the chances that teachers will remain in the profession; the quality of their induction experience matters. These factors had the most influence on retention:

- Novice elementary school teachers who received strong levels of mentoring were 25 percentage points more likely to plan to remain in the same school compared to teachers who received weak levels of mentoring. The relationship was similar for high school teachers, although not statistically significant.
- Other supports for novices—such as regularly scheduled collaboration with other teachers; participation in a network of teachers; release time to observe teaching; observation of their teaching with feedback; the principal’s encouragement, assistance, or support; and suggestions and advice from other teachers—were also linked to improvements in the three outcomes measured. High school novices who received strong levels of these supports were 50 percentage points more likely to plan to remain in their school than their colleagues who received weak levels of support. A similar pattern was present among elementary school teachers.
- The combination of mentoring and other supports made an even greater difference in keeping new teachers in their schools. Novice elementary school teachers were 48 percentage points more likely to remain in their school when they received intensive levels of mentoring and support, compared to their colleagues. The improvement for novice high school teachers was 55 percentage points.

This study was funded by a grant from the Joyce Foundation. Based in Chicago with assets of approximately \$900 million, the Joyce Foundation invests approximately \$8 million annually in research, public policy development, and advocacy to improve the quality of education for Midwest children, especially improving the quality of teaching in low-performing schools.