

Hiring (and Keeping) Urban Teachers

A Coordinated Approach to New Teacher Support



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Hiring (and Keeping) Urban Teachers: A Coordinated Approach to New Teacher Support

Introduction

Over the past six years, the Boston Public Schools (BPS) has collaborated with its local education foundation and partner in reform, the Boston Plan for Excellence (BPE), to improve its support to new teachers. This partnership has resulted in significant improvements in teacher hiring and induction and offers lessons to other districts, district collaborators, and school support organizations that are concerned with hiring and retaining effective teachers.

This report tells the story of how the BPS/BPE partnership unfolded – from the design of a research agenda, to collaborative analysis of data, to the overhaul and ongoing revision of hiring and induction activities in Boston. While some of this story is unique to Boston, the approaches these partners have taken could be replicated in other school systems.

Boston Improves New Teacher Retention

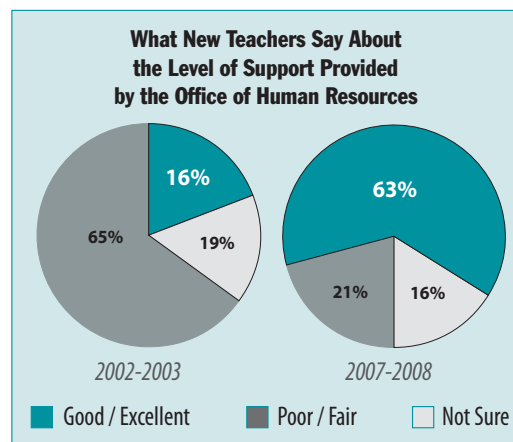
- In the fall of 2006, **85.4%** of teachers who were new to the BPS returned for a second year, a marked increase from the one-year retention rate of **71.8%** in 2003.
- Over the same period, one-year retention rates for new teachers of color (a priority hiring group for BPS) increased from **73.6%** to **83%**.

Teacher Hiring and Retention: Core Issues for Urban Districts

Nothing matters more to student achievement than good teaching, and districts set the foundation for broader improvements when they are able to hire qualified teachers and support them to become effective. New teachers who are hired in a timely fashion, placed in appropriate settings, and receive comprehensive induction are more likely to remain teaching long enough to become effective,¹ so it is in a district's interest to get these early stages of human capital development right.² The costs of not doing so are too large.

Teacher turnover is a major resource issue for urban districts. New teachers are frequently in "survival mode" throughout their first year. Becoming an effective teacher typically takes three years or more³ and, when a new teacher leaves the classroom, only to be replaced with another new teacher, student learning suffers.

The financial costs associated with teacher turnover are also substantial. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) estimates that the cost of teacher turnover nationwide may be greater than \$7.3 billion per year.⁴



1 Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Liu & Johnson, 2006.

2 Odden & Kelly, 2008.

3 Curtis & Birkeland, 2006.

4 NCTAF, 2007.

A System in Need of Revision

BPS and its partner, BPE, began to examine the new teacher hiring and support practices in 2002. At the time, half of BPS teachers were leaving within their first three years on the job. It is estimated that the BPS spent over \$3 million replacing these teachers: \$10,547 for every first-year, \$18,617 for every second-year, and \$26,687 for every third-year teacher who left.⁵ These costs, financial and academic, were too large to ignore. With 400-600 new teachers hired annually, or about 10% of its total teacher workforce, BPS had an enormous human capacity issue to address: how to bring the right teachers into the system and keep them long enough to have a positive impact on student learning. A survey of new teachers administered and analyzed by BPE's research team was the first step in understanding where the biggest problems lay and what to do about them.

New Teacher Survey

- Conducted annually by BPE.
- Gauges perspectives on BPS recruitment, hiring, professional development, mentoring, and other supports.
- Some questions are the same from year to year, to track changes over time, while others are revised to reflect an evolving support system.

Problem #1: A Lengthy, Cumbersome Hiring Process

The majority of new teachers responding to the first survey in the 2002-2003 school year reported being hired in late August or after the start of the school year, leaving them with little or no time to prepare curriculum.⁶ They described the hiring process as too long and beginning too late in the summer.

The biggest culprit was the hiring system itself. In Boston, the Office of Human Resources (OHR) completes the initial applicant screening and "on-boarding" process, but school principals/headmasters⁷ are primarily responsible for choosing new teachers. Ideally, a decentralized process provides school leaders with flexibility to hire teachers who will be the right fit for a school's culture and its whole-school improvement objectives. However, until recently, the steps involved in this decentralized process were not clear, and some job descriptions asked applicants to send their application materials directly to OHR, while others asked applicants to contact schools directly. Adding to the confusion, though BPS job descriptions were posted online, its application process was entirely paper based, making it extremely difficult to send or review applications electronically or keep track of newly hired employees. This system often resulted in misfiled or lost paperwork and contributed to a lengthy hiring process. Union contract rules about making open positions available first to tenured employees — and the BPS interpretation of those rules — further delayed the process. The delays were not all due to a messy system, but the system exacerbated a complicated hiring schedule.

Problem #2: An Inadequate and Uneven Induction Strategy

Before the reinvention of new teacher support, the only formal induction support for new BPS teachers was the district's mentor teacher program that paired full-time, experienced teachers with novice teachers. However, the mentor program was fraught with technical and financial limitations. One major issue was that the process for selecting mentors was not well defined and had few clear criteria; the only requirement for becoming a mentor was that a teacher had to be designated a lead teacher — a role determined by school

⁵ Curtis & Birkeland, 2006.

⁶ McCarthy & Guiney, 2004.

⁷ Principals of high schools in Boston are called headmasters.

leaders. While some principals assigned lead teacher status to a number of teachers in their schools, others did not, leaving some schools flush with available mentors and others with very few. In addition, the selection of mentors was not ongoing. Over time, the pool of lead teachers who could serve as mentors shrank, leaving mentors stretched thin and many new teachers without mentors. In addition, mentors were full-time teachers themselves and unable to spend significant amounts of time observing and giving feedback to their mentees. Mentors received little professional development on guiding other teachers, limiting their own growth as well as their capacity to influence the practice of their mentees.

Undercutting the work further, the one-on-one design of the program made it costly, and there was insufficient funding to support it. As a result, many mentors were only able to fulfill their roles for a short period. Many new teachers reported mentoring support that did not last throughout the year and an inadequate amount of release time with their mentors. Less than half of new teachers who responded to BPE surveys reported observing a mentor's classroom,⁸ a critical component of new teacher induction.

BPS Revamps Hiring & New Teacher Support

In 2004, a new Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources was hired to revamp the district's hiring policies and processes. Responding to data from the new teacher surveys, she saw her charge as reorienting the department to be customer friendly, or as she put it, to create a "red carpet system from contact to contract." Over the next four years, with considerable support from local and national foundations and through changes in central leadership, the OHR made significant revisions to its processes, streamlining hiring and follow-up support with the goal of hiring and keeping more talented teachers. This effort to improve new teacher supports evolved over time, with new components developed and revised and new partnerships forged among BPS central offices, partners, and foundations.

A Customer-Service Approach to Hiring

One of OHR's first steps was to form the Office of New Teacher Support, staffed by a New Teacher Support Team (NTST), that would give a human face to the department and streamline the hiring and induction of new teachers. Since its creation, the NTST has taken on several key support functions.

Red Carpet Treatment for Prospective Teachers

As the first point of contact for potential new hires, the NTST takes responsibility for answering any questions prospective teachers have and helping them to navigate all aspects of the hiring process. Its three staff members are the brokers for all issues pertaining to new and prospective teachers. An additional position was created in OHR to support all teachers (including new hires) with licensure issues, Massachusetts Tests for Educator License (MTEL) preparation, and related one-on-one support.

Human Resources is the highest-functioning, best run department in the BPS. Kudos to all who helped modernize all processes pertaining to personnel hiring and management.

-BPS principal/headmaster

Streamlined Online Application Process

In response to survey feedback about the lack of clarity in hiring procedures, BPS launched a new web-based hiring system, which allows applicants to create and store their application information online and to apply to multiple positions at once. The new

⁸ Amigone et al., 2005.

system separates internal and external job postings, which were formerly in one place, making it easier for prospective new teachers and hiring managers to find the right match. Principals/headmasters can view applicant data online and communicate via the website with OHR about teachers they wish to hire. The new system also allows OHR to communicate more efficiently with applicants and new hires.

Logistical Support

The new website includes a checklist for new teachers and is a one-stop location for accessing and printing all forms that applicants and new teacher hires must submit. The NTST also holds weekly sessions to assist new teachers with their hiring paperwork and to provide other logistical information and support. These two steps ensure quick and accurate processing of paperwork so that as many new staff as possible can be on the payroll before the first day of school.

Welcoming and Connecting New Hires

To celebrate and welcome teachers who are successfully hired, the NTST introduced New Teacher Celebrations. These events, held during the summer at prominent public institutions such as the Boston Public Library and the Boston Children's Museum, introduce new teachers to important community resources for educators and offer a chance for new teachers to meet and network with one another before the start of the school year.

Follow-Up Support

The NTST serves as a central point of contact for new teachers throughout the school year. Prior to the OHR overhaul, the majority of new teachers (71%) rated their access to immediate practical support from OHR as "poor" or "fair," and anecdotal evidence suggested that the department was not responsive to teachers' problems with receiving benefits or pay checks and other immediate needs. Now, NTST members make school visits as well as personalized phone and emails, and the team sends monthly email updates to keep teachers informed of upcoming deadlines and professional development events.

The suite of supports offered by the NTST has been received with enthusiasm. Since the adoption of a customer-service orientation to new teacher support, new teachers who complete BPE's annual survey often single out NTST staff by name and commend them for their responsiveness. NTST staff report that they receive numerous calls every year from new BPS teachers who are struck by the team's receptivity to their needs. This is particularly true for new BPS teachers who have taught previously in other districts: when comparing BPS central office support to their prior experiences with large, bureaucratic, anonymous institutions, these teachers find BPS new teacher support to be a refreshing change.

A District-Based Teacher Preparation Program

BPS in partnership with BPE launched its own teacher preparation program in 2003, the Boston Teacher Residency (BTR). BTR was created for the explicit purpose of recruiting and retaining teachers in and for the BPS, particularly in the high-needs areas of math, science, and special education. BTR also aims to increase the diversity of the BPS workforce by recruiting teachers of color. Based on a medical residency model, aspiring teachers — called residents — participate in a year-long program that includes four full days per week working a mentor teacher's classroom and graduate-level coursework tied to the district's instructional priorities and taught by BTR instructors. Residents are clustered in cohorts in "host" schools

and learn to teach at the elbow of effective practitioners who are trained and supported as mentors.

Upon completion of their residency year, BTR graduates receive a master's degree from University of Massachusetts Boston and are fully certified to teach in Massachusetts. In addition, they are partially certified in special education, with the opportunity to complete requirements for dual licensure in special education during their first year of teaching. BTR graduates are given priority in the hiring process, and special efforts are made by the district to place these new teachers strategically, often in clusters with other BTR graduates. Since its inception, BTR has refined its support to graduates and now offers induction support through the first three years of teaching, including course opportunities and classroom-based coaching.

Boston Teacher Residency

BTR increasingly garners national interest for being at the forefront of classroom-based urban teacher preparation. The program has been featured in *Education Week*, *Edutopia*, and recent reports by the Aspen Institute, the Center for American Progress, and the Center for Teaching Quality. In 2008, BTR was a finalist for the Ash Institute's Innovations in Government Award housed at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

For more information about BTR, please visit: www.bostonteacherresidency.org

Revamped Induction Support for New Teachers

The first graduates of the Boston Teacher Residency entered teaching just as the district began making changes within OHR. However, it quickly became clear that these changes in new teacher recruitment and hiring needed to be accompanied by changes in the district's approach to developing and supporting new teachers once they were in the classroom. Consistent with findings from BPE's annual survey of new teachers, graduates of this first BTR cohort reported inadequate mentoring and support. With two rich sources of feedback, the BPS understood that its induction support of new teachers needed revision and began to roll out a set of induction supports that build on the BPS's experience with new teacher mentoring and that take that work many steps further.

In the summer of 2006, the BPS created within the Office of Professional Development (OPD) a New Teacher Support System (NTSS) to run parallel to the Office of Human Resources New Teacher Support Team (NTST). The NTSS was charged with redesigning induction supports in collaboration with the Boston Teachers Union (BTU). The NTSS and BTU gave a fresh start to the previously existing mentoring program, naming it the New Teacher Development program and building a substantial 5% salary differential for new teacher developers (NTDs) into the teachers' contract.

NTDs are skilled, veteran teachers, identified by BPS and the BTU through a rigorous selection process, who work closely as non-evaluative mentors to new teachers. Full-time NTDs are fully

My new teacher developer has been incredible. She has made the flow of my transition from being a student to a teacher so much easier than it ever could have been without her help.

-New BPS teacher

released from their classroom teaching responsibilities, and each supports about 14 teachers across the district. Part-time NTDs continue to teach full-time while mentoring one or two new teachers in their own schools.

Grounding their work in the district's professional teaching standards, the Dimensions of Effective Teaching, NTDs model lessons, co-teach, observe their mentees, and make time to confer one-on-one. NTDs focus their support in areas that are typically challenging for beginning teachers, such as classroom management, lesson planning, and differentiating instruction.

Beyond their work with individual teachers, NTDs play a role in district-wide support to new teachers, facilitating workshops at the annual New Teacher Institute, seminars for teachers new to BPS, and courses on teacher leadership.

Like all other first-year teachers, BTR graduates are supported by the NTDs in their first year of teaching. In their second and third years, BTR residents continue to receive support from BTR through other course and advancement offerings and from BTR's own induction coaches. BTR induction coaches collaborate throughout the year with NTDs to share ideas and co-construct coaching and feedback tools to create a seamless system of induction support for graduates.

The NTD program is grounded in the idea that teacher professional development should be rich and ongoing. To continue their own professional learning and develop their capacity as mentors, the NTDs participate in intensive professional development provided by the New Teacher Center at the University of California-Santa Cruz.⁹ The professional development for NTDs addresses principles of adult learning and effective practices for observing instruction and providing feedback.

Mentoring Support Improves Dramatically

- Prior to the adoption of the New Teacher Development program, **57% of new teachers expressed satisfaction** with BPS mentoring support.
- After the adoption of the New Teacher Development program, **81% of new teachers expressed satisfaction** with BPS mentoring support.
- New teachers now cite the new teacher developers and the Office of Human Resources New Teacher Support Team as among their greatest sources of support.

Professional Development Opportunities for New Teachers

The Office of Professional Development's New Teacher Support System (NTSS) coordinates a year-long series of professional development opportunities for teachers new to BPS, differentiated to meet the needs of both experienced and novice teachers.

New Teacher Institute

The NTSS collaborates with other BPS departments and local partners to run a multi-day orientation to the district's instructional priorities and policies. This district-wide summer institute kicks off a year-long series of credit-bearing professional development opportunities for new teachers. During the institute, new teachers engage in workshops in areas in which they typically need support, such as classroom

New Teachers Who Rated BPS Orientation as Good/Excellent

SY 2002-2003: **44%**

SY 2007-2008: **90%**

⁹ For more information about the New Teacher Center, please visit: <http://www.newteachercenter.org/>.

management, fostering equity in the classroom, and differentiating instruction. Participants also get tips about living in Boston and learn about resources for educators offered by BPS and the City of Boston.

Beginning Teacher Seminars

These recurring seminars for first-year teachers are differentiated by grade level (elementary, middle, and high school), and their content is aligned with the Dimensions of Effective Teaching. They are taught by new teacher developers.

Advancing Practice Courses

This course series for new hires with prior teaching experience is led in partnership with Boston College's Teach for a New Era initiative. The courses, also differentiated by grade level, are designed for second- and third-year teachers to improve specific areas of their practice, including differentiating instruction for English Language Learners and students with disabilities, using a wide variety of assessments to inform practice, and honing lesson-planning techniques.

Online Technology Courses

These courses, offered in collaboration with the BPS Office of Instructional and Informational Technology, help new teachers master instructional technology skills, including those specific to BPS technology.

Exemplary Teaching Cross-Site Visits

The Office of Professional Development offers structured school visits for groups of new teachers to observe exemplary teachers at work. New teacher developers coordinate the visits and facilitate conversations that help new teachers make connections to their own classrooms.

All of these professional development opportunities are grounded in the district's priorities for accelerating student achievement and are informed by data from BPE's annual survey of new teachers. Through coursework and cross-site visits, the BPS is building networks of support among new teachers, a key strategy for teacher retention and ongoing professional growth.

The BPS Dimensions of Effective Teaching

- Demonstrate excellence, equity, and high expectations for all students
- Reflect on practice and collaborate with peers
- Model professional behavior
- Plan instruction and use strategies that address diverse student needs
- Monitor and assess student progress
- Know content
- Build and maintain partnerships with families and communities
- Establish safe, respectful, and culturally sensitive learning communities

Support for School-Based Induction

Since school administrators are another important source of support for new teachers, the annual New Teacher Institute includes time for new hires to attend school-based orientations led by principals/headmasters. The NTSS designed a “Principal Toolkit for New Teacher Induction” that contains templates for orientation activities and best practices for developing professional learning communities. The induction guide also includes guidelines for the hiring process, a copy of the district’s hiring calendar, information about the district’s mentoring program, and suggestions about how to support, supervise, and evaluate new teachers.

During the school year, new teacher developers connect regularly with school leaders to ensure their work aligns with the goals of the schools and to discuss targeted supports for their teachers. School leaders are also encouraged to call the NTSS with questions about new teachers and to direct new teachers to these support services when needs emerge.

An Inside/Outside Approach to Building and Refining the System

Over the past six years, the success of BPS new teacher support has relied on partnerships and collaboration. As part of its overhaul of new teacher support, the BPS began convening monthly interdepartmental meetings focused on further coordinating new teacher support. This group consists of representatives from the BPS Office of Human Resources, Office of Professional Development, Office of Instructional and Information Technology, the Boston Teacher Residency, and the Boston Plan for Excellence’s research team. These partners co-plan new teacher programming, examine survey and teacher retention data, and oversee ongoing evaluation of their shared work with the goal of continuously refining new teacher support.

A Partnership Driven by Data

An important component of the partnership has been BPE’s annual survey of new teachers. The survey, first launched in 2002-2003 with support from the Barr Foundation, helped uncover areas where new teachers were not receiving adequate support during recruitment, hiring, and induction. BPS took the survey feedback seriously in revamping its work, and that data was at the core of the changes described in this report.

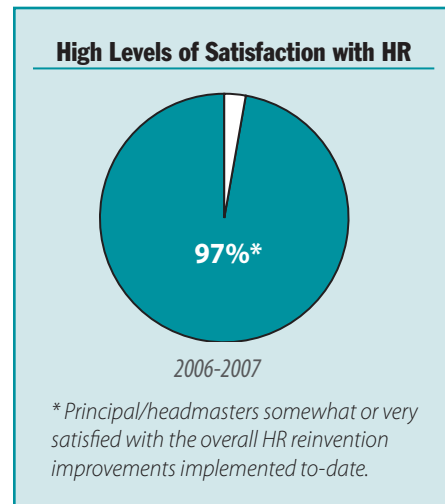
BPS and BPE have worked together to modify the survey over time so that survey items continue to be relevant to changes in the new teacher support system. Once the survey has been administered and data have been analyzed, the partners meet as a group to review the results and discuss possibilities for making changes to new teacher support. For example, feedback from teachers suggested that a four-day New Teacher Institute was too long, so in response, the NTSS shortened the orientation to three days. When new hires with prior teaching experience reported that the institute was too focused on novice teachers, the NTSS began differentiating sessions for novice and experienced teachers.

The BPS has done a great job of completely rethinking new teacher support, from training to hiring to mentoring to professional development. That is just what we need to recruit the next generation of teachers.

-BPS principal/headmaster

The use of data has become an integral component of new teacher support, and the partners now look at multiple supplemental data sources, including:

- the new teacher survey conducted by BPE
- monthly hiring and vacancy reports
- feedback from participants in the Beginning Teacher seminars and Advancing Practice courses
- data collected by the New Teacher Center at UC-Santa Cruz on teachers' experiences with new teacher developers
- surveys of principals about new teachers and central office supports



Other Key Partners

The BPS has also drawn on partnerships with area universities, especially those with schools of education, to inform and implement its reform of new teacher support. In one case, a college has partnered with the BPS to deliver courses for new teachers, and in other instances, higher education partners have contributed advice, research capacity, and graduate-level interns.

Local and national foundations, including the Barr Foundation, the Broad Foundation, the Dell Foundation, the Harold Whitworth Pierce Charitable Trust, and Strategic Grant Partners, have provided substantial financial and technical support. The reinvention of the hiring system, BPE's research on new teachers, the launch and ongoing operation of BTR, and the district's professional development initiatives targeting new teachers have all received external funding.

Finally, the Boston Teachers' Union (BTU) has been an integral partner. In its collective bargaining agreement with the district, the BTU agreed to a specific designation for the role of new teacher developers, which includes a pay differential and a course-release agreement. By collaborating on the ongoing development of the New Teacher Developer program, the BTU demonstrates a commitment to support for novice teachers and to veteran teachers who seek to apply their instructional expertise and expand their impact.

Mapping the partnerships

Partner	Recruitment, Hiring, & On-boarding	Orientation & Induction	Program Evaluation
Office of Human Resources (OHR)	<p>Management of web-based hiring system</p> <p>First point of contact for new teacher questions and concerns</p> <p>New Teacher Celebrations</p>	<p>New Teacher Institute</p> <p>Monthly new teacher email updates</p>	<p>Continuous monitoring of district hiring and vacancy reports</p>
Office of Professional Development (OPD)	<p>New Teacher Celebrations</p>	<p>New Teacher Institute</p> <p>Mentoring support for first-year teachers through the New Teacher Developer (NTD) program</p> <p>Beginning Teacher seminars, Advancing Practice courses, and Exemplary Teaching cross-site visits</p>	<p>Engagement with external researchers to assess NTD program impact on classroom practice, student achievement, and teacher retention</p>
Office of Instructional and Information Technology (OIIT)		<p>Management of online courses in technology for new teachers</p> <p>Professional development for teachers on how to use technology in the classroom</p>	
Boston Plan for Excellence (BPE)			<p>Development, implementation, and analysis of surveys, interviews, and focus groups with BPS teachers</p>
Boston Teacher Residency (BTR)	<p>Targeted recruitment of teachers of color and teachers in high-need areas</p> <p>Teacher preparation through residency plus coursework</p> <p>Resident field placement and site-based mentoring</p>	<p>Induction coaching support for 2nd and 3rd year BTR graduates</p>	<p>Internal data collection focused on BTR recruitment and preparation</p> <p>Engagement with external researchers to assess BTR program impact on student achievement</p>
Boston Teachers Union (BTU)		<p>Contractual support of NTD program</p> <p>Participation in hiring of NTDs</p>	
Local and National Foundations	<p>Fellowship opportunities in central offices</p> <p>Programmatic support for OHR reinvention and BTR</p>	<p>Funding to support the NTD program.</p>	<p>Funding for survey development and implementation</p> <p>Funding to conduct focus groups with teachers of color</p>

Lessons Learned

When BPS and its partners first began this work six years ago, they were concerned about the experiences of teachers new to BPS, who reported high levels of dissatisfaction with hiring, recruitment, and induction into BPS. Since then, many changes have been made and overall ratings of school-based and centrally offered hiring and induction supports have improved. The following are lessons BPS and BPE have learned.

A customer-service approach makes a difference. The district demonstrated a significant and symbolic commitment to new teachers by instituting organizational changes that provided them with “go-to” support through the hiring process and their first year teaching in the BPS. The creation of the New Teacher Support Team and a redefined mentoring role through the New Teacher Development program were changes that were immediately visible to new teachers. Responding to the positive feedback to its “red carpet” approach, in the fall of 2008 the OHR absorbed the NTST into its larger staffing team, where its customer-service approach is being integrated into all aspects of hiring. The former New Teacher Support Manager is now the BPS Director of Staffing, signaling how important the work of the NTST has been to BPS’s human resource strategy.

Support happens at multiple levels. New teachers need support at every stage — from hiring to orientation to induction to ongoing classroom support. As such, the district and BTR have developed a recommended sequence of professional development experiences for teachers for the first three years of teaching that enables them to connect and network with teachers throughout the district. Efforts at three levels — classroom, school, and district — now form a comprehensive system of new teacher support.

Differentiation matters. Teachers enter BPS with a variety of experiences and preparation. In order to best support all teachers, BPS has implemented a system of core support with options for differentiation. At the core, all first year novice teachers are paired with a new teacher developer who tailors support to individuals.

Effective new teacher support is made even more effective through collaboration, both internal and external. The development of a data-driven system of support for new teachers would not have been possible without the collaboration of multiple partners, including the Boston Teachers Union and BPE. The monthly convening of partners created an important space for building coherence across departments and organizations.

These lessons have helped to inform the current priorities of the BPS, including Superintendent Carol Johnson’s Acceleration Agenda, which is focused on closing achievement gaps and supporting all students to reach proficiency and graduate ready for college and success in life. Human capital development — including the hiring and development of new teachers — is critical to achieving these goals.

The Learning Continues

While significant changes have been made in the hiring and induction of new teachers to BPS, there is still room for improvement and continued learning.

More research is needed on effective classroom-based support to new teachers. Since 2002, new teacher retention in BPS has steadily improved. Further, new teachers express high levels of satisfaction with the classroom-based support they receive from their new teacher developers. However, little is known about the specific impact of the New Teacher Development program on teacher retention or student achievement. In October 2008, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. released a study evaluating the impact of comprehensive new teacher induction support on teacher retention and student achievement in 17 urban school districts, including Boston. This study found no impact on student test scores or teacher retention. This research suggests that school districts still have a long way to go in improving student achievement and in keeping their teachers; however this study followed data for the 2005-2006 school year, before the NTD program was implemented districtwide. With only one year of data, findings from this study should be interpreted with caution.

New teacher induction must be the responsibility of entire school communities. The current BPS induction model emphasizes the relationship between new teachers and new teacher developers. Integrating this work into a systemic whole-school induction model will be critical. BTR has begun to test such an approach by concentrating the placement of its residents and graduates in a cohort of schools, where BTR continues to support new teachers through their third year of teaching and helps develop the leadership capacity of more experienced teachers.

Teacher retention remains an issue beyond the first three years. Like many urban school districts, BPS faces the challenge of retaining high-quality teachers who are entering the second stage of their career. With four to ten years of experience, many of these teachers have improved their classroom practice but are looking for opportunities for advancement and leadership without leaving teaching. BPS is exploring ways of providing leadership opportunities that have an impact on student learning outcomes and also enable teachers to remain in the classroom. Additional data on the professional needs and career aspirations of these emerging teachers would help the district differentiate supports and roles.

Subpopulations of teachers may need additional support. The BPS intentionally recruits teachers of color for a student population that is largely African American and Latino, but BPS knows little about the specific experiences of BPS teachers of color. To that end, in 2007-2008, the BPE research team began conducting focus groups with teachers of color to understand more strategies for supporting and retaining a key subgroup of teachers. Findings from these focus groups suggest that teachers of color could benefit from formal support networks so that they can share their experiences with one another and the district.

Teachers who leave the BPS are an important source of information. With the development of a cohesive and collaborative system of support for new teachers, the BPS and BPE have asked what can be learned from teachers who, even with these improved supports, choose to leave BPS. In June 2006, BPS and BPE launched a voluntary teacher exit survey to gather information from resigning teachers about why they leave and where they go after teaching in BPS. Findings from this research suggest that school-based issues and relationships with administrators in particular play an important role in teachers' decisions to leave the district. However, the survey's response rate has remained low (~33%), making it difficult to draw any definitive conclusions about teachers' reasons for resignation, in large part because many resigning teachers relocate to other districts or states and leave behind outdated contact information. Solving this problem will be critical for getting accurate, actionable data on teachers' reasons for leaving the school district.

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The Boston Plan for Excellence in the Public Schools is a local education foundation established in 1984 to support the city's schools in raising student achievement. BPE works from the "outside in," acting as both an ally and critical friend to the Boston Public Schools — seeking and supporting innovative solutions to the toughest problems faced by Boston's students, their teachers, and the school district as a whole.

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