



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE
to strengthen teaching in public schools®

Teachers Institutes Support Higher Teacher Retention in High-Needs Public Schools, 2020



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School district officials often cite high teacher turnover in schools serving high proportions of students from low-income families as a key challenge in their efforts to improve the achievement of disadvantaged students and reduce the achievement gap. High teacher turnover may pose multiple challenges:

- Maintaining high quality instruction is especially difficult in schools with high turnover each year. In schools with high teacher turnover, students are taught by a higher proportion of new, inexperienced teachers (Clotfelter, Ladd, and Vigdor 2005; Simon and Johnson 2015; Chapman et al. 2018) and teachers who have been reassigned to teach a grade they haven't taught before, both patterns that lead to disruptions in instruction, lower instructional quality, and lower student achievement (Allensworth et al. 2009; Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff 2006; Ingersoll 2001; Ronfeldt et al. 2013).
- Replacing teachers requires financial resources that could otherwise support classroom teaching—curriculum, materials, and professional development for teachers. When teacher turnover is high, schools must repeatedly recruit, hire, induct, and develop replacement teachers, all activities that are likely to divert financial resources away from classroom teaching.
- High teacher turnover also alters the school workplace and may affect students beyond those touched directly by changes in teachers (Ronfeldt et al. 2013). High turnover may impede the development of strong collegial relationships among teachers, lead to the loss of institutional knowledge, and make teachers reluctant to take on leadership roles. These effects may in turn limit the school's capacity for instructional improvement and limit achievement among all students.

Researchers have identified multiple factors that lead teachers to leave their schools. These include working conditions, especially conditions that shape the social context for teaching and learning and make effective teaching possible (such as school culture, principal leadership, and relationships with colleagues) (Kraft and Papay 2012; Simon and Johnson 2015; Allensworth 2009; Marinell and Coca 2013; Borman and Dowling 2008). In a review of the literature, Scheopner (2010) noted that studies show that to stay in a school, teachers need to experience a sense of effectiveness and feel supported in their work. Teachers want an intellectually stimulating community in which they can experience a sense of learning, changing, and growing. Status and respect for teachers is also a factor that influences teacher retention.

Teachers Institutes address some factors leading to high teacher turnover

Teachers Institutes create partnerships between school districts and local universities or colleges to provide teacher professional development in a way that offers the kinds of support teachers need to remain teaching in high-poverty, high-minority public schools. University faculty and public school teachers work collaboratively in intensive seminars on topics suggested by teachers. Teachers Institutes offer teachers an intellectually stimulating opportunity to learn about the seminar topic along with other teachers in their school and district. In the seminars, teachers create a curriculum unit on some aspect of the seminar topic that they plan to teach to their students in the following school year. Through seminar discussions, teachers also have access to collegial support in improving pedagogical

practice. Institutes are carefully designed to respect and build on the pedagogical expertise that teachers bring to the Institute seminars; the roles of seminar leaders and teachers are carefully defined, and teachers receive a stipend in recognition of their time and effort.

All teachers of core subjects are eligible to participate in Teachers Institute seminars. Those who participate include teachers of all grades and core subject areas. They include both relatively new teachers and highly experienced teachers still interested in improving their teaching. In fact, in the New Haven Teachers Institute, for example, more than half of teachers who participate have at least 5 years of experience in teaching. Most of those teaching in middle and high school grades had a degree or certification in the subject area they taught, but a few did not (perhaps a consequence of teacher turnover). When they applied to a Teachers Institute, many participating teachers had leadership roles in their school or district.

Developers of the Teachers Institute approach expect that by increasing collegiality among district teachers and university faculty, by providing teachers with opportunities for leadership while they remain in the classroom, and by increasing teachers' content knowledge and confidence in teaching the content, the Institute will increase the likelihood that teachers will remain teaching in their current district and school (Kisker 2011, 2018). Surveys of participants confirm that their experiences in the Institute seminars have supported their commitment to teaching in high-needs public schools.

Collegial support

When working conditions in a school are poor, teachers' experiences in the Teachers Institute seminars may help counterbalance the conditions in their school and provide some of the support they need to remain in their current teaching position. When teachers are unable to develop strong collegial working relationships at their school, the opportunity to work with other district teachers in a Teachers Institute seminar may provide some of the professional interactions and feedback that teachers, especially new teachers, need. Two thirds of teachers who participated in the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, for example, rated their interactions with other teachers in the program as useful to a great extent, and most of the other teachers found these interactions to be useful to a moderate extent. The supportive relationships that teachers form often continue beyond the Institute seminars.

TIP has been a beautiful reminder of the larger network that we belong to as teachers. At the School District of Philadelphia, we operate in a series of internal configurations and autonomous forms. Each school is its own unique universe, colleagues are split into departments, and then within that most of us function in separate autonomous classrooms. It is easy to feel alone within your room and get caught up in the craziness of school and forget the fact that we are part of a larger network. 2018 PA 37

It also taught me a lot, made me interested in continuing to increase my knowledge, and helped me make connections with the university faculty and other teachers around the state that I know I can reach out to in the future if I have questions. 2017 DE 17

My past participation has kept me engaged in learning and allowed me to develop more professional relationships both throughout public schools in Delaware as well as at the University of Delaware. 2017 DE 23

Every year I make new contacts and connections across the district which serve to give me a stronger sense of a New Haven teaching community. This is a strong factor in why I never left

the district, even when other districts were offering more money back when I started teaching. 2014 YNHTI 197

The support of other teachers gave me confidence in my curriculum decisions. During the school year, teachers are often too busy to give feedback on each other's disciplines; the seminar allows us to work in a positive, supportive, collaborative environment. 2014 YNHTI 11199

My participation in the seminar this year reaffirms my excitement for teaching...Hearing and sharing with other teachers that we have all had our doubts during our careers [about] teaching, whether at our school, district, or altogether, ... and we all choose to stay because we all care about our students and communities, helped me realize that I do enjoy what I do at the place I am at, despite all of its issues. 2018 YNI 24

The opportunity to work with Yale faculty and learn from my fellow teachers gave me a renewed excitement as I return to the classroom. 2018 YNI 32

Because of the community we have created at the intensive session, I no longer feel alone in the work I am doing. I know there are teachers out there who have the same passion as me and we are there to continue to inspire and support each other. 2018 YNI 12

I met several teachers who teach the same subject/grade levels as I do, and I plan to keep in touch with them and share ideas that will improve our teaching and our students' learning. 2018 YNI 37

Furthermore, as a result of the discussions with colleagues from across the nation who are engaged, passionate, professionals, I'm always reinvigorated to reenter the classroom with enthusiasm and positivity. 2018 YNI 6

I know that I can email or call one of the other Fellows this year if I want to talk about poetry and art or some theory of learning. If I am up late researching for a new unit, I can bet one of my YNI colleagues is too. This network will undoubtedly buoy me up during challenging parts of the school year. 2018 YNI 26

Respect

Teachers Institutes are carefully designed to respect teachers. Seminars are intended to promote interactions among seminar leaders and teachers, who bring content knowledge and teaching expertise, respectively, to the discussions, and both teachers and seminar leaders are compensated for their time and effort. At the end of their seminar, some Fellows highlighted the respect or sense of professionalism they received from the program, the resulting respect they gained from their peers or school administration, or the respect they gained for the teaching profession.

The Institute has helped me improve my unit development and teaching by increasing my content knowledge and confidence in using a variety of teaching techniques. This has helped me improve my performance with my peers and gain respect from my administration. 2017 DE 28

All of the Fellows that I work with in these seminars hold this program in high esteem and it makes the work that we do feel professional and important. 2017 DE 1

It was really nice to be treated respectfully and be encouraged to explore our own ideas and research. 2018 PA 36

The more profound effect is on my sense of professionalism, scholarship, and desire to remain a classroom teacher. 2018 PA 40

I feel incredibly respected by all of [the Fellows, Coordinator, and seminar leader] as well, despite the fact that this is only my second year of teaching. In our discussions, I know they are engaged and listening to what I have to say and will provide me with constructive and helpful feedback. 2018 YNHTI 2-5

I was treated as a knowledgeable colleague and learned about how to apply the seminar topic to my elementary students in a meaningful, relevant way. 2018 YNI 7

In my conversation with the YNI faculty and fellow teachers, I felt that my views were respected and my ideas were valued. 2018 YNI 2

I felt I incurred a deeper level of respect for the teaching profession by the vast amounts of collegiality displayed...I gained a deeper respect for teaching by listening to the perils and successes that other teachers are facing across the nation. 2018 YNI 4

Professionally, I was treated as a professional, which should be the standard in professional development for teachers, but that is not often the case. 2018 YNI 11

I feel so respected and valued and those feelings truly give me an anti-burnout booster shot as I head into another school year with its inevitable challenges. 2018 YNI 26

The intensive seminar provides the time and space for teachers to critically reflect on their practices and develop quality units. This, in turn, elevates the professionalism in and outside of the classroom. 2018 YNI 28

My participation always increases my sense of professionalism and dedication to my role as classroom educator. 2018 YNI 47

Intellectual stimulation

Most teachers participating in Teachers Institutes cite the opportunity for intellectual stimulation as an important reason for participating, and after completing their Institute seminar, nearly all agreed that their seminar helped them grow professionally and intellectually. The intellectual stimulation and learning that teachers experience in Teachers Institute seminars also strengthens their teaching and confidence, and some Fellows noted that these improvements are recognized in assessments of their performance. These positive experiences may help sustain them in teaching.

I think participating in the seminar this year was intellectually stimulating. It was nice to sit down with other professionals and have adult conversation, exchange ideas, and in the end produce a product that I created, that I am proud of, and can't wait to teach. 2017 DE 27

I value the intellectual stimulation the most...I was glad to participate, because it forced me to develop a robust unit plan. 2018 PA 3

The rich discussion aided by the enthusiastic and respectful seminar leaders keeps me coming back year after year. I am truly appreciative of this opportunity to grow and develop my intellect as well as the intellect of my students. 2018 PA 19

Participation in TIP is an intellectual high for me. It means that I'll have something fresh and new to share with my students. It means I'll be recognized for my hard work and dedication both through publishing my work and paying my stipend. 2018 PA 32

It's really refreshing to be challenged in an academic setting, rather than being the one doing the challenging. 2018 PA 35

As teachers we often teach the same subjects year after year and use many of the same lesson plans. I was looking for a way to stimulate myself intellectually as I had discovered I had not been challenged since graduate school. 2018 PA 38

The Institute this year, as was my experience last year, was a highly intellectual experience, very much worth the time and effort. It has kept me more engaged as a New Haven teacher, and provides me with tools to enrich the learning experience for my students in very real ways. I have found my experience this year once again among the most redeeming as a teacher in New Haven. 2014 YNHTI 869

The seminar was challenging intellectually as it caused me to exercise my brain after a hard day's work with the children but it was equally as rejuvenative as it always left me with more important concepts and questions to reflect on. My participation meant a great deal to me personally and professionally as I experienced being in a learning community of fellow teachers and learners where my ideas were listened to and respected. 2014 YNHTI 294

The most valuable aspect of the institute was the intellectual stimulation I received from my professor, peers, readings, and lectures. I was able to work with other like-minded educators who had a deep desire to improve their skills and were not afraid to express their passion or have their ideas challenged. 2014 YNHTI 314

Personally, I was able to develop an idea that I had wanted to teach for a long time and the seminar meetings are often the best part of the week, intellectually. Professionally, there is nothing better than getting together with a bunch of teachers when all of us are truly interested in the topic to discuss in order to develop teaching strategies. 2015 YNHTI 4716

It was challenging in that the content material was new to me as an English teacher, and this was also the best part of the seminar. It is wonderful to feel intellectually challenged. 2018 YNHTI 1-2

The discussions helped me further understand the content. I am grateful for this experience, as it was intellectually stimulating. I was challenged by the content and empowered as I began to unlock the information and how I can bring it into my classroom. 2018 YNHTI 1-12

I want my own students to get this same experience. I'd like to stimulate their intellectual curiosity by allowing them to find connections between the content we cover in class and their own topics of interest. 2018 YNI 2

The most valuable experience was speaking to other teachers within the seminar as well as outside of the seminar in social occasions because the intellectual conversations sparked so many ideas for me as a teacher to utilize as I enter another school year. 2018 YNI 23

Professional growth and improved performance

As noted above, after completing their Institute seminar, nearly all participating teachers agreed that their seminar helped them grow professionally and intellectually. Some teachers described the professional growth they experienced through their participation in Teachers Institute seminars and were gratified by recognition of that growth by school administrators.

I also received positive feedback from other teachers who heard my students sharing about what we were learning together. I think that it all contributes to a positive growth mindset and energized school culture. Participating has also helped me on my evaluations because it clearly shows my administrators that I am continuing to grow and refine my craft as an educator. They can see the investment of my time and effort... 2017 DE 20

Participating has improved my teaching performance, which has been evident in the scores of my students. 2017 DE 6

Professionally, this experience helped me meet my professional development goals with Teach for America and certainly looked good for evaluations with administrators. 2018 YNHTI 2-4

This was my first year involved with the Institute. I was a bit nervous and unsure if I could accomplish the goals of the Institute at first, however, once I got started felt very motivated professionally and personally. The overall experience has built my confidence not only as a teacher but as a learner as well. 2014 YNHTI 7433

I felt great knowing I was part of such a noble initiative to use the brainpower that already exists in the district to enhance the learning going on in the classrooms. Professionally, it helped me to be taken seriously as an academic teacher. Overall, in both respects I have grown through the examination of a topic that I felt near and dear to. I wanted to understand more about Native Americans and I did. I also wanted to learn the tricks of veteran teachers and I did. I sought an academic challenge and I accomplished that. 2015 YNHTI 12525

Leadership opportunities

By providing opportunities for leadership without leaving the classroom, the Teachers Institutes also may facilitate leadership in other school-wide decision-making and increase the likelihood that teachers remain teaching in their present school.

My participation in the Institute model has also raised my stock in the district. I have been asked to step into leadership roles both within my building and the district as a whole. I am able to help my school and district grow through these new responsibilities. 2017 DE 15

The seminar participation has allowed my confidence to soar as a teacher leader and the curriculum unit will be implemented as a way of bettering the school community inside and outside of the building. 2014 YNHTI 574

Our school improvement plan entails much of the same ideals upheld in the Institute. Student and teacher leadership are a main facet of it. The opportunity of being a fellow and representative is a direct reflection of this. It has given me greater confidence in presenting my

work to students and staff alike. I have been given the chance to share my units at staff meetings and have therefore raised awareness and interest in the Institute among my colleagues as well as those in my assigned schools. I look forward to a continued connection with the Institute and working collaboratively with teachers across the district to provide best practices in teaching. It has also allowed me to use the knowledge gained in my role as a student teacher mentor, TEAM mentor and Teacher Facilitator. 2014 YNTHI 373

YNI really enhances teaching quality and our opportunities to engage in school leadership which in fact are important factors in raising student achievement overall. 2018 YNI 21

My seminar dealt with issues of school discipline and restorative practices. I am signing up for the school discipline committee this year and plan on having an immediate impact on the school by bringing what I have learned in the seminar to those discussions. One of our goals is to reduce suspensions and because of my participation, I have resources and insights to offer as we work towards that goal at both school and district. 2018 YNI 30

Past participation has elevated my status in the district. In the time since I have been a national and local Fellow, I have been a building teacher of the year, a district level presenter at in-service, and I am currently a lead mentor for new first year teachers to the district. I know that my exposure to YNI and the other national Fellows has made me better prepared to step into leadership roles within my district. 2018 YNI 3

Professional Network

By offering teachers the opportunity to learn together in a collegial setting and by facilitating professional relationships among teachers in different schools in the district, the Teachers Institutes may over time build collegial relationships among teachers in a school and in the district that support teacher retention.

When I need help addressing a topic or new way to teach a concept that is difficult for my students, I have other teachers to ask for help. Not only can I get help during seminars, but I have developed relationships with other teachers that I can turn to at any time. 2017 DE 7

Being part of the Institute has meant friendships with other educators throughout the district that I may not have had the opportunity to meet otherwise. 2014 YNHTI 663

Due to this seminar, I have a network of professionals who I consider colleagues and friends. This experience has truly brought us together in an amazing way. Collaborating with these individuals...has been extremely valuable to me. They are so helpful and knowledgeable in a variety of ways. I have learned a great deal from them. 2018 YNHTI 2-5

Curriculum Support

The focus of teachers' work in the Teachers Institute is the development of a curriculum unit that the teacher can use in his or her classroom in the following school year. Through this work, teachers take the initiative to improve the curriculum; their unit supplements a unit in the existing curriculum or fills a gap in the school's curriculum. For some teachers, writing a curriculum unit that meets their needs gives them more control over what they teach and a feeling of empowerment.

There are many gaps in the ELA 3 Honors curriculum. It is not meeting the needs of students in regards to rigor or skill requirements. It seems to only apply the CCS standards and nothing

more. I am going to propose part of my unit as a district-wide modification to the fourth unit in this course. I hope that it will be well-received. 2017 DE 10

Like any school, closing the achievement gap is a priority. My school is Title I and many of my students lack background knowledge or are not native to the United States. By participating in DTI and creating personalized quality curriculum units, the students know that they are important. It allows me to fill holes in my present curriculum and present new content. In addition, it shows students that I am also a student and learner and that I value their judgment and views. 2017 DE 20

I have participated in the Institute for all these years because it offers me intellectual stimulation and the great opportunity to develop curriculum which I am very interested in doing. In this way I am able to contribute units to the larger teaching community and I am very proud of that... The huge focus that is placed in my school on strengthening the literacy skills of our students makes this unit ideal as a supplement to what I already use in my teaching. It offers interdisciplinary activities (reading, writing, art, drama) that make learning fun at the same time that it addresses strategies and objectives aligned with the common core. 2014 YNHTI 293

Writing a curriculum unit gives me the feeling of having some control and say in what I am teaching. In an otherwise dictated curriculum, writing my own unit is empowering and allows me to have autonomy over my classroom and my students. It motivates me to do better and work harder for my students! 2014 YNHTI 320

Being part of the seminar gives me the opportunity to really reflect and focus on what my students need. So often with all the curriculum resources that we receive from the district it is easy to just use what is given to us and not step outside that information and see if there is something else that might benefit students in a different way. 2014 YNHTI 663

This particular unit was developed for a unit in our very new curriculum for tenth graders that asks students to explore how technology is affecting our lives. It meets many student achievement goals based on the Common Core standards for grades 9-10 English Language Arts. These standards have been newly adopted by the State of Connecticut and the New Haven School System. Our urban school is perennially challenged to raise the academic skills of students who come from disadvantaged homes. I believe that this unit, and the adoption of the Common Core Standards in general, will move teachers, administrators, and students to have higher educational goals. The unit I developed is very challenging in its reading, research and writing requirements. 2014 YNHTI 4716

My teaching will be better this year because I feel like I know what is in the NHPS History curriculum and how my unit fits well for a number of different courses taught in my building and through the district. 2016 YNHTI 12525

It has filled an area of my curriculum that I wanted to improve on and learn more about to share with my students. 2017 YNHTI 167

I am definitely teaching this class next year, I am getting other teachers to teach this unit with me, and I am building other new curriculum around this unit and I am taking my students on at least 3 field trips, and we are doing at least 1 project that I hope will become an annual tradition at the school. 2017 YNHTI 11676

I'm looking forward to teaching my unit this coming year. It is an enrichment component to a content area I already teach so I'm excited to add my unit to the current curriculum. 2016 YNHTI 110

The seminar not only allowed me to create professional relationships with a variety of teachers in the district, but it also provided a structural framework to address a gap I noticed in the 7th and 8th grade science curriculum. The Institute gave me a setting to address a problem in the school science curriculum, and I know that my unit will give my students a deeper and more holistic understanding of the content area. 2016 YNTHI 921

By having the opportunity to create my own interdisciplinary curriculum units I have felt more empowered to determine the choice of subject-matter that I want to include in my teaching. 2016 YNHTI 293

My students will probably enjoy this version of the unit more than the prescribed one because it fits better with the course. They will like learning about the different components that I have incorporated, and it actually gives more student choice on what they are doing. 2017 YNTHI 1082

Renewed Passion for Teaching

Many Fellows comment on how their Institute participation contributes to their motivation to teach.

It also reinvigorates my passion for teaching, which I greatly appreciate. 2017 DE 1

To me, participation in the seminar meant a reinvigorated passion for what I do in the classroom each day. 2018 PA 27

I feel that my participation has given me a professional confidence and renewed passion to teach my students. 2018 PA 42

It kept me academically and intellectually engaged in the midst of professional development that isn't necessarily as stimulating as YNHTI. These seminars keep me excited about teaching. 2017 YNHTI 13405

I have attested that the Institute, my participation in it, and my leadership roles holistically account for more than half the reason I still teach in New Haven. Salaries remain noncompetitive, stipended leadership roles have now ended; New Haven Public Schools does not do a lot to keep talented teachers in the district. Coop, my school, is a wonderful place, and I understand that under budgetary constraints it is tough to keep a large school district with a lot of moving parts going with everything they must consider. I love the city of New Haven and its students and am proud to teach and live here. However, the Institute offers me another, quite important reason to be here. A job to do. A task to see through. Each year this job and task is a curricular unit that will benefit students. Year-to-year this has become trying my best to make sure as many eligible, qualified, and enthusiastic teachers have the opportunity to see the same come to fruition. I have met and worked with exceptional individuals within the Institute and the University. It's hard work, sometimes very hard, sometimes even frustrating and stressful. But as they say, nothing worth doing will come easily. The work I do I feel is worth doing. It gives me pride and focus, and the opportunity to help others to the same benefit, and the relationships I form have become part of my identity as a teacher in New Haven, and a teacher at all. 2017 YNHTI 869

Despite being too young to experience true “teacher burnout”, my participation this year has reinvigorated my passion for education. 2018 YNI 25

The seminar was a transformative experience for me personally and professionally, as it renewed my passion for teaching and intellectual pursuits. 2018 YNI 37

It keeps me pushing to be better and to stay current on content and best practices. One of the risks of doing something for a number of years is to fall into complacency. DTI keeps me motivated and provides an intellectual stimulation that I can then share with my students. 2017 DE 21

It has definitely made me more motivated, more professional in my job, and enhances my teaching as well as knowledge. 2018 YNI 41

My past participation has helped me maintain enthusiasm for teaching. 2017 DE 24

The effect that participating in the TIP program has had on my teaching is: (1) helped me to stay enthusiastic as a teacher... 2018 PA 13

Participation always makes me more invested in teaching. 2018 PA 15

Participation in the seminar keeps my creativity and excitement for teaching sharp. 2018 YNI 3

My participation in the seminar this year reaffirms my excitement for teaching. 2018 YNI 24

My participation always increases my sense of professionalism and dedication to my role as classroom educator. Participating in the intensive provides a great deal of pride in my scholastic and intellectual abilities and encourages me to continue challenging myself and expanding my knowledge. I receive none of these encouragements from my practice during the school year. 2018 YNI 47

Strengthened Commitment to Teaching

In their narrative comments at the end of their seminar, some Fellows speak directly about the influence of Teachers Institute participation on their desire to remain in teaching.

I am not the only educator to say that one of the things that keeps me teaching in Philadelphia is the TIP program. 2018 PA 13

The more profound effect is on my sense of professionalism, scholarship, and desire to remain as a classroom teacher. 2018 PA 40

The Institute...has also made me want to stay in the classroom and in the district. 2014 YNHTI 921

As noted, the greatest impact has been on my decision to remain as a classroom teacher. Each experience deepens my resolve and certainty that the classroom is where I belong. 2018 YNI 47

The Initiative and local Institute keep me teaching in New Haven. YNI 2018 48

This was an absolutely wonderful experience for me. I feel so respected and valued and those feelings truly give me an anti-burnout shot as I head into another school year with its inevitable challenges. 2018 YNI 26

Teachers Institutes may increase teacher retention rates

At the end of their Institute seminar, most teachers report that they expect to remain in teaching in five years, but some teachers indicate that they expect to take an administrative position, go to graduate school, or retire. In the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, for example, most of those who expect to remain in teaching in five years expect to remain teaching in their current school (78%) or in their district (11%).

Some evidence exists showing that Teachers Institutes may increase teacher retention rates. Smith (2009) showed that among teachers who had participated in the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute during or before the first year of the study (2000-2001), 63% were still teaching in the New Haven School District five years later, compared with 43% of New Haven teachers who had not participated in the Institute. After controlling for race, sex, and years of teaching experience, the analysis showed that teachers who had participated in the Institute by 2000-2001 were almost twice (1.93 times) as likely to remain teaching in the district in 2004-2005.

Summary

Lower teacher retention in high-poverty public schools remains an obstacle to instructional improvement, student achievement gains, and reductions in achievement gaps. Multiple factors influence teachers' decisions to remain teaching at their school and in their district, including factors related to school working conditions, salary, and curriculum. Teachers Institutes address some of these factors by providing an intensive professional development experience that offers curricular support, fosters collegiality and new professional relationships with other teachers in the district, and encourages teacher leadership without leaving the classroom.

Teachers who participate in Teachers Institute seminars express a strong commitment to teaching in their school, and data show that they remain at higher rates than other teachers in their districts. These teachers include experienced teachers and teachers in leadership roles (in other words, those most likely to be effective teachers) whose retention in high needs public schools is especially important.

The Teachers Institute is a promising approach that supports teaching in high-poverty public schools, but more research is needed to reach causal conclusions about Institute effects on teacher retention. Because random assignment of teachers to participate in a Teachers Institute would distort the program, an experimental research study is not feasible. A prospective study following a sample of Fellows and a matched comparison group of teachers, however, could be designed to document retention rates and estimate the role of the Teachers Institute in increasing retention rates.

Further descriptive research could also provide important information about teacher retention among Fellows. For example, a small sample of accepted first-time applicants to a Teachers Institute could be identified and interviewed prior to participating in their seminar, at completion of their seminar, and annually thereafter. These applicants could be interviewed in focus groups, individually, or both to learn in depth about their retention history and the role of Teachers Institute participation in their career decisions.