



# *Ensuring High-Quality Professional Development For All Maryland Teachers*

*A Report from  
The Maryland Teacher Professional Development  
Advisory Council*



*July 2009*

June 18, 2009

Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick  
State Superintendent of Schools  
Maryland State Department of Education  
200 W. Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Dear Dr. Grasmick:

On behalf of Dr. Hanne Mawhinney, who served with me as co-chairperson of the Maryland Teacher Professional Development Advisory Council, and the Council members listed on the following pages, I am pleased to submit the Council's fourth report, *Ensuring High Quality Professional Development for All Maryland Teachers*. .

As you know, Dr. Jackie Haas also served as co-chair until her untimely passing in December, 2008. We lost a great leader and advocate for teacher professional development and in her honor, the Council dedicates this report to her, knowing how pleased she was to serve you, the State of Maryland and our colleagues with this work.

This report highlights three topics that the Council has addressed during its work over the past two years. As the Council has continued to address your charge of reviewing current policies and programs in our state, we turned our focus to three important issues: support for beginning teachers, finding time for professional development and, understanding the contributions of college and university courses to teacher knowledge and skills. As you will see, the Council's review of each of these issues is accompanied by specific recommendations and action steps.

The last section of the report amplifies the Council's core recommendation for creating a statewide system of high-quality professional learning opportunities, which was first articulated in the Council's 2004 report. Here, the Council offers three recommendations for this system. We believe the final section of this report provides a vision and strategies for building on current institutional structures and staffing to improve the overall quality of teacher professional development by reducing or eliminating the fragmentation, lack of coherence, and ineffective utilization of resources that characterize too much of current practice in this area. Together these three recommendations underscore the Council's fundamental belief that, in the end, the most important thing we can do is ensure excellent teachers for each of our students.

We appreciate your support for the work of the Council and for your leadership in improving the quality of teacher professional development. As always, we stand ready to assist you in making this report and our recommendations a part of the daily work of educators across the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colleen P. Seremet". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C' and 'S'.

Colleen P. Seremet  
Assistant State Superintendent for Instruction  
Co-Chair, Maryland Teacher Professional Development Advisory Council

## **In Memoriam**

### **Jacqueline C. Haas**

*Treat people as if they were what they ought to be,  
and you will help them become what they are capable of being.*

– Goethe

The Maryland Teacher Professional Development Advisory Council dedicates this report to the memory of Jacqueline C. Haas. As a co-chairperson of the Council, Jackie exerted strong leadership and brought keen insights to conversations about professional learning. Her unswerving commitment to teachers and students inspired us to think carefully about critical issues and to make every effort to articulate recommendations that are both practical and forward-looking. As a superintendent, a leader, and a colleague, Jackie was always a teacher and she encouraged all of us to learn with her.

June 2009

# Maryland Teacher Professional Development Advisory Council

## CO-CHAIRPERSONS

**Hanne Mawhinney**, Coordinator  
Organizational Leadership & Policy Studies  
Department of Education Leadership, Higher  
Education & International Education  
University of Maryland

**Colleen Seremet**  
Assistant State Superintendent  
Division of Instruction  
Maryland State Department of Education

## PDAC MEMBERS

**Kim Bobola**, Coordinator  
Comprehensive Planning  
Division of Student, Family, School Support  
Maryland State Department of Education

**Darren Hornbeck**, Teacher  
Linganore High School  
Frederick County Public Schools

**Nancy Carey**, Coordinator  
Teacher Professional Development  
Maryland State Department of Education

**Ann L. Hummer**, Director  
Professional Development (Retired)  
Frederick County Public Schools

**Carol Corwell-Martin**, Supervisor  
Center for Peak Performance and  
Productivity  
Washington County Public Schools

**Thea Jones**, Supervisor  
Office of Instructional Technology  
Baltimore County Public Schools

**Kevin Dennehy**, Principal  
George Fox Middle School  
Anne Arundel County Public Schools

**Julie Kimball**  
Technology Resource Teacher (on leave)  
Dorchester County Public Schools

**Paul Dunford**, Director  
Middle School Initiatives  
Maryland State Department of Education

**Rebekah Loker**, Supervisor of Instruction  
for Elementary Math  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
St. Mary's County Public Schools

**Clara Floyd**, President  
Maryland State Teachers Association

**Jeffrey Maher**  
Director of Professional & Organizational  
Development  
St. Mary's County Public Schools

**Leslie Hammond**  
**Teacher**  
Hyattsville Middle School  
Prince George's County Public Schools

**Kalisha Miller**  
Student Achievement Facilitator  
Division of Special Education/Early Intervention  
Service  
Maryland State Department of Education

**Pamela Morgan**  
Project Co-Coordinator  
Teacher Academy of Maryland  
Department of Elementary Education  
Towson University

**Kathy O'Dell**, Associate Dean  
College of Arts & Sciences  
University of Maryland, Baltimore County

**Katharine Oliver**  
Assistant State Superintendent  
Division of Career Technology &  
Adult Learning  
Maryland State Department of Education

**Jana Palmer**, Principal  
Williamsport Elementary School  
Washington County Public Schools

**Margaret Pfaff**  
Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Staff  
Development  
Carroll County Public Schools

**Thomas Proffitt**, Associate Dean  
College of Education  
Towson University

**John Smeallie**  
Deputy State Superintendent  
Maryland State Department of Education

**Phyllis Sunshine**, Director  
Graduate Program in Education  
Goucher College

**Carol Williamson**  
Superintendent  
Queen Anne's County Public Schools

**Alexis Willing**, Teacher  
Westside Intermediate School  
Wicomico County Public Schools

**Willie Woods**, Dean  
Division of Arts and Science  
Chesapeake College

## Acknowledgements

Many people contributed to the Council's conversations about issues in teacher professional development and we are pleased to acknowledge their contributions here.

First, we recognize Sheila Cox, Executive Associate to Dr. Seremet in the Division of Instruction at the Maryland State Department of Education. Sheila managed arrangements for meeting space, sign-in sheets and a myriad of logistical details, always with ease and a smile.

Maureen Montgomery and Debra Bowling, principals in the Saint Mary's County Public Schools, Neal Case, a principal in the Frederick County Public Schools, and Jana Palmer, a principal in the Washington County Public Schools and a member of the Council, shared their experiences and insights about finding time for teacher professional development. They helped the Council understand how principals can work with teachers to integrate professional learning as a regular part of school activities and how these efforts can lead to improved instruction and increased student learning.

Presentations by Dr. Donna Gollnick, Senior Vice President of the National Council on the Accreditation of Teacher Education, Dr. Yi Huang, Director of Assessment and Associate Clinical Professor of Education at the University of Maryland-Baltimore County, Dr. Virginia Pilato, MSDE's Director of Certification and Accreditation, Dr. Margaret Trader, Chairman of the Department of Education at McDaniel College and Chair of PSTEB, Ms. Fran Kroll, Director of Teacher Education and Professor at Howard Community College, and Dr. Thomas Proffitt, Associate Dean and Professor of Secondary Education at Towson University and a member of the Council, helped the Council understand how current accreditation systems might help the K-12 system understand more about how teacher enrollment in college and university courses contributes to improved practice. The presentations also helped the Council to understand more about the potential payoffs of K-12-higher education partnerships and the importance of shared responsibility for teacher professional development.

Finally, the Council acknowledges the ongoing support provided by Policy Studies Associates, Inc. (PSA) and LDRA Performance Consultants. Jennifer LaFleur, PSA Senior Research Associate, was responsible for collecting and organizing data on local programs to support new teachers. Derek Riley, PSA Senior Research Associate, was responsible for collecting and organizing data on how schools integrate professional development into their regular schedules. Ben Lagueruela provided ongoing editorial assistance in the preparation of the Council's report. Continuing their contributions since the Council's inception in 2003, Linda Adams and Ronald Adams of LDRA Performance Consultants assisted in various data collection tasks and maintained detailed records of the Council's meetings.

The Council extends special thanks to Dr. Bruce Haslam, PSA Managing Director, for facilitating Council meetings, keeping the Council apprised of current research on teacher professional development, and synthesizing the Council's discussions into this and earlier reports to the State Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Haslam created a culture of collegiality, respecting the contributions of Council members and the various stakeholder groups they represented. The number of emails, phone calls and personal meetings he managed has ensured that everyone's voice was heard and noted. He has been tireless and persistent in tracking down specific program information across Maryland's 24 school districts, at MSDE and in colleges and universities. His meeting facilitations skills, frequently tested by highly engaged Council members, kept us on track while allowing for the depth of discussion needed to fully address our charge. His thinking and writing skills are a testament to his perseverance, his endless energy for clarity and his dedication to capturing multiple points of view. His personal dedication to this work over the past 7 years is recognized and deeply appreciated.

# Contents

	Page
In Memoriam: Jacqueline C. Haas .....	i
Maryland Teacher Professional Development Advisory Council .....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Contents .....	v
Introduction.....	1
Maryland Programs to Support New Teachers .....	3
The Issue .....	3
Observations about Support for New Teachers in Maryland.....	5
Concluding Observations, Recommendations, and Action Steps.....	10
Finding Time for Teachers Engagement in High-Quality Professional Development.....	13
The Issue .....	13
Observations about Finding Time for Professional Development in Schools.....	13
Observations about District Strategies for Finding Time for Professional Development	15
Concluding Observations, Recommendations, and Action Steps.....	16
Understanding the Contributions of Teacher Enrollment in College and University Courses to Professional Knowledge and Skills .....	18
The Issue .....	18
Observations about Information on the Contributions of Coursework to Teacher Knowledge and Skills .....	19
Concluding Observations, Recommendations, and Action Steps.....	23
Establishing a System of High-Quality Professional Development .....	26
The Issue .....	26
Observations about a System of High-Quality Professional Development .....	26
Concluding Observations, Recommendations, and Action Steps.....	30

# Introduction

This is the fourth report to the Maryland State Superintendent of Schools prepared by the Maryland Teacher Professional Development Advisory Council (Council).<sup>1</sup> Responding to the State Superintendent of Schools' 2003 charge to (1) continuously examine Maryland's teacher professional development policies and practices, (2) set standards to articulate a Maryland-specific, policy definition of high-quality professional development, and (3) make recommendations for improving professional development to ensure that it meets the standards, previous reports have:

- Presented a set of standards for teacher professional development and recommendations for implementing them (December 2004)
- Reported on early progress in implementing the standards (January 2006)
- Reviewed the introduction and use of the *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Planning Guide* (March 2008)
- Examined the deployment of school-based professional development staff in schools across the state (March 2008)
- Assessed the state-of-the-art in evaluating teacher professional development at the state and local levels (March 2008)

The Council has also:

- Convened 72 focus groups to solicit feedback and build consensus around the professional development standards (See the December 2004 report.)
- Contributed to the development and administration of a comprehensive, statewide survey of teacher participation in professional development (See the December 2004 report.)
- Overseen the development and updating of the *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Planning Guide* and the development of the *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Evaluation Guide*

In this report, the Council turns its attention to three new issues in teacher professional development:

- Special programs and strategies to help new teachers develop the knowledge and skills they need to be successful

---

<sup>1</sup> Copies of these reports and other professional development tools discussed in this report have been widely disseminated and are available at [www.marylandpublicschools.org](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org). Click on the "Teacher Professional Development" button on the homepage and follow the links to the reports and tools.

- Strategies for finding time for teacher engagement in high-quality professional development
- Understanding the contributions of teacher enrollment in college and university courses to professional knowledge and skills

Discussion of each issue begins with an explanation of how the Council defines the issue and why it considers the issue important. Next, there is a discussion of the Council's observations on current policies and practices. Finally, the Council offers recommendations and specific action steps for strengthening policies and improving practice. Some of these recommendations and action steps also suggest targets or guidelines for the intensity and duration of various professional learning activities. In suggesting these targets, the Council recognizes that it may not always be feasible to meet them, at least in the short term. At the same time, the Council anticipates that districts, MSDE, and their professional development partners will carefully consider these targets as they plan professional development.

The last section of the report presents three recommendations that look five to ten years ahead and that are intended to amplify the Council's core recommendation of creating a system of high-quality professional learning opportunities. In the Council's vision, this system would simultaneously address all teachers' individual learning needs and local and state priorities for helping all students learn. Ideally, such a system would function to improve the overall quality of teacher professional development by reducing or eliminating the fragmentation, lack of coherence, and ineffective utilization of resources that characterize too much of current practice in this area.

The first recommendation calls for articulating professional teaching standards as the glue that holds the system together. The second recommendation calls for comprehensive, long-term district professional development plans that define the key components of the local professional development systems and how they will be organized around the teaching standards. The third recommendation calls on the State Superintendent of Schools and district leaders to establish state and local professional development committees that are responsible for reviewing the alignment of system elements, system operations, and professional learning outcomes. Each of these recommendations is discussed in more detail in the last section of the report. Together, these recommendations underscore the Council's core assumption that responsibility and accountability for ensuring that professional development is of high quality and accessible to all teachers must be shared among key stakeholders. Implementing these recommendations will also reflect a commitment to professional development as a critical element of all efforts to improve and sustain the quality of teaching and learning.

# Maryland Programs to Support New Teachers

## The Issue

Each year, thousands of new teachers enter classrooms across the country. For many, the first teaching assignment is the beginning of a career in education—a career that can include remaining in the classroom or taking on other roles in schools or district offices. For others, these assignments do not go well and lead young teachers to abandon the profession after just a few years in the classroom. In national studies of beginning teachers, estimates of attrition range from 30 percent to 50 percent during the first three to five years. Factors identified as contributing to these attrition patterns include inadequate preparation, lack of administrative support, and low salaries.<sup>2</sup>

The costs of teacher attrition are high. For example, according to a 2005 issue brief prepared by the Alliance for Excellent Education, the annual cost of teacher turnover in Maryland, including the cost of replacing teachers who leave the profession and the costs related to teachers transferring to other schools, exceeds \$114 million.<sup>3</sup> (These costs include the costs of recruitment, personnel processing, and professional development, including induction.) Other costs of teacher attrition, which are more difficult to calculate, include disruptions to instructional programs and loss of organizational capacity and stability, as teachers leave their positions and new teachers adjust to new assignments. These disruptions are likely to be especially severe in low-performing schools and schools that lack strong leadership to guide the transitions associated with staffing changes. Citing data from the National Commission on Teaching for America's Future, the Alliance for Excellent Education estimates the rate of teacher attrition in poor schools to be 50 percent higher than in more affluent schools.

During the past 15 years, states and districts have sought to reduce attrition among new teachers and to enhance their knowledge and skills by establishing induction programs to facilitate entry into careers in teaching and into new assignments.<sup>4</sup> As the Council learned, these programs, including programs in Maryland, vary considerably in the kinds of support they provide.

Practitioners generally agree that to achieve the goal of keeping *highly skilled* teachers in the profession (as opposed to merely retaining large percentages of new teachers), teacher induction programs should include the following characteristics:

---

<sup>2</sup> Several reports by Professor Richard Ingersoll of the Center for Policy Research in Education at the University of Pennsylvania present extensive analyses of teacher retention and teacher attrition data included in the *Schools and Staffing Survey* and other national databases. See, for example, Consortium for Policy Research in Education, (2003), *Is there a teacher shortage?* This study is available at [http://www.gse.upenn.edu/faculty\\_research/Shortage-RMI--09-2003.pdf](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/faculty_research/Shortage-RMI--09-2003.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> See Alliance for Excellent Education, (2005), *Teacher attrition: A costly loss to the nation and to the states*. Washington, DC: Author. These estimates, which the report labels as conservative, are based on data from the National Center for Education Statistics' *Schools and Staffing Survey*, the Department of Labor, and the National Education Association's *Estimates of School Statistics*.

<sup>4</sup> As it is used here, the term induction program refers to various configurations of support for new teachers, including mentoring, which is often the central component of an induction program.

- A thorough orientation to the profession
- Frequent and sustained interaction with a well-trained and skilled mentor
- Ongoing professional development specifically designed for new teachers
- Opportunities to observe skilled teachers
- Ongoing formative assessment of performance oriented to a set of teaching standards (Note that this process may include teacher portfolios or similar assessment tools.)
- Summative assessment of performance oriented to a set of teaching standards

In addition, some have argued for facilitating the induction process by ensuring that new teachers have (a) reduced teaching loads, (b) few or no non-instructional responsibilities, and (c) no assignments to work with difficult groups of students.

While there is a strong consensus about the potential benefits of quality induction programs, this consensus is not yet supported by a strong empirical base that gauges the impact of particular program components or configurations of components in teacher knowledge and skills and teacher retention.<sup>5</sup> Qualitative studies as well as several studies based on various kinds of correlation analyses do, however, provide some evidence of the impact of these programs. For example, using *Schools and Staffing Survey* data, Smith and Ingersoll identified four components of programs to support new teachers that were associated with reduced likelihood of turnover.<sup>6</sup> These components included (a) basic induction (including having a mentor and supportive communications with principals) and opportunities for collaboration with other teachers (including common planning time and participation in a seminar for beginning teachers), (b) participating in a network with other teachers, (c) having a reduced teaching load, and (d) being assigned a teacher's aide. It should also be noted that when the survey data were collected in 2000, fewer than 1 percent of new teachers experienced these induction supports.

---

<sup>5</sup> The Council reviewed *Impacts of Comprehensive Teacher Induction: Results from the First Year of a Randomized Control Study*, which is the most rigorous study to date of teacher induction programs. (Available online at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pdf/20094034.pdf>.) Early results from this ongoing study, which is being conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., under contract from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Educational Sciences, indicate that at the end of one year the induction programs included in the study (a) had no impact on teacher practices, (b) did not show positive impacts on student outcomes after one year, and (c) had no impact on teacher retention. The study did, however, find that teachers in the treatment group (a) received more mentoring than teachers in the control group, (b) were more likely to report participation in specific induction activities, and (c) spent more time in certain kinds of professional development. The Council joins many others who have reviewed this report in suggesting that it is too soon to conclude that the induction programs have no impact. The Council also looks forward to reviewing results from subsequent phases of the study when it is more reasonable to expect discernable changes in teacher knowledge, changes in student outcomes, and changes in teacher retention.

<sup>6</sup> See Smith, T., & Ingersoll, R., (2004), *What are the effects of induction and mentoring on new teacher turnover?* Available online at [http://www.gse.upenn.edu/faculty\\_research/Effects-of-induction-and-mentoring-RMI-fall-2004.doc](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/faculty_research/Effects-of-induction-and-mentoring-RMI-fall-2004.doc) .

Despite the limited empirical base, the Council remains optimistic that high-quality induction programs are beneficial to new teachers and will pay off in terms of improved professional practice and retention of skilled teachers. The Council also recognizes that high-quality induction programs must be guided by a vision of teacher preparation and professional development as parts of a process of continuous personal and professional growth.

## **Observations about Support for New Teachers in Maryland**

### **New Teacher Hiring in 2007-2008<sup>7</sup>**

Statewide, 7,249 new teachers were hired in 2007-08, a decrease from 7,917 in 2006-07 and 8,046 in 2005-06. Among teachers hired in 2007-08:

- 4,003 were new to the profession (including 1,234 from Maryland IHEs and 2,769 from out of state)
- 3,246 were experienced teachers (including 1,549 who had previous experience in Maryland and 1,697 from out of state)
- 4,446 (or 60 percent) of new teachers were from out of state
- Overall, five districts (Anne Arundel, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Montgomery County, and Prince Georges County) accounted for 65 percent of the new hires (5,247), hiring well over 700 new teachers each. Six other districts hired between just under 200 new teachers and just over 500 new teachers. The remaining districts hired 136 or fewer new teachers.

### **Regulations Governing Support for New Teachers in Maryland**

Under the Code of Maryland Administrative Regulations (COMAR) (*Title 13A.07.01*), district mentoring programs are expected to include the following:

- The assignment of mentors with an Advanced Professional Certificate and who are knowledgeable about adult learning theory and peer coaching, understand the knowledge and skills required of new teachers, and have a positive reference from a principal or supervisor.
- Initial and ongoing training for mentors
- Focus on models of effective practice

---

<sup>7</sup> See: Maryland State Department of Education, (2008, October), *Maryland Teacher Staffing Report 2008-2010 (Revised)*. Baltimore, MD: Author.

- Regular meetings between mentors and new teachers and identification of resources necessary to address the needs of new teachers
- A ratio of one mentor for each 15 new teachers
- No mentor involvement in administrative tasks or formal reviews of new teacher performance

Despite these expectations, there are no state funds earmarked for these or other induction program components to support new teachers. Funding for these programs is at the discretion of the districts. The Council also notes that while the current regulations help to define quality mentoring, mentoring is only one component, albeit a very important component, of quality induction programs. Therefore, the regulations may be somewhat limited as a framework for guiding district efforts to support new teachers and to ensure the retention of effective teachers.

### **Local Induction Programs**

Data sources include (1) profiles of programs to support new teachers submitted by the districts, including updated versions (in fall 2008) of the original profiles, (2) background documents submitted with the profiles, and (3) follow-up telephone interviews with staff in all counties that submitted profiles.<sup>8</sup> The profile sought information about programs to support all new teachers employed in the 2007-2008 school year, including teachers who were new to the profession and teachers who were new to the district and who had been employed as teachers in other jurisdictions.

***Overall patterns of support for new teachers.*** All 23 of the districts report having some sort of program to support new teachers in 2007-08, and there is considerable variation in the configurations of specific components of district programs to support new teachers:

- All 23 districts provide orientation programs prior to the beginning of the school year. Programs in six districts last more than a week, programs in six others last a week, and programs in nine districts last three or four days. The remaining two orientation programs last a day or two.
- Twenty-one orientation programs include school-based components, and, in most cases, the plans for these activities are at the discretion of the principal with little or no explicit guidance from the central office.
- Twenty-one districts assign mentors to at least some new teachers. Of this number, 14 assign mentors to all new teachers, two assign mentors to all teachers who are new to the profession, and five assign mentors only in some subject areas and at some grade levels to teachers who are new to the profession. Assignments

---

<sup>8</sup> Twenty-three districts responded to the Council's request for information about their programs to support new teachers.

may be based on the concentrations of new teachers in schools or on schools being identified as low-performing.

- Twenty-one districts provide various kinds of ongoing professional development for all new teachers, and two provide these activities for teachers who are new to the profession.
  - Eighteen provide structured opportunities for all new teachers to work with school-based professional development staff, and one provides these opportunities for teachers new to the profession.
  - Fifteen provide structured opportunities for all new teachers to collaborate with experienced teachers, and two provide these opportunities for teachers who are new to the profession.
  - Ten provide structured opportunities for all new teachers to observe classroom instruction, and five provide these opportunities for teachers who are new to the profession.
- Three districts require new teachers to maintain professional portfolios, journals, or similar records of their professional experiences and practices.
- Districts provide several kinds of additional supports for new teachers:
  - Seventeen provide stipends or salary supplements for participation in new teacher orientation programs to all new teachers, and one provides this support to teachers who are new to the profession.
  - Fourteen provide stipends or salary supplements for participation in ongoing professional development specially designed for all new teachers, and one provides this support to teachers who are new to the profession.
  - Seven provide release time to support ongoing participation in professional development designed for new teachers to all new teachers, and one reports providing release time to teachers who are new to the profession.
  - One district reports that new teachers have limited or no committee assignments, and one other district reports that teaching assignments for teachers new to the profession do not include difficult groups of students.
  - No districts report reduced teaching assignments for new teachers.
- Sixteen districts have formal mechanisms to coordinate programs to support new teachers.

- Seven districts report that there have been formal evaluations of their programs to support new teachers, and 11 report conducting formal performance reviews of the mentors.

***Mentoring components of programs to support new teachers.*** As with induction programs overall, there is considerable variation in the deployment of mentors in these programs:

- Six districts employ mentors in full-time positions, seven employ them in part-time positions, with staff devoting less than 30 hours a week to these assignments. Ten districts define mentoring as a supplementary assignment, with mentors having full-time assignments not associated with the mentoring activities.
- Districts report substantial within-district variation in the number of teachers assigned to individual mentors, and it is difficult to report these numbers accurately.
- Twelve districts require mentors to meet with new teachers at least once a week, three require several meetings a month, and three others have no requirements for the frequency of these meetings.
- Looking at the duration of mentor support, eight districts provide mentor support for one year, four provide this support for two years, and two provide it for more than two years. Six districts report that the duration depends on the need for support.
- Twenty districts provide various kinds and amounts of training for mentors:
  - Training in 13 districts takes place throughout the year, and it is completed before the school year in five others.
  - Major training topics include (a) conducting classroom observations and providing feedback (16 districts), (b) using student data for instructional planning (11 districts), and (c) working with principals and other school leaders to support new teachers (8 districts).
  - Eight districts report that working with principals and other school leaders to support new teachers is a major topic, and eight report it is as a minor topic.
- In terms of mentors' involvement in reviewing new teachers' performance, 15 districts report that observing new teachers and providing feedback that is not part of formal performance appraisal is a major responsibility, and four report that it is a minor responsibility. Seven districts report that helping new teachers prepare for a formal performance review is a major part of mentors' responsibilities, and eight report that it is a minor part of their responsibilities.

**Challenges in organizing and operating programs to support new teachers.** Programs to support new teachers can face many challenges:

- Thirteen districts view inadequate funding as a major challenge, and six describe it as a minor challenge.
- Eleven districts report lack of time for program activities as a major challenge, and seven report it as a minor challenge.
- Five districts see recruiting skilled mentors as a major challenge, and 10 see it as a minor challenge. (Note also that five districts report that they have no required criteria for selecting mentors.)
- Thirteen districts report coordinating program components as either a minor challenge (10 districts) or a major challenge (3 districts).

### The Cost of Programs to Support New Teachers

Quality programs to support new teachers represent a significant cost. Exhibit 1 presents estimates of the cost of these programs as they vary in size from serving 30 new teachers to serving more than 200 new teachers each year. Readers should note that just under half of Maryland’s districts annually employ well over 500 new teachers and that the costs of programs to support these teachers would therefore be even higher than the estimates presented here.

**Exhibit 1**

Estimated Annual Costs of New Teacher Induction Programs						
Cost elements and assumptions	Program Size (in New Teachers)					
	30	45	60	90*	150*	210*
Mentor Program Manager @ .6 FTE (Assume salary and benefits @ \$60,000/year)	\$ 60,000	\$ 60,000	\$ 60,000	\$ 66,000	\$ 72,600	\$ 79,860
Support staff @ .5 FTE (Assume salary and benefits @ \$35,000/year)	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000
Mentor Teachers (assume a ratio of one mentor for 15 new teachers)						
Salaries and benefits @ \$80,000/year	\$ 160,000	\$ 240,000	\$ 320,000	\$ 480,000	\$ 800,000	\$ 1,120,000
Mentor training @\$5,000 per mentor cadre	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Mentor Travel @ \$200 per year per mentor	\$ 400	\$ 600	\$ 800	\$ 1,200	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,800
Stipends/release time for new teacher PD @ 20 days per teacher @\$100 per day	\$ 60,000	\$ 90,000	\$ 120,000	\$ 180,000	\$ 300,000	\$ 420,000
Ongoing Mentor Training	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500
<b>Estimated Annual Cost</b>	<b>\$ 325,400</b>	<b>\$ 435,600</b>	<b>\$ 545,800</b>	<b>\$ 774,700</b>	<b>\$ 1,222,100</b>	<b>\$ 1,670,160</b>

\*Includes cost escalators for increased program size.

## Concluding Observations, Recommendations, and Action Steps

Based on its review of current programs to support new teachers, the Council concludes that although some elements of local programs are solid, the possible lack of coordination among program components and the uneven availability of program supports for new teachers seriously undermine the overall quality of these efforts. The varying configurations of local support for new teachers almost certainly represent choices among less-than-optimal options, defined in part by resource constraints and competing priorities for improving instructional programs. Nevertheless, the variations and the apparent lack of well-developed local mechanisms for coordinating key program elements are sources of concern and lead the Council to offer the recommendations and action steps listed below. In short, the Council urges districts to establish induction programs with the explicit goal of keeping highly skilled teachers in the profession.

In making these recommendations, the Council is acutely aware of their cost implications. Nevertheless, given the urgent need for skilled teachers in every classroom, the Council calls on districts to re-examine current budgets and new funding sources to find the resources necessary to support high-quality induction programs. The Council also encourages districts to recognize that in the long term these investments are likely to be offset by substantial reductions in spending on hiring new teachers and addressing other problems associated with teacher attrition, especially in low-performing schools.

**Recommendation 1: Amend COMAR (Title 13A.07.01) to require districts to establish and maintain comprehensive teacher induction programs to ensure that all new teachers have the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in their classrooms and schools and that new teachers who have the requisite knowledge and skills remain in the profession.**

*Action Step 1.1:* MSDE should propose a specific set of teacher induction program characteristics to replace current COMAR regulations that are limited to mentoring support for new teachers. The program characteristics included below under Recommendations 2-4 could provide a framework for MSDE's proposal.

**Recommendation 2: Districts should establish and maintain comprehensive induction programs with the explicit goal of ensuring that all new teachers have the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in their classrooms and schools.**

*Action Step 2.1:* Districts should assign an experienced staff member to lead the induction programs, with responsibility for planning and coordinating all induction activities, supervising new teacher mentors (see Recommendation 3), coaching and communicating with principals and other school leaders about induction activities and their roles, and overseeing evaluation of all induction activities.

*Action Step 2.2:* Districts should design diversified induction programs that, at a minimum, include (a) pre-school orientation programs for all teachers new to the district; (b) ongoing support from a mentor teacher, including frequent and ongoing meetings during non-instructional time; (c) frequent and regularly scheduled opportunities for new teachers to observe and/or co-

teach with skilled teachers and to engage in follow-up conversations about the observations; (d) ongoing professional development specifically designed to address new teacher needs and concerns; and (e) ongoing formative reviews of new teacher performance based on clearly defined standards (or expectations), conducted by the mentor teacher (or other skilled member of the induction program staff) and including classroom observations, review of lesson plans, and feedback.

*Action Step 2.3:* Districts should require all new teachers to participate in all core induction activities for one year, and they should require all teachers who are new to the profession to participate in induction activities for up to three years.

*Action Step 2.4:* To facilitate the induction process and participation in induction activities, districts should consider options for (a) reducing the teaching load for all new teachers, (b) reducing or eliminating responsibility for involvement in non-instructional activities other than induction support, and (c) not assigning new teachers to teach difficult groups of students.

**Recommendation 3: Districts should establish cadres of skilled mentors to work with all new teachers.**

*Action Step 3.1:* Districts should establish teacher mentor positions as full-time positions, with each mentor serving 12-15 new teachers, including teachers who are new to the profession and teachers who are new to the district.

*Action Step 3.2:* Districts should provide ongoing training for mentors, including training prior to assuming their assignments and regular training sessions equivalent to at least one half day of training per month.

*Action Step 3.3:* Districts should provide annual training for principals, assistant principals, and school-based professional development staff to familiarize them with the factors that contribute to teacher attrition and retention, the role of mentors and expectations for supporting mentors' work in schools, and the importance of school-level coordination of support for new teachers.

**Recommendation 4: Districts should conduct rigorous biennial evaluations of teacher induction programs, with special attention to (a) the extent to which all new teachers clearly demonstrate mastery of the knowledge and skills necessary for success in their classrooms and with their students, (b) teacher retention and attrition during the first five years after their initial assignments, and (c) new teachers' perceptions of the adequacy and appropriateness of all elements of the induction program.**

*Action Step 4.1:* Districts should allocate adequate resources for these evaluations, with a target allocation of approximately 8 percent of the annual budget of the induction program for each biennial evaluation.

*Action Step 4.2:* Districts should use the *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Evaluation Guide* to plan and conduct the evaluations.

**Recommendation 5: Districts should fully fund new teacher induction programs as described in Recommendations 2-4.**

*Action Step 5.1:* Districts should review their current spending on professional development to identify resources that could be (re)allocated for induction programs. Other potential resources include American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) dollars in the stabilization fund and Title I and IDEA funds. Title II funds are directly targeted for recruitment and retention of skilled teachers and should be directed to address the districts' needs in this area. Districts should note that ARRA funds committed to training full-time mentors over a two-year period would yield a significant district capacity that would remain once the stimulus funds are gone. Additionally, the annual federal allocations in Title I include a 10-percent set-aside for professional development, and IDEA encourages use of funds for high-quality professional development to meet the needs of special educators or co-teaching teams.

**Recommendation 6: Districts and college and university partnerships that operate professional development schools (PDS) with demonstrated records of success should create pilot projects to test the feasibility of expanding these partnerships to support the transition of new teachers from preservice preparation to the first three-five years of their teaching assignments.**

*Action Step 6.1:* The partners should explore the funding options discussed in Recommendation 5 as a starting point for finding the resources necessary to support the pilot projects that expand PDS partnerships to include a combination of mentoring, job-embedded professional development, and enrollment in a degree program focused on preparing teacher leaders.

# Finding Time for Teacher Engagement in High-Quality Professional Development

## The Issue

The Council's interest in the issue of finding sufficient time for teachers to engage in high-quality professional development was prompted by a concern that time is in short supply and that, for many teachers and in many schools, time for professional development is in even shorter supply. Further, it is important to recognize that engagement in high-quality professional development, which often entails opportunities for study, collaboration with colleagues, practice, and reflection, is time-consuming. What the Council learned is that school leaders and staff, often with support and encouragement from districts, are finding time for teacher professional development during regular school schedules. And while finding enough time for professional development is not without challenges, the real challenges lie in finding ways to use the time most effectively when it is available.

## Observations about Finding Time for Professional Development in Schools

In schools where there is time for professional development, the Council learned that:

- Principals and other school leaders need to have the authority for establishing school schedules that include adequate time for teacher participation in high-quality professional development.
- Teachers and principals have agreed on schedules that afford opportunities for teachers to meet and work together, usually in groups that represent existing teams or similar groupings.
- Agreements have been negotiated and often follow several experiments with scheduling. In short, it takes time to find time.
- Time is set aside for teachers to work together to address instructional issues. Review of student data is a key focus, with emphasis on monitoring the progress of individual students and planning specific instructional interventions.
- Time may also be set aside for study/learning about new practices and how they can be applied in the school.
- Professional learning activities are carefully planned and connected over time, with expectations for setting agendas, ongoing planning, and progress reports.

- Principals play an important role early and may continue to lead the efforts. Often, their role is less central as teachers assume more leadership and responsibility.
- Principals are resourceful and adept at finding resources that teachers need for more professional learning or for implementation/application of new ideas. Typically, resources are not substantial, but they are timely.

School leaders and staff also face challenges in finding time for professional development. These challenges include but are probably not limited to:

- Garnering teacher buy-in for collaborative work and committing time during the regular school day
- Ensuring that all teachers have opportunities to participate
- Setting clear goals for professional learning and gauging the extent to which they are met (as reflected by changes in classroom practice and student learning)

In addition to these three challenges that are likely to confront schools at all grade levels, Council members agreed that leaders and faculty in high schools, especially large high schools, may face additional challenges as they try to find time for collaborative professional learning activities in the regular school schedules. For example, difficulties in scheduling common planning time for teachers limit opportunities for collaboration and shared professional learning activities. In addition, informal but strong professional norms in these schools emphasize individual autonomy and independence as well as strong allegiance to academic disciplines. Together, the scheduling challenges and professional norms can work against ongoing collaboration, especially collaboration across subject areas.

Finally, the Council concludes that the success of school-level approaches to finding time for teacher professional development, especially those strategies that may include altering daily starting and ending times, depends, in part, on effective communications with parents. Changes in school schedules inevitably mean changes in family schedules. Therefore, it is important to factor parent questions and concerns into decisions about altering school schedules. It is also important to communicate with parents about the payoffs of professional learning that takes place during the school day. Later, as these activities mature, it will be important to provide concrete evidence of these payoffs.

Together, the strategies listed above define the elements of a comprehensive approach to finding time for teacher professional development. They do not, however, point to a single best approach. Indeed, one of the more interesting characteristics of these strategies in practice is how fluid they are as professional learning needs change and school staffs learn different ways of working together.

Currently, additional impetus for finding time for professional development in regular school schedules is provided by a provision in MSDE's guidance for the professional development portion of annual updates on district master plans. Guidance for annual updates submitted in

September 2008 included two options for reporting on professional development. One option called on districts to submit plans for centralized professional development initiatives to support district improvement initiatives. The second option called on districts to integrate the six-component planning framework included in the *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Planning Guide* into local school improvement planning processes.<sup>9</sup> This option also called on districts to carefully monitor implementation of the new approaches to school improvement planning and to work with schools to assess the effectiveness of the school-based professional development activities. The Council anticipates that efforts to enhance school-based professional development will necessarily include identifying strategies that school leaders and school staffs apply in integrating time for professional development into school schedules. These efforts should yield important lessons that can be shared among districts.

Twelve districts chose this option and are in various stages of implementing their new school improvement planning processes. Master plan updates submitted in October 2009 will report on early progress and challenges. The Council anticipates that these efforts will yield important insights about how schools find time for high-quality professional development, the payoffs from the school-based activities, and how districts can guide and support this work.

## **Observations about District Strategies for Finding Time for Professional Development**

In addition to supporting and encouraging the kinds of school-based activities discussed above, districts have several other ways of finding time for teacher professional development, such as designating days as professional development days and providing substitutes to “release” teachers from instructional responsibilities for a few hours or perhaps even a few days.

All Maryland districts include professional development days in their annual calendars, with the number of days set aside ranging from two to six. Based on anecdotal reports, districts “use” these days in various ways. For example, professional development days at the beginning of the school year may be used to welcome teachers back to their schools, to update them on new policies and programs, or to provide motivational speeches. Later in the year, these days may be used for centralized professional development activities organized by grade level and/or content area, or they may be used for school-based activities. The centralized activities may take the form of more traditional kinds of professional development, such as awareness sessions, workshops, and presentations. In some cases, these centralized activities are accompanied by school-level follow-up to reinforce the initial professional learning. In other cases, there is limited follow-up and almost no systematic evaluation of these activities beyond “customer satisfaction” questionnaires, which typically yield little useful information on the quality or impact of the professional development.

---

<sup>9</sup> The guide suggests that a good plan specifies (1) student and teacher learning needs, (2) which teachers are most likely to benefit from the professional development, (3) the intended professional learning outcomes and related indicators, (4) the professional learning activities necessary to achieve the intended outcomes, (5) how the professional development will be evaluated, and (6) the resources necessary to support the professional learning and an evaluation.

Statewide, the overall annual cost of these allocations of professional development days is an estimated \$102,387,000, which makes them a relatively expensive portion of local professional development portfolios.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, and like other categories of professional development spending, spending on professional development days represents a very small portion of overall budgets. In this case, the total represents about 2 percent of annual spending on teacher salaries and benefits.

A second strategy for finding time for professional development is to provide substitutes to release teachers from regular classroom responsibilities for short periods of time to participate in professional development. This strategy typically supports teacher participation in activities outside of the building, including attendance at conferences and professional meetings. Policies related to the allocation of these resources vary across districts. In some cases, decisions about providing this support rest with the central office. In other cases, districts allocate money to schools and grant principals discretion in deciding how to allocate these resources to individual teachers. An important advantage of this approach to finding time for professional learning is that it permits strategic targeting of this resource to meet individual teacher and/or school needs in a very timely fashion.

## **Concluding Observations, Recommendations, and Action Steps**

The Council began this phase of its review of teacher professional development policies and practices with a concern about finding time for teacher professional development. What the Council learned is that although the basics of finding adequate time (as reflected in creating new school schedules to accommodate these activities) are not without challenges, the real challenge is to find ways to use the time for high-quality professional development. At the school level, much of the responsibility for finding time for high-quality professional development rests with principals and other instructional leaders who must address the practical issues of scheduling and ensuring that appropriate resources are available. More important, they must create school cultures that explicitly value professional learning. Districts must support these efforts by making sure that school leaders have the knowledge, skills, predispositions, and resources to carry out these responsibilities. Districts must also take stock of their stewardship of the professional learning time that they control and ensure that the time is used efficiently and effectively. The Council's recommendations and action steps suggest ways of finding and using time for high-quality professional learning for all teachers.

**Recommendation 1: Districts should require all schools to create schedules that explicitly include time for regular and frequent professional development for all teachers.**

---

<sup>10</sup> This estimate, which is based on information in MSDE's *Fact Book* for the 2007-2008 school year, assumes that there are 60,800 teachers in Maryland's public schools earning an average annual salary and benefits of about \$80,000 and working 190 days per year. Assuming an annual average of four professional development days per teacher, the total number of person days allocated for these activities is estimated to be 243,200.

*Action Step 1.1:* Districts should create and disseminate models of scheduling options that include time for teacher professional development to guide school-level planning.

*Action Step 1.2:* District school improvement planning guidance and requirements should require schools to include schedules for ongoing school-based professional development that supports planned improvement efforts.

*Action Step 1.3:* As appropriate and necessary, districts should provide professional development and other supports to principals and other school leaders to ensure that they understand how to find and manage time for teacher professional development in their schools.

*Action Step 1.4:* As appropriate and necessary, districts should work closely with principals, other school leaders, and teachers to ensure alignment between school-based professional development activities and schedules and the content and format of activities planned for district professional development days to maximize the benefits of both kinds of activities.

*Action Step 1.5:* Districts should work with school-based professional development staff (e.g., coaches, mentors, resource teachers) to ensure that their job responsibilities are coordinated with ongoing school-based professional development activities.

**Recommendation 2: MSDE should examine the experiences in the 12 districts that have included introducing and/or improving school-based professional development as part of their master plan strategy to identify effective strategies for finding time for high-quality professional development in regular school schedules. (See pp. 14-15 above for a discussion of these activities.)**

*Action Step 2.1:* Beginning with its regular review of annual master plan updates and continuing, as appropriate, with a more in-depth look at these efforts, MSDE should (a) identify promising and/or successful strategies, and (b) identify challenges and impediments and lessons for overcoming them. Lessons from these early efforts should be shared with districts across the state to encourage further progress in finding time for high-quality professional development.

# Understanding the Contributions of Teacher Enrollment in College and University Courses to Professional Knowledge and Skills

## The Issue

The Council's interest in the contributions of coursework to teacher knowledge and skills is consistent with the Council's interest in assessing and understanding the effects of a wide range of professional development activities.<sup>11</sup> Further, the Council's interest in learning more about possibilities for enhanced communications between higher education and the Pre-K-12 system reflects the Council's core assumption about the importance of shared responsibility and accountability for professional development quality.

Enrolling in college and university courses is an important part of teachers' professional and career development. States and districts require completion of coursework for various kinds of certification and salary supplements. Some teachers enroll in courses to sharpen their content knowledge and teaching skills. Others enroll in courses to prepare them for careers outside of the classroom or in fields other than education. Courses in the first category are, for purposes of this report, considered teacher professional development, although courses in the second category may also contribute to knowledge and skills that are directly related to classroom practices.

Enrollment in college and university courses represents a significant investment of teachers' time and of personal and district resources. In most districts, including districts in Maryland, spending on tuition and other costs related to coursework is one of the larger expenditures of teacher professional development, even though it remains a relatively small portion of the overall district budget.<sup>12</sup> In addition, for some teachers, coursework, like other kinds of professional development, involves choices among activities, each of which requires time and energy.

Given the salience of coursework in teachers' professional and career development as well as resources allocated to it, it is reasonable to ask how districts can learn more about the contributions of this kind of professional learning to teacher knowledge and skills, especially knowledge and skills that are explicitly relevant to district needs and priorities.

A caveat about the focus of the Council's review of this issue is in order. The Council also recognizes that institutions of higher education, especially colleges and departments of education, have a multi-faceted role in preparing education professionals. They provide pre-service preparation for teachers across the spectrum of Pre-K-12 education, and, as noted above, they provide graduate-level training for many roles other than classroom instruction. In

---

<sup>11</sup> See Section III of *The Pursuit of Excellence in Teacher Professional Development* (March 2008) for more on the Council's interest in understanding the impact and effectiveness of teacher professional development.

<sup>12</sup> Often, the largest area of professional development spending is salaries and benefits for school-based professional development staff. As discussed earlier in this report, spending on professional development days is a second large expenditure. Spending on tuition and related costs ranks below both of these categories, although the long-term costs of salary increases linked to completion of coursework and/or advanced degrees are substantial.

Maryland and elsewhere, a key component of higher education's role is the creation and operation of PDS partnerships with schools and districts. By design, PDS provide intensive school-based learning opportunities for pre-service candidates and can also offer professional experiences for teachers who are already on the job. In addition, faculty members, working individually or in teams, provide a variety of professional development activities and may advise districts on other issues related to teacher quality. Examining preservice preparation is not within the Council's purview and the role of PDS in teacher professional development has been described elsewhere.<sup>13</sup>

## **Observations about Information on the Contributions of Coursework to Teacher Knowledge and Skills**

To learn more about this issue, the Council invited representatives of national and state accreditation organizations and representatives from several Maryland teacher preparation programs to discuss (a) the kinds of information that are available about the contributions of enrollment in college and university courses to teacher knowledge and skills and (b) options and opportunities for increased sharing of this information between institutions of higher education and districts. *It is important to note that the purpose of these conversations was not to judge these contributions and that neither the presenters nor the Council attempted to do so.*

### **The Potential of Accreditation Reviews as Information Sources for the Pre-K-12 System**

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has been the main national accrediting organization since 1954.<sup>14</sup> Currently, 15 of Maryland's teacher preparation programs have been accredited by NCATE and, consistent with NCATE policies and practices, several others are in various stages of the review process. Six programs enroll less than 2,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) students, and, are therefore subject to state accreditation only.

---

<sup>13</sup> For example, see *Professional Development Schools in Maryland*, (2004), Maryland State Department of Education. Also see, Latham, N.L., & Vogt, W.P., "Do professional development schools reduce teacher attrition? Evidence from a longitudinal study of 1,000 graduates." *Journal of Teacher Education*, 2007, (Vol. 58, No. 2, pp. 153-167).

<sup>14</sup> A second national accrediting organization, the Teacher Education Accreditation Council, emerged in 1997. According to a recent NCATE report, the governing boards of the respective organizations have "recently accepted in principle a shared vision and transition plan for a unified system of accreditation for educator preparation." No Maryland teacher preparation programs have been accredited by TEAC. (See Murray, F.B., & Wise, A.E., (2009, April), "Towards a unified accreditation system for educator preparation," *NCATE Newsletter*, available at [www.ncate.org](http://www.ncate.org).)

It is beyond the scope of this report to examine all of the ins and outs of the NCATE review process. Nevertheless, five features are relevant to this discussion.<sup>15</sup>

- ***Reliance on performance standards to define program quality.*** Although the NCATE accreditation process was standards-based for a long time, it was not until 1995 that the organization began introducing performance standards to inform accreditation reviews. The process was completed in 2000, with the articulation of six standards. The first standard, entitled “candidate knowledge skills and dispositions,” reads as follows:

Candidates<sup>16</sup> preparing to work in schools as teachers or other professional educators know and demonstrate the content, pedagogical and professional knowledge and skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates meet professional, state, and institutional standards.

The remaining standards focus on assessment and evaluation (Standard 2); field experiences and clinical practice (Standard 3); diversity (Standard 4); faculty qualifications, performance, and development (Standard 5); and governance and leadership (Standard 6). Together, these five standards define the expectations for organizational structures and processes that facilitate attainment of the first standard, although it is the first standard that most directly relates to the Council’s interest.

- ***Focus on the “unit” for the accreditation review processes and reporting.*** For practical purposes, a unit is the entire set of preparation programs at a college or university that prepares candidates for initial certification, provides continuing preparation for teachers, and prepares educational specialists. Typically, this set includes courses and clinical experiences in a college or department of education, as well as content courses in other colleges or departments. Institutions seeking accreditation report on a unit’s progress or performance against the six standards. Courses that are not part of a unit are not included in the review process.

---

<sup>15</sup> NCATE leadership has prepared a plan for revising the accreditation process to address concerns about the burden and the lack of collegiality and to strengthen NCATE’s leadership in improving educator preparation and K-12 education. Among other things, the plan calls for a focus on continuous improvement and programmatic initiatives that are transformative in nature. NCATE has invited public comment on the plan, but it is too soon to tell what revisions will be made to the current accreditation process or when the revisions will be completed and operational. The plan is available at [www.ncate.org](http://www.ncate.org).

<sup>16</sup> Note that the term “candidate” as it used in this context refers to all students in programs under review, including undergraduate students, graduate students, and practicing teachers enrolled in graduate programs.

- ***Reliance on myriad national content and performance standards for individual disciplines and professions.*** A central element of NCATE’s attention to program quality is a reliance on various national content and professional performance standards to define quality.<sup>17</sup> This means that institutions seeking accreditation are held accountable for demonstrating that both program content and organization meet these standards. In addition, Maryland and other states administer a second layer of accreditation reviews that are intended to complement the national accreditation processes. In Maryland, this review assesses the extent to which preparation programs meet criteria articulated in the *Redesign of Teacher Education*.<sup>18,19</sup>
- ***Extensive reporting requirements.*** Not surprisingly, demonstrating that programs meet different sets of standards requires collecting, analyzing, and reporting large amounts of data on candidate performance, both in courses and in classrooms and schools, as well as data on program organization and practice. The result is mounds of data and voluminous reports that may be difficult to read and interpret.
- ***Data quality issues.*** Collecting and reporting data on unit organization and operations, including instruction, course content, assessments, and clinical experience, are relatively straightforward albeit time-consuming tasks. Documenting and assessing the impact of coursework on candidates’ professional practice and Pre-K-12 student outcomes is much more difficult both conceptually and as a practical matter. Challenges include developing fair, accurate, and consistent assessments of candidates’ knowledge and skills, collecting the appropriate data, and accounting for the effects of myriad mediating and intervening variables that affect the application of new knowledge and skills and student learning outcomes.

These five characteristics of the accreditation process have important implications for the extent to which the process can yield information about the contributions of coursework to practice. On the plus side, the attention to rigorous content and professional standards provides assurances about overall program quality and candidates’ knowledge and skills. At the same time, focusing on the “unit” for data collection and reporting imposes an extended time horizon on conclusions that might be drawn about candidates’ knowledge and skills. The reports describe candidate knowledge and skills upon completion of a program of study. Further, by focusing on the unit, the reports do not examine the attainment and application of knowledge and skills by teachers from individual districts or even clusters of districts.

---

<sup>17</sup> Examples include, but are certainly not limited to, standards set by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the National Council of Social Studies.

<sup>18</sup> Prepared by the Teacher Education Task Force of the Maryland Higher Education Commission in 1995, this report outlines an ambitious vision for upgrading the quality of programs to prepare teachers.

<sup>19</sup> Specifically, the *Maryland Institutional Performance Criteria* (updated in March 2009) focus on five components of preparation programs: provision of a strong academic background; extensive internships in a PDS; use of performance-based assessments to assess candidate knowledge and skills; linkage with PreK-12 priorities as defined by the Voluntary State Curriculum, the Maryland Model for School Readiness, Maryland School Assessments, Core Learning Goals, and High School Assessments; and receipt of state approval and NCATE accreditation.

The challenge to districts and to their higher education partners and colleagues is to find ways of maximizing the potential of the accreditation process to address district-specific questions about payoffs for specific groups of teachers and to do so in ways that do not impose unreasonable burdens on either side. The Council recognizes that both the Pre-K-12 system and higher education have important roles to play here.

### **Pre-K-12 Opportunities for Understanding and Enhancing the Contributions of Coursework to Teacher Knowledge and Skills**

The Council identified two strategies that districts can use to enhance their understanding of the contributions of coursework on teacher knowledge and skills and to maximize these contributions.

***Involvement in district-university partnerships to support cohorts of district staff in graduate study.*** Under these arrangements districts and universities work together to plan a course of study for a cohort of district staff (e.g., elementary math teachers, secondary reading specialists) who together will progress through a course of study typically leading to an advanced degree. Although the particulars vary among these partnerships, a common theme is that they afford districts an opportunity to work with college and university faculty to tailor the course of study to focus explicitly on district needs and priorities. In addition to tailoring professional learning activities with local priorities, these arrangements allow districts to target their tuition spending in ways that almost certainly increase the returns on the investments.

In practice, it appears that the partnerships are most active on the input side, as reflected in initial planning and selection of participants. Subsequently, there is less attention to monitoring progress, making mid-course corrections, or assessing impact in classrooms and schools and on student performance. Aside from time and resource constraints, there are no obvious impediments to the partners engaging in ongoing review and assessment.

***Targeting and monitoring spending on tuition and related costs.*** The negotiated agreements in all Maryland school districts include provisions governing district spending on tuition and other costs associated with enrollment in courses (either in direct payments to colleges and universities or reimbursement to teachers). As noted above, these expenditures typically represent *a small portion of district budgets*, but they may represent *a very large portion of the budget for teacher professional development*. Based on a review of negotiated agreements in place during the 2007-2008 school year, the Council identified the following patterns:

- All 24 of the negotiated agreements include provisions for districts to approve certain courses or categories of courses for tuition support. More specifically, eight agreements stipulate that courses must be part of an approved program, course of study, or endorsement.
- Fifteen agreements set specific completion requirements for payment of tuition. One agreement requires that courses be completed, and 14 set a minimum grade

requirement. Among the latter, five require attainment of a B or better; six require attainment of a C or higher, and three require “passing” the course.

- Eleven agreements specify reimbursement rates in terms of specific institutions (e.g., the per-credit charge at Towson or Frostburg).
- Four agreements specify that determination of which courses are eligible for tuition support is the responsibility of the superintendent or a designee, and six specify that the determination is to be made by the HR director.

Together these elements of the negotiated agreements describe ways that districts can exert influence over patterns of course-taking to ensure that investments in tuition support (1) explicitly address district priorities, (2) advance and sustain local improvement efforts, and (3) are consistent with larger professional development goals and strategies. In practice, districts do little to track spending on tuition and to assess its impact on professional practice or student learning outcomes. In some districts, existing data systems do not have the capacity to generate even very basic reports on course-taking patterns by content area of the courses, grade levels of teachers, or content area of teaching assignments. Important exceptions to this pattern are the cohort arrangements and similar kinds of PreK-12-higher education partnerships that may maximize opportunities for districts to ensure that coursework explicitly addresses their needs as well as the needs of participating teachers.

## **Concluding Observations, Recommendations, and Action Steps**

Nowhere in conversations about teacher professional development programs and practices is the notion of shared responsibility and accountability more important than in conversations about college and university coursework as an integral part of teacher professional learning. In looking at the kinds of information that are available to understand the contributions of coursework to professional knowledge and skills, the Council learned several things. On the higher education side, existing accreditation systems generate large amounts of information on professional learning activities, content, assessments, faculty and staff qualifications, and less information on professional practice outside the immediate context of courses and other learning activities. Second, the focus of analysis and reporting is on the performance of the unit, although analysis can aggregate up from courses and programs of study that comprise the unit. On the PreK-12 side, accreditation findings and reports can provide overall assurances of program quality, especially assurances about the inputs, but current reporting requirements do not address the performance of teachers from a particular district. At the same time, current practice suggests that districts are doing little to track their investments in teacher enrollment in coursework.

In making its recommendations, the Council is mindful of the potential burdens on higher education and PreK-12. Therefore, the Council has attempted to frame recommendations that can, to some extent, take advantage of existing programs and practices. Nevertheless, implementing some of the recommendations will, over time, require additional resources. In addition, the Council recognizes that implementing several of the recommendations and action

steps will require careful attention to issues related to protecting the confidentiality of college and university faculty and PreK-12 teachers. Finally, the Council recognizes that the higher education and PreK-12 partners may also choose to seek other sources of data about the contributions of coursework to improved practice, and some of these options are included in the action steps that follow below.

**Recommendation 1: Districts and colleges and universities should work together to strengthen and expand their partnerships to ensure that college and university courses address teachers' professional learning needs and district priorities in the larger context of addressing standards for accreditation.**

*Action Step 1.1:* The partners should use the cohort-planning processes and similar kinds of efforts as opportunities to ensure that course content, assignments, and assessments are closely aligned with district priorities. Wherever possible, course assignments should focus on classroom applications in the classrooms of participating teachers.

*Action Step 1.2:* Districts and colleges and universities should work together to identify options for relying on existing accreditation review processes to examine the contributions of enrollment in courses to changes in the knowledge, skills, and performance of selected groups of teachers.

**Recommendation 2: Districts should closely monitor their spending on tuition and related costs associated with teachers enrolling in college and university courses.**

*Action Step 2.1* Districts should establish and periodically review priorities for providing tuition support for teachers that are explicitly aligned with district priorities for instruction and for developing cadres of skilled educators.

*Action Step 2.2* Districts and colleges and universities should work together to design and administer surveys to examine teacher perspectives on their course-taking experiences, with special attention allotted to ratings of the alignment between course content, assignments, and assessments and current teaching assignments. In some cases, this may entail revising existing surveys rather than creating and administering new instruments. Surveys should also ask teachers about the kinds of support available in their schools and districts to help them apply new knowledge and skills in their classrooms and about any impediments they face or are likely to face.

*Action Step 2.3:* Districts should upgrade data systems to permit more thorough tracking of expenditures on tuition and other costs associated with enrollment in college and university courses. At a minimum, these systems should provide comprehensive, up-to-date information on which teachers are enrolling in which courses at which colleges and universities. These systems should be able to track enrollment by grade level of teaching assignment, by content of teaching assignment, and by content of course, and they should also track individual progress in degree programs, meeting certification requirements, and completing an endorsement. *The Maryland Teacher Professional Development Spending Analysis Tool* is an excellent and inexpensive resource for completing this task.

*Action Step 2.4:* Districts should use the upgraded data systems (recommended under *Action Step 2.3*) and surveys (recommended under *Action Step 2.2*) to prepare annual reports on patterns in tuition spending and course-taking experiences for district leaders, school boards, higher education partners, and other stakeholders.

# Establishing a System of High-Quality Professional Development

## The Issue

The State Superintendent of Schools charged the Council with making recommendations related to implementing the *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards* and for monitoring progress in these efforts. In this report, as well as in its other reports, the Council has focused on various issues related to implementing the standards at the state and local levels. Together, these issues (e.g., the deployment of school-based professional development staff; evaluation of professional development, using *The Maryland Teacher Professional Development Planning Guide*; teacher induction; the contributions of college and university coursework to teacher knowledge and skills; finding time for high-quality professional development) reflect important elements of state and local professional development systems. As the Council wrapped up the current phase of its work, the members saw a need to offer recommendations to guide efforts to align disparate professional programs, policies, and practices into a coherent system of teacher professional development. The Council strongly believes that creating such a system is the only way to realize the full potential of high-quality professional development for improving professional practice and student learning. The Council also believes that establishing this system will result in efficient utilization of the resources available for teacher professional development.

## Observations about a System of High-Quality Professional Development

Based on past and current work, the Council has identified three policy issues that need to be addressed to create a professional development system:

- Articulating teaching standards
- Preparing comprehensive, long-term professional development plans as core components of district master plans and MSDE's strategy for organizing its support of teacher professional development
- Establishing local and state professional development committees to review the operation of local and state professional development systems and identify opportunities for improving them

***Articulating teaching standards.*** Teaching standards provide much of the glue that holds a professional development system together. By defining the knowledge and skills that teachers need to master, these standards provide a guiding framework for all teacher professional development, including college and university programs and courses. Further, when teaching standards are accompanied by rubrics that define various levels of proficiency, they can inform

the design of professional development that is differentiated to more explicitly address teacher needs. Finally, teaching standards can guide policies related to spending on teacher professional development, performance appraisal systems, and allocations of rewards and incentives.

Currently, the *Essential Dimensions of Teaching*, which were first promulgated in 1994, currently serve as Maryland's *de facto* teaching standards and they inform the state's teacher education program review process. Note, for example, that the *Redesign of Teacher Education* and the Maryland teacher preparation program accreditation process already focus on the *Essential Dimensions of Teaching* as criteria for program reviews. Therefore, it is appropriate that the first step in any effort to articulate new teaching standards should be to review the *Essential Dimensions of Teaching* to determine their continued relevance in defining quality practice. In addition, other sets of teaching standards, such as those articulated by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the Interstate New Teacher Support and Assessment Consortium, and various professional associations offer useful frameworks for defining quality teaching and professional practice. Based on the Council's prior experience in developing the professional development standards, reviewing multiple sets of standards is an excellent way of exploring options, surfacing areas of disagreement, and ultimately reaching consensus on standards that are most appropriate for Maryland.

In the end, new teaching standards should explicitly reflect Maryland priorities and should, at a minimum, address the following elements of teachers' professional practice:

- Solid mastery of content knowledge
- Understanding of child and adolescent development
- Solid understanding of and demonstrated ability in the application of instructional skills
- Mastery of skills necessary to assess student learning and to apply the results of the assessments to improving classroom instruction
- Understanding the learning needs of diverse groups of students, including English language learners, students with disabilities, students who are gifted and talented, and students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds
- Ability to communicate effectively and work collaboratively with colleagues on instructional improvement, curriculum development, and improving school organization and culture
- Ability to communicate and work effectively with parents as partners in helping all students learn
- Active, ongoing engagement in professional learning activities

***Developing comprehensive long-term professional development plans.*** Currently, most districts and MSDE do not have comprehensive professional development plans, relying instead

on professional development programs and initiatives planned and implemented by various operating units and aimed at addressing the units' needs and priorities. This can result in professional development that is fragmented and inconsistent, although this is certainly not always the case. This problem is compounded by the fact that MSDE's master planning requirements have called on districts to focus on specific professional development programs and explain how they address the *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards*. These reporting requirements have effectively called attention to the standards and what they should look like in practice. At the same time, the reporting requirements have devoted less attention to the fact that professional development is a central component across all district improvement initiatives. As such, they may distract districts from adopting comprehensive professional development strategies.

For districts, comprehensive professional development plans can help focus on helping all teachers meet standards for proficient performance. They can also help guide long-term planning and decisions about resource allocation. Although district plans will vary as they address specific local priorities and goals, these plans should, at a minimum, describe:

- An explicit perspective that recognizes teacher professional development as a proactive strategy to achieve the improvement goals included in the district's master plan
- The district's overall approach to teacher professional development and how it aligns with the *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards*
- The district's professional development priorities and how they support the improvement priorities presented elsewhere in the plan
- Strategies for monitoring implementation of planned professional development
- How individual professional development initiatives and programs included in the master plan are aligned with the comprehensive professional development plan
- Strategies for assessing the impact of teacher professional development
- How the plan aligns with school improvement planning, accountability systems, and resource allocation strategies

Consistent with MSDE's multifaceted role in supporting district improvement efforts and pending direction from the State Superintendent of Schools, the agency's comprehensive professional development plan should describe:

- The agency's overall approach to teacher professional development and how it aligns with the *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards*
- Direct services to districts
- MSDE's state professional development initiatives

- Services available from MSDE’s Breakthrough Center
- Services to support low-performing schools
- Technical assistance related to implementation and compliance with federal and state programs
- Funding priorities for state and federal support of local professional development programs and initiatives

***Establishing professional development committees.*** For both the districts and MSDE, establishing professional development committees can ensure increased coherence and consistency in teacher professional development. The Council envisions these groups as serving in advisory capacities and does not envision them as replacing any current organizational structures or as having any regulatory functions. At the same time, the Council recognizes that the long-term work of these groups could, in fact, lead to the reorganization of teacher professional development programs and policies at both the state and district levels.

At the district level and depending on district needs and priorities, the Council envisions these committees taking on the following responsibilities:

- Preparing the district’s comprehensive professional development plan
- Reviewing implementation of the plan
- Planning, reviewing, and synthesizing evaluations of district professional development activities
- Reviewing professional development spending
- Reporting on progress in implementing the plan and making recommendations for modifications to the plan and for changes and improvements in the district’s professional development policies and practices

The Council also views these committees as valuable forums for teacher input on their professional development. Therefore, the Council recommends that teachers comprise a substantial portion of the membership of these committees, along with district professional development staff (e.g., professional development coordinators, managers of key professional development initiatives and programs, and supervisors), representatives of college and university partners, and other stakeholders.

The Council envisions two state-level professional development committees. The first one would be internal to MSDE. Pending direction from the State Superintendent of Schools and a review of agency needs and priorities, this committee would be responsible for:

- Reviewing districts' comprehensive professional development plans and annual updates prepared as part of the master planning process
- Preparing MSDE's comprehensive professional development plan
- Monitoring implementation of MSDE's comprehensive plan
- Planning, reviewing, and synthesizing evaluations of MSDE's professional development activities and programs
- Reviewing MSDE's spending on professional development
- Reporting on progress in implementing the plan and making recommendations for modifications to the plan and for changes and improvements in the agency's professional development policies and practices

The second state-level committee, which would be established by the State Superintendent of Schools, would be composed of representatives from the district and state professional development committees, which are described in *Action Steps 3.1* and *3.2*. This group would replace the Maryland Teacher Professional Development Advisory Council and would be responsible for:

- Reviewing ongoing progress in implementing the *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards* and implementing the recommendations included in this report as well as the Council's earlier reports
- Identifying opportunities for improved cooperation and coordination between state and local professional development programs and initiatives
- Reporting annually to the State Superintendent of Schools, the state board of education, and districts

## **Concluding Observations, Recommendations, and Action Steps**

Based on the Council's review of teacher professional development policies and practices during the past five years, the Council concludes that there is a compelling need for each of the three elements of a professional development system discussed above. The Council does not view the system as requiring new organizational structures or as being tightly coupled. Instead, the Council views the emerging system as composed of elements that are more explicitly aligned with state and local priorities and the *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards*. The system will not add costs to professional development, but the Council is confident that it will add coherence and efficiency and, more important, significantly increase the contributions of professional development to teaching and learning. The Council is also confident that as the system develops and matures, it will sustain high-quality professional development that is

already underway and work to eliminate professional development that is ineffective and not a good use of resources.

**Recommendation 1: Set rigorous teaching standards to (a) define expectations for instruction and other professional responsibilities and (b) guide professional development policies, practices, and investments.**

*Action Step 1.1:* The State Superintendent of Schools should establish a forum in which key stakeholders, including district leaders, teachers, school leaders, and representatives from institutions of higher education, can engage in the conversation about teaching standards.

*Action Step 1.2:* Review Maryland's *Essential Dimensions of Teaching* to gauge their continued relevance as a foundation for defining quality teaching and other expectations for professional practice.

*Action 1.3:* Develop rubrics for each standard that define expectations for performance by teachers at different stages in the careers (e.g., new teachers, experienced teachers, master teachers).

*Action 1.4:* Determine the functions that the teaching standards will serve and the accountability mechanisms necessary to support these functions. It will also be necessary to determine whether there will be a single set of standards for the state or whether there will be a core set of standards to inform district decisions about their own standards that reflect the core principles and address local goals and priorities.

**Recommendation 2: Prepare comprehensive, five-year professional development plans in each district and at MSDE.**

*Action Step 2.1:* MSDE, drawing on the advice of the Master Plan Work Group and other stakeholders, should require districts to (a) prepare comprehensive professional development plans in the master plans to be submitted in 2010, and (b) provide progress reports on plan implementation in annual updates. The Council recommends that these plans should include each of the components listed on page 27.

*Action Step 2.2:* Following a review of (a) districts' comprehensive professional development plans discussed under *Action Step 2.1* and (b) agency priorities and requirements, MSDE should develop a comprehensive professional development plan to guide all agency professional development activities. The Council recommends that this plan should include each of the components listed on pages 27-28.

**Recommendation 3: Establish professional development committees responsible for ongoing review of local and state professional development systems.**

*Action Step 3.1:* District leaders should establish local teacher professional development committees and assign them the responsibilities listed on page 28.

*Action Step 3.2:* The State Superintendent of Schools should establish an MSDE cross-divisional teacher professional development committee and assign it the responsibilities listed on page 28.

*Action Step 3.3:* The State Superintendent of Schools should establish a statewide teacher professional development coordinating council and charge it with the responsibilities listed on pages 28-29.