

Key Findings from the 2007-08 Initial Educator and Mentor Survey
2008 Initial Educator Data Seminar
DPI/Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center
June 16, 2008

Background

Using data compiled by the University of Wisconsin Center for Educator Research (WCER), seminar participants were assigned randomly to groups and asked to investigate one of the three data summary profiles (qualified mentors; orientation and support seminar; or PDP development and resources). Each group identified key findings for their data summary profile. Key findings are defined as *information of critical importance to the successful support of initial educators and improved learner outcomes.*

Group participants were cautioned to consider the fact that the survey data did not meet all the criteria for quality research (i.e. low response rates for administrators). Surveys were sent to all public school initial educators (and their mentors) whose districts applied for and received \$375 grants for providing induction services identified in Wisconsin Administrative Code PI 34.

Survey Key Findings

Mentor Support, Selection and Training

Successful mentor selection was identified as a critical component of induction support. The following characteristics were specifically identified as important:

- ability to provide emotional support,
- skill in communication,
- expertise in differentiating instruction within the classroom,
- expertise in classroom management practices.

Most training for mentors is organized and conducted at the school district level. Mentor training should be ongoing and focused on the needs of initial educator within the school and district. Sixty percent of the mentors attend ongoing training that consists of a series of events. Forty percent of the mentors reported a single training meeting/event with no follow-up.

Sixty-six percent of the mentors are full-time teachers with no release time for mentoring. About half of the mentors were offered substitute support so they could work with initial educators.

Seventy-one percent of mentors are compensated for services through a stipend.

Over half of the mentors spend from 30-60 minutes each week in direct communication with their initial educator.

Orientation and Support Seminars

Attendance at support seminars is required for initial educators in 72% of the districts.

Ninety-three percent of initial educators reported that they had opportunities to meet and network with other initial educators.

Initial educators indicated a lack of opportunities to observe and discuss classroom strategies and classroom management with mentors or veteran teachers.

Initial educators reported that the greatest support they received was first from their mentors and secondly from district orientation and support seminars.

All initial educators need guidance on how to develop a quality PDP.

The Professional Development Plan

Ongoing quality staff development is needed for understanding what's required for PDP goal assessment & documentation.

Sixty percent of Initial educators reported that they received no support from mentors as to the PDP process.

Sixty-two percent of initial educators noted that they received some guidance regarding the PDP process from their IHE program. IHE's must be equipped to provide consistent/accurate information regarding the initial educator stage of licensure.

Fifty-four percent of initial educators chose teaching standard #3 for their PDP. Identification of this standard suggests that initial educators recognize a need for support/improvement regarding differentiation of instruction to increase teaching effectiveness.

Other Key Findings

While the number of initial educators getting support is increasing, there is still a need to get information to districts about the level of needed services.

School boards need to be better informed about the requirement to support initial educators. District communication regarding initial educators should be clear so all within the district understand their roles and responsibilities.

Multiple resources need to be available from all stakeholders (DPI, professional organizations, CESAs, school districts, etc.) to support initial educators in the development of quality PDPs.

Survey Responses

License Category	Initial Educator Responses	Mentor Responses
Teacher	n=745	n=702
Administrators	n=13	n=8
Pupil Services	n=73	n=62

Survey response rate of initial educators was about 31%.