CALFORNIA BEGINNING TEACHERS' BUMPY PATH TO A PROFESSION

Julia E. Koppich and Daniel C. Humphrey

For the full report:

http://www.sri.com/work/publications/california-beginning-teachers-bumpy-path-profession

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Study Background

- 1990s and 2000s—California policymakers developed a coherent, comprehensive policy system for beginning teachers.

- Purposes: Reduce attrition and increase beginning teacher effectiveness

- This study was designed to focus on 4 key state policies: 1) BTSA, 2) evaluation, 3) clear credentialing, 4) tenure

- Study team conducted 8 case studies, interviewed state policy officials, examined state databases

- Almost immediately discovered the system state policy envisions does not match beginning teachers' experiences

Beginning Teachers' Path to a Profession

- Complete a preparation program,
- Earn a preliminary credential,
- Take a teaching job and be assigned probationary status,
- Complete a two-year induction program (BTSA) in their first two years,
- Earn a Clear Credential, and
- Receive tenure following two years of satisfactory evaluations.

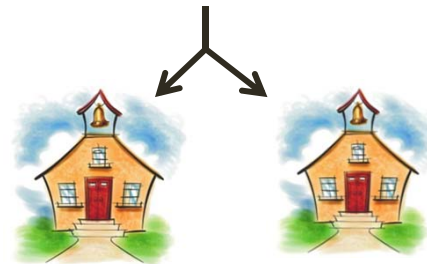SRI International   J. Koppich & Associates

Year 1 Temporary: Hired Nov 15

March 15th

Year 2 Temporary: Hired Sept 15th

.5 FTE   .5 FTE

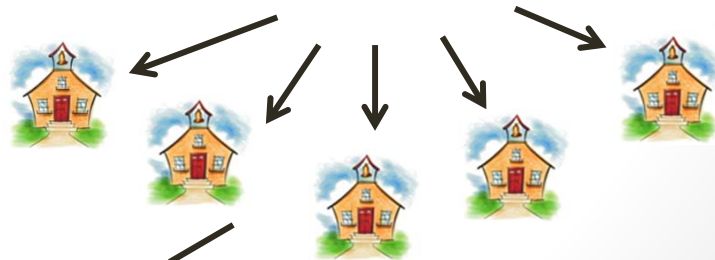Year 5 Probationary:
Hired October 1st

March 15th

March 15th

Year 3: Substitute Teaching

Year 4 Probationary:
Hired August 15th

Temporary Teachers

- Nearly all beginning teachers are classified as "temporary" some time during their early career years.
  - Many serve on temporary status for several years.
- Using temporary teachers is not a result of California's recent fiscal crisis.

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Exhibit 1: Number and Percent of 1st Through 3rd Year Teachers on Temporary or Long-term Substitute Status

Year	Number of 1st–3rd Year Teachers	Percent of 1st–3rd Year Teachers
1999	14,666	23%
2000	14,582	24%
2003	8,950	19%
2004	9,159	20%
2005	10,318	22%
2006	9,893	21%
2007	10,160	22%
2008	8,913	23%
2009	5,046	21%
2010	4,582	24%

Temporary Teachers

- Getting an accurate count of temporary teachers is hampered by state databases:
  - Numbers districts report to the state not based on uniform definition of temporary teacher
  - State merges temporary teachers and long-term substitutes
  - State counts temporary teachers only once a year
- Another way to look at the number of temporary teachers is to examine how many teachers earn tenure (permanence) by their third year.

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Exhibit 2: Number and Percent of 3rd-Year Teachers with Permanent Status (Tenure)

Year	Number of 3rd-Year Teachers with Tenure	Percent of 3rd-Year Teachers with Tenure
1999	6,779	33%
2000	5,994	31%
2003	5,372	32%
2004	4,682	34%
2005	4,685	34%
2006	5,444	38%
2007	6,311	43%
2008	5,771	42%
2009	4,655	42%
2010	3,527	45%

Temporary Teachers

- **No support or evaluation**
  - Many temporary teachers serve for several years with full teaching loads.
  - Many receive little or no formal support and are not evaluated.

BTSA and Clear Credentialing

- Mandatory new teacher induction has become a hallmark of teacher preparation in California.
- The Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment System (BTSA) was designed for teachers in their first 2 years of teaching.
- BTSA is meant to strengthen beginning teachers' professional skills and improve their effectiveness.

Biggest BTSA Plus:
- Support Providers
- "New teachers couldn't survive without their support providers."

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BTSA Challenges

1. **Timing**
   - Not all teachers receive BTSA in their first 2 years:
     - Temporary teachers often do not.
     - Late-hired teachers are not eligible.
     - Linking BTSA and clear credentialing complicates the timing issue
2. **Redundancy**
   - BTSA often duplicates portions of teacher preparation.
     - New teachers told us BTSA often adds much to their responsibilities but less to their professional learning.

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(BTSA Challenges)

3. **Burden**

- **Paperwork**
  - Support provider: "Honestly, I feel bad about all the paperwork. Is it really helping them [beginning teachers] or is it just adding more stress?"

4. **Compliance orientation**

- When BTSA became a requirement for clear credentialing, time to complete was extended from 2 years to 5.
- Extending the time dilutes the impact of BTSA as an induction program.
  - BTSA is viewed by some districts as "hoop jumping for a Clear Credential".

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Beginning Teachers' Evaluation

- Beginning teachers and principals say current evaluation systems are not up to the tasks of diagnosing needs or designing support.
- **Insufficient Feedback**
  - Neither clear nor comprehensive
  - Little guidance on how to improve practice
- **Disconnected support**
  - Support and evaluation largely siloed

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(Beginning Teachers' Evaluation)

- **(Redacted) evaluation files sparse and spare**
  - Nearly all beginning teachers hitting the mark on all CSTPs.
  - Even where need for improvement is indicated, often no actionable suggestions
- **BTSA firewall**
  - State policy establishes bright line between support and evaluation.
  - Support providers are precluded from sharing what they know with principals.
  - In some schools, firewall is porous; beginning teachers receive more integrated and comprehensive support and evaluation.

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(Beginning Teachers' Evaluations)

- **Some hopeful signs on the horizon**
  - Some study sites are rethinking beginning teacher support and evaluation.
  - New systems focus on formative reviews, coordinated support, and actionable feedback.

Permanence/Tenure

- State policy assumes permanence after 2 years of satisfactory evaluations.

- As earlier slide showed, only 31-45% of teachers earn tenure by their third year.

- Why?

  - Multi-year temporary status

  - Annual layoffs

  - "Combination" appointments

(Permanence/Tenure)

- **What do principals think?**
  - Views about how long it should take to earn permanence vary widely.
  - General consensus that current evaluation system not sufficiently rigorous for tenure decision
- **What do beginning teachers think?**
  - Many do not understand what "tenure" is or how to achieve it.
  - Most view permanence as an unachievable goal.

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Recommendations

Temporary Teachers

- Require districts to keep accurate counts of the number of temporary teachers by type of temporary appointment.

- Include temporary teachers among those who must be supported and evaluated.

Recommendations

BTSA and Clear Credentialing

- Allow districts and consortia to tailor induction support to the needs of their beginning teachers.

- Give districts and their local unions the option of developing induction programs that eliminate the firewall between support and evaluation.

- Decouple BTSA and clear credentialing.

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Recommendations

Evaluation

- Rethink the purpose of evaluation so that it focuses more squarely on support and improvement.

- Require that all teachers, regardless of employment status, be evaluated.

- Support local experiments in educator evaluation systems, including peer review for beginning teachers.

Fiscal and Broader Policy Implications

- Some recommendations may require the investment of new resources.

  - New Local Control Funding Formula will provide some districts with dollars to make these changes.

- Not doing anything may result in a weaker California teaching force.

- The policy system the state put in place for beginning teachers has broken down.

- Policymakers need to take a fresh look at induction, evaluation, clear credentialing, and tenure and create a comprehensive, interconnected system designed to support beginning teachers and improve their practice.