CALIFORNIA BEGINNING TEACHERS’ BUMPY PATH TO A PROFESSION

Julia E. Koppich and Daniel C. Humphrey

For the full report:
We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Stuart Foundation and the research and analysis provided by Inverness Research.
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.
Year 1 Temporary: Hired Nov 15

Year 2 Temporary: Hired Sept 15th

Year 3: Substitute Teaching

Year 4 Probationary: Hired August 15th

Year 5 Probationary: Hired October 1st
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.
### Exhibit 1: Number and Percent of 1st Through 3rd Year Teachers on Temporary or Long-term Substitute Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of 1st–3rd Year Teachers</th>
<th>Percent of 1st–3rd Year Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>14,666</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>14,582</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>8,950</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>9,159</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>10,318</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>9,893</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>10,160</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>8,913</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>5,046</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>4,582</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.
Exhibit 2: Number and Percent of 3rd-Year Teachers with Permanent Status (Tenure)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of 3rd-Year Teachers with Tenure</th>
<th>Percent of 3rd-Year Teachers with Tenure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>6,779</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>5,994</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>5,372</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>4,682</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>4,685</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>5,444</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>6,311</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>5,771</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>4,655</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>3,527</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.”
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.
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”.
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
(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.
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.
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.
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.