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Research

ROI on Professional Development Can Pay Off for Decades

By Dian Schaffhauser | **10/29/19**

Professional development for improving teacher effectiveness has residual benefits that last for decades. A project that took place from 2013 to 2017 to provide "high-intensity mentor support" for new teachers in a large urban district appeared to have three major outcomes:

- Every dollar invested in the teacher induction program paid out a 22 percent return the following year in reduced teacher attrition;
- Each dollar invested per student by the district would produce a "141-fold benefit" over that student's 30-year career, on average, resulting in subsequent higher tax levies to support the district in which they lived; and
- Each dollar invested would also generate a "\$2.43 return to city/state coffers" over the same 30-year period.

Those were the findings recently offered in a report produced by the New Teacher Center, which received a federal "Investing in Innovation" grant to deliver the

professional learning services. NTC worked with Metis Associates in the development of models to compare the spending from that grant to the "estimated monetary value of the observed effects of the program" in two areas: student performance and teacher retention. NTC is a nonprofit that focuses on improving student learning through development of new educators. Metis does research and consulting in the education field.

The return-on-investment study used data from a previous SRI Education study that evaluated the grant in 2017, showing positive impacts on student scores in standardized tests and — "to some extent" — teacher retention. That led NTC to wondering if the model could also show a "positive return on investment" specifically for the districts they worked with. Most of the report is dedicating to explaining how the latest ROI numbers were calculated.

Based on an evaluation of the lone, unnamed district, the analysis also found that:

- The savings accrued even for districts with diverse student populations. The district at the heart of the calculations had a 90 percent non-White student population, with 85 percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunches;
- Teacher retention was 11 percentage points higher in the group supported by NTC than in a "control" group that received traditional support (78 percent versus 67 percent);
- Students in grade 4–8 classrooms of NTC-supported teachers showed up to five months of additional learning in math and English language arts; and
- Students of NTC-supported teachers also had the potential to generate \$38,000 more in "career lifetime earnings."

"We believe that mentoring and job-embedded coaching are critical components of ensuring new teachers are Day 1 ready and continue to grow their practice throughout their careers," said Christine Murphy Judson, director of talent acquisition for Chicago Public Schools, in a statement. "By partnering with NTC to train cooperating teachers and mentor teachers, we are investing in supporting

educators throughout their career — pre-service to veteran. Coaching and mentoring are consistently a key component of teachers choosing to return to our schools and classrooms year after year, creating stability for school communities and students."

An executive summary of "Counting the Cost" is available with registration on the New Teacher Center website.

About the Author

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