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# Preface

In the 1980s, school districts began to realize the importance of beginning teacher induction programs. Faced with high teacher attrition and a growing student population, many districts abandoned the “survival of the fittest” method and sought more effective means of retaining and developing promising new teachers (Brewster & Railsback, 2001; Moir, 2003; RNT, 2000).

The number of schools and school districts that have adopted teacher induction programs is growing (Moir, 2003). The scope of the programs, however, varies widely from one-day orientation programs to developmental programs lasting up to three years. Induction for roughly 50% of all beginning teachers continues to consist of an orientation program (DePaul, 2000), although some school districts provide substantial induction programs as the initial step in a continuous career-long professional development program.

The requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act have given impetus to state initiatives to improve teacher quality. A growing number of states mandate teacher induction programs for their school districts, some of which are linked with assessments necessary for license renewal and continuing employment (Ganser, 2003). The U.S. Department of Education has taken steps to improve the American teaching force through legislation aimed at improving teacher education and working with college presidents to call attention to teacher education (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

In spite of the growing interest in teacher induction, support for it is missing or inadequate, and new teachers continue to leave the teaching field at a rate of 20% to 30% within the first three years. By the end of five years, approximately 50% of new teachers will have left the field (DePaul, 2000). Other beginning teachers, disillusioned and uninspired, remain in the field to the detriment of their students.

Clearly, teacher induction programs hold the answer to retaining and developing promising beginning teachers. The challenge is creating an effective program.

Designed with school leaders and staff developers in mind, *Developing a Teacher Induction Plan: A Guide for School Leaders* offers practical assistance for creating and implementing a teacher induction program. The first

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chapter is a discussion of the role of the induction team and the needs of the recipients of induction programs. Chapters 2 and 3 focus on assessment of current problems, past performance, and school context. Chapters 4 through 10 guide the reader through the process of designing an induction program to meet school needs.

The book has a workbook format—read it, discuss it, and write in it. We recommend that you and your planning team complete the chapters in order. You may be tempted to skip the opening chapters on assessment and begin with induction program design. In skipping the assessment exercises, however, you run the risk of creating an induction program based on assumptions about your school rather than an appraisal of its actual needs. Thoughtful assessment of current problems, the school context, and past practice is essential to the creation of an induction program that meets the specific needs of a school. After completing the exercises in the book, you will have developed a plan for a teacher induction program tailored to meet the needs of your school.

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