



# Rhode Island Induction News

Volume 2, Issue 2

Summer 2013

## Reflecting Back on Year 2 Commissioner's Corner

We have just completed Year 3 of our four-year Race to the Top grant initiative, and I recently had the honor of presenting our Year 3 report to the Race to the Top Steering Committee. No doubt about it: One of the highlights of the report was the update on Beginning Teacher Induction, which is fully supported by Race to the Top funds.

During the previous school year, the Rhode Island Induction Coaches provided at least 75 minutes a week of support to 412 beginning teachers across our state. The coaches were also able to support an additional 41 second-year teachers in our urban districts. These numbers were far

greater than we had anticipated – we had about twice the number of beginning teachers in 2012-13 as we'd had in previous years. Because support for the Induction Program is so strong, however, we were able to reallocate some grant money and provide coaches for all beginning teachers.

To date, we have spent about \$6.8 million of Race to the Top funds on the Induction program, and I consider every dollar spent to be a wise investment that will improve teaching and learning for years to come. Getting teachers off to a great start in their career will help ensure that beginning teachers develop

and improve their practices, and someday perhaps they will become coaches, mentors, or role models for others entering this challenging, stimulating, and rewarding profession.

Despite the kudos we have received for our Induction Program from educators and from the community at large, I am deeply concerned about the future of this program beyond the term of the Race to the Top grant. The Induction Program is one of the very few programs in our Race to the Top initiative that cannot sustain itself once the grant expires. In hopes of maintaining this program in 2014-15, I have started to look for alter-

native means of funding and we have convened a working group of educators, which will begin meeting next month to address this issue. As we seek funding going forward, it will be very helpful to hear from those who have benefitted from the Induction Program over the past two years – including beginning teachers, coaches, even students and family members. Please feel free to send me your thoughts on the program ([Deborah.gist@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Deborah.gist@ride.ri.gov)), or you can send messages to Hilda ([Hilda.Potrzeba@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Hilda.Potrzeba@ride.ri.gov)) for possible inclusion in a future issue of Rhode Island Induction News.

## Final Academy: Leading for Tomorrow

The 17 second year Induction Coaches recently completed their eighth and final New Teacher Center academy training with consultants Fred Williams and Geri Acers. The specific focus of this final training was *Leading for Tomorrow*.

Coaches learned how their work with induction is transforming educational experiences for both students and their beginning teachers. By analyzing the data from the midyear survey that was completed by beginning

teachers and administrators, as well as reflecting on individual case studies, coaches also had the opportunity to assess their own personal and professional development.

As many coaches prepare for the transition to return to the classroom, it is important for them to set next steps for their own professional growth. The final academy gave coaches the opportunity to reflect on their future opportunities to deepen their skills as instructional

leaders and to serve as skilled facilitators and strategic advocates for conditions that support effective teaching and learning.

Over these past two years the RI Induction Coaches have developed a professional network among themselves and the hundreds of beginning teachers they have supported. They have also developed an ongoing relationship with the New Teacher Center in Santa Cruz, CA. Coaches look forward to using these established professional networks



as they continuously strive to increase student achievement across the Ocean State.



Second year Induction Coach Buddy Comet (right) meets with Vannaly Sivilai at Calcutt Middle School in Central Falls

## Using the ASW Tool

There are many formative assessment tools provided by the New Teacher Center that Induction Coaches use in order to best support beginning teachers in their growth process. These tools are used to collect data and ultimately inform instruction. One of the most valuable of all is the Analyzing Student Work tool (or ASW).

The ASW tool involves a careful, collaborative examination of students' work to better understand their learning needs and to then determine how to best address those needs. With their Induction Coach, new teachers select an assignment that has the potential to offer important

information about their students' learning.

The Analysis of Student Work tool guides the beginning teacher and Induction Coach through the process of analyzing student work samples, understanding specific learning needs, and then identifying teaching strategies that will help differentiate instruction.

Although teachers regularly review and provide feedback on their students' work, the ASW tool provides a structure that allows for closer examination and analysis. This analysis allows the teacher to determine specific steps to take in order to meet the needs of all students.

## Rhode Island Coaches Present Nationally

This past February, two of Rhode Island's Induction Coaches, Buddy Comet and Alicia Sullivan, traveled to San Jose, California to present at the New Teacher Center's 15<sup>th</sup> National Symposium on Teacher Induction. This year's theme was Avenues to New Teacher Excellence. Their presentation, *Making the Most of the 2-Teacher Classroom*, connected to the symposium's theme of Equitable Learning and Social Justice.

Buddy and Alicia recognized early in their coaching practice last year that many Rhode Island students learn in co-taught classrooms. After working as a teaching partnership themselves for seven years, they feel strongly that maximizing the potential in 2-teacher classrooms ensures educational equity.

The two set out to develop systems and tools to support teachers in the collaboration, co-planning, and co-teaching that they knew could benefit

students. After receiving feedback from the teachers and administrators with whom they shared their work last year, Buddy and Alicia were motivated to share their work with a wider audience. "Symposium offered us the opportunity to expand our impact on teachers and students" explained Buddy. Alicia echoed that notion, "It was an incredible experience to collaborate with so many wonderful educators who are all driven to make things happen."

## WAYS TO ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION

Publicly acknowledge how a colleague has helped improve your practice

Establish norms and protocols that promote a safe environment and encourage participation from all

When faced with a dilemma, provide groups of teachers a time and place to brainstorm solutions

Laugh together, because when we laugh we relax and make eye contact

If you come across an interesting article or resource, share it with others and then have a follow up discussion about it

When seeking support about a student or situation, let your colleagues know their support is valued

Look at student work with a colleague, and do it with the door open so others become curious and want to join in

Ask a colleague to observe and provide you with feedback on a specific component or skill you would like to improve

Keep newsletters and web pages updated because many times community members and coworkers would be happy to offer their support if they knew what was happening

Become familiar with your school's mission statement because it unifies the staff and acts as a compass for the entire community

## Teacher Profile: Erin McGovern

Beakers, bugs and butterflies... the world of the elementary science teacher! Erin McGovern seamlessly transitions between all three plus more in a typical day.

Meet Erin, a first year Science Itinerant in the Warwick Public Schools. Erin grew up in Warwick and attended school there herself before heading to Rhode Island College where she earned her BA in Elementary Education with a concentration in General Science as well as an endorsement in Middle Level Science

Erin teaches students in grades 1-6 at Greenwood Elementary School and Cedar Hill Elementary School. She has a caseload of 509 students and sees them once a week for 45 minutes. "I have found the year to be overwhelming at times; especially at the beginning coming in and not really knowing anyone." She spent a year substitute teaching in the system which allowed her to transition to her own classroom more smoothly. Substituting at the secondary level allowed Erin to get a feel for the pacing in the short blocks of time

allowed to an itinerant teacher. She states, "I really know the value of



even three minutes of teaching time!"

Aside from working with the students, Erin attributes her rewarding year to both veteran teachers and the Induction Program. Planning and teaching is a challenge, but for all of the additional expectations she found veteran

teachers to be invaluable. "They really helped me streamline and prioritize all of the expectations; they seemed so intimidating at first but are so willing to help with anything I need. I definitely recommend all beginning teachers reach out to others for support."

As for the Induction Program, "... every beginning teacher needs it. In fact, I think second and third year teachers could benefit from the support." Erin and her coach have worked together on planning for open house, role playing parent conference conversations, making connections, and reflecting on teaching practice. In addition, she has had multiple opportunities to gather with other beginning teachers in the district to work on topics such as evaluation, parent communication, and planning in a small group setting. These gatherings build lasting supportive relationships that enhance student learning now and in the future. She reflects, "I am not sure what my year would have been like without the support of my Induction Coach!"

## Time for Reflection

It's time to pat yourself on the back and breathe a sigh of relief... The end of the year has arrived and you've made it! Your first year of teaching is complete, and you've learned so much about the teaching profession, your students and yourself. Now it's time to reflect: What were your successes this year? What are you most proud of? What was a challenge for you? How did you overcome this challenge? Who helped you along the way? Is there a particular student in whose life you made a big difference? It's so important to take time to reflect upon these questions, as your experiences this year have greatly contributed to your growth process.

Based on this year's experiences, what changes do you plan to make

next year? What lessons do you want to keep as they are? Which lessons need drastic changes? What classroom management strategies worked this year? Which ones didn't work so well? Be sure to celebrate this year's successes and learn from the challenges. We tell our students that it's okay to make mistakes and to learn from them. Use the lessons learned from this year's challenges to make you an even better teacher next year. Reflection is crucial to the process of professional growth.

In anticipation for next year, carry these learning experiences with you. Whether you'll be in the same classroom next year or in another school teaching another grade... Whether you plan on serving in another role in education or have plans to move on to another pro-

fession altogether... The experiences you've had this year have helped you to grow both professionally and personally. Be sure to recognize and take pride in this growth.



Moir, E. (2011). Phases of First-Year Teaching. eReflections. Retrieved from [www.newteachercenter.org/blog/phases-first-year-teaching](http://www.newteachercenter.org/blog/phases-first-year-teaching)

## Contacts

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"Supporting new teachers with programs that make them better faster, represents one of the greatest opportunities for change in education today."

Ellen Moir, NTC Chief Executive Officer

### Office of Educator Quality

[www.ride.ri.gov](http://www.ride.ri.gov)  
[www.newteachercenter.org](http://www.newteachercenter.org)

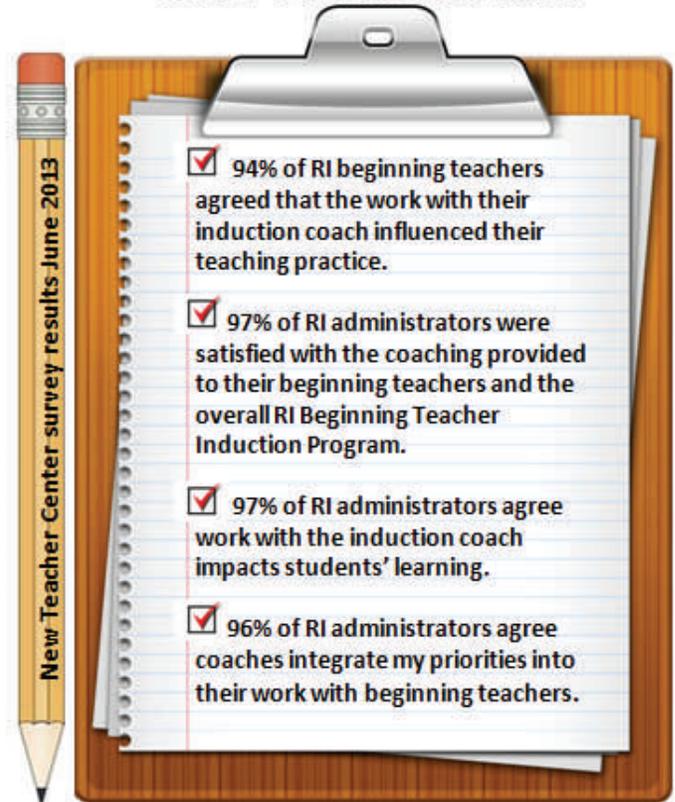
"Teachers are not 'finished products' when they complete a teacher preparation program. Strong residency and mentored induction experiences during their initial years in the classroom provide beginning teachers with invaluable support as they lay the groundwork to become accomplished teachers. A well-planned, systematic induction program for new teachers is vital to maximize their chances of being successful in any school setting..."

No Dream Denied  
National Commission on Teaching  
and America's Future  
Washington, DC, January 2003

Induction programs are vehicles that facilitate systemic sustained enhancement to school culture and the teaching profession. The Rhode Island Department of Education believes that induction programs are a smart investment in the ongoing training, support, and retention of beginning teachers, who, as a result of the programs become more qualified, capable, and effective teachers.

## Data Year 2

### THE DATA IS IN:



## Induction Coaches 2012-2013

Alicia Proulx*	Jodi Clark
Alicia Sullivan	John Wolf (Option 2)*
Angela Holt	Kathleen Fleenor
Barbara Berleth	Kristin Polseno*
Buddy Comet*	Lillian Turnipseed*
Connie McCarthy*	Lisa Peterson*
Christine Fitzgerald	Lisa Tenreiro
Crystal Monteiro	Martha Dion*
Dana Ramey	Melissa Denton*
Elisabeth Ridder*	Mia Godbout (Option 2)*
Elizabeth McGuire	Michaela Ware*
Gino Sangiuliano	Michelle Livsey*
Jennifer Jendzejec*	Nicole Rattay*
Jennifer Theroux	Tabitha Watjen
Jessica Butash	

\* Induction Coaches returning for the 2013-2014 school year.

"When veterans and novices work together in a nurturing relationship, each gets something of real value from the other. Veterans gain energy; novices gain inspiration. Isolation fades, connection flourishes, pain turns into wisdom -- a joyful wisdom that makes the difficulties in our work endurable and keeps both veteran and novice coming back for more."

"A tale of two children" David Shoemaker, Phi Delta Kappan, Feb. 2003



