School Board Induction Initiatives

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This issue of Teaching and Learning is devoted to induction practices as they relate to beginning teachers and other leadership roles. The Brock-Golden Horseshoe Consortium consists of eleven school boards partnering with Brock Faculty of Education. An important question in terms of the focus of this issue is what are these school boards doing to promote induction activities for novice teachers? The following is a summary of information gathered about what beginning teachers hired by one of our partner school boards might expect.

School boards conduct an orientation sequence that normally includes several components. In most cases, one or two days are scheduled either near the end of the existing school year or late in August before the start of the next school year. The Human Resources Department of a school board provides new teachers with information and conducts workshops and information sessions related to policies, salary, benefits, safety and workplace regulations, employment and contract clarification and provides a variety of resources deemed useful to assist teachers in achieving a successful September start up. Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board provides a summer institute with over 120 options of one, two, or three day sessions. Usually district federation representatives assist with these sessions providing new teachers with important information about ethics, professional conduct and legal concerns. The Hamilton-Wentworth District Board in cooperation with HWETL schedules an after school "meet and greet" session and provides

every new teacher with a book called Classroom Beginnings. The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board orientation includes the chairperson of the board, Director of Education, a welcome from a dynamic mentor teacher and concludes with a mass and a commissioning ceremony. Several boards schedule an additional one or two days in August reserved for program consultants such as special education, guidance and curriculum specialists who review school board policies and provide resources respective to each area. Often school principals or vice principals attend these sessions. The Waterloo Catholic District School Board provides access to the Media Center, a resource booklet for beginning teachers and conducts an on-going biannual survey of professional development needs. Throughout the year curriculum specialists offer scheduled professional development evening sessions across a wide scope of school board initiatives such as assessment and evaluation, electronic report card, classroom management issues and specialized subject specific program development. The District School Board of Niagara in cooperation with NSAC and OSSTF schedules six half-day sessions of professional development for new teachers during the year. The main school boards focus on communicating with parents, meeting individual needs, classroom management strategies, personal professional career planning and survival strategies to enhance success for the first two years of teaching. Most boards provide some form of informal "mentor" program at the school level that matches beginning teachers with

selected experienced teachers. The Halton Catholic District School Board has embarked on a volunteer mentorship program in partnership with Professor Joe Engemann of the Faculty of Education. This program provides peer support by matching an experienced volunteer teacher mentor/coach with a beginning teacher. Opportunities to share and exchange ideas and information are highly encouraged. All beginning teachers participate in scheduled professional development days for all staff.

In summary all boards appear to provide some type of formal orientation program in late August usually one or two days. Most boards have developed a beginning teacher resource booklet. They also provide curriculum and special issues support during the year usually after hours. While there are informal mentorship arrangements encouraged they are not the primary focus of the induction process. There is ample information to suggest that more research and initiatives are needed in this important education focus of the transition period from pre-service candidate to inductee through life long career management.

- School boards that submitted information for this summary were:
- Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board
- Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
- Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
- Halton Catholic District School Board
- District School Board of Niagara
- Waterloo Catholic District School Board.