OHIO EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTER

Evaluation of the TeachOhio Program

RESEARCH TEAM

Sarah Woodruff, PhD
Miami University

Christopher Cox, MSEd
Miami University

Location of TeachOhio Partnerships

IMPORTANCE

One key strategy of providing great teachers for all Ohio schools is to increase the supply of effective teachers so that students in high-poverty and high-minority schools, schools that are historically hard to staff, have equitable educational access and opportunity. During the 2012-14 school years, the TeachOhio Program will support LEAs in achieving full licensure and highly-qualified teacher (HQT) status for their teachers. The Program intends to assist 675 teachers in obtaining necessary additional licensure or endorsement, fulfilling HQT requirements, or earning an initial teaching license.

BACKGROUND

The TeachOhio Program, supported by Ohio's Race to the Top (RttT) funds, is implemented through 15 partnerships of Educational Service Centers (ESC), Ohio colleges and universities (IHE), and local school districts (LEA) with preference given to those participating in RttT. TeachOhio aims to address the LEA's short-term staffing needs and develop a long-term regional teacher supply plan or strategy for each of the 15 Partnerships.

Specific state-wide objectives of TeachOhio include: (a) ESCs coordinate with LEAs to identify and address LEAs' teacher staffing needs; (b) ESCs with LEAs identify and recruit teachers and teacher candidates into a licensure completion program; (c) ESCs support individuals to achieve their teacher licensure goals; and support LEA-identified second-career teacher candidates; (d) ESCs coordinate with LEAs to identify/recruit teachers into HQT completion programs; and (e) ESCs facilitate LEA and Ohio IHE work to develop long-term regional teacher supply plans.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A mixed-methods program evaluation began in Fall 2012 and will continue through Summer 2014. The 2-year evaluation collects qualitative data including Partnership regional plans and reports; interviews of all Partnership ESC leads, a sample of IHE partners, and a sample of LEA administrators; observations of TeachOhio consortium meetings; and focus groups of participating teachers. Embedded quantitative data from partner LEA surveys will aid the interpretation of qualitative data.

The unit of analysis is the TeachOhio partnership which includes the ODE, lead ESC, LEAs with TeachOhio teachers, and any partnering IHEs. Overarching questions reflect the five TeachOhio Program objectives and include:

- How are ESCs coordinating with partner LEAs to identify and address LEAs' specific teacher staffing needs? What are the intermediate and final outcomes of TeachOhio participants and the Program's ability to reach its target audience?
- How are ESCs supporting participants to achieve their teacher licensure goals? How do participants reflect on their experiences with and outcomes of the Program? Are partnerships effectively preparing participants for licensure?
- What are the nature and extent of collaboration and communication among the ODE, ESC, LEA and IHE partners in TeachOhio? How do stakeholders characterize the collaboration and leadership provided by the ESCs?

- How are ESCs facilitating the work of LEAs and IHEs to develop long-term local or regional teacher supply plans or strategies, with attention to the placement of IHE teacher candidates and retraining/credentialing of current teachers?
- How do the costs/resource needs of TeachOhio compare with its benefits? How do they compare with similar strategies for increasing teacher supply in shortage areas?
- What are the facilitators, barriers, intermediate and final outcomes, and emerging best practices of the TeachOhio partnerships? How did the TeachOhio Program contribute to the State's goal of increasing the supply of teachers overall, specifically, in hard-to-staff subject areas and schools? What recommendations can be made for improving the State's efforts regarding increasing teacher supply in areas of need?

DATA

During Fall 2012, all 15 Partnership ESC leads were interviewed. During Spring 2013, LEA administrators will be surveyed and representative samples of IHE faculty and LEA administrators, and TeachOhio teachers will be interviewed.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Preliminary findings are based on interview data collected from TeachOhio ESC leads.

Implementation. Each of the 15 Partnerships is engaged in addressing participating LEAs' short-term teacher supply needs through approaches that differ due to staffing needs, ESC capacity, partner relationships, and regional emphases.
LEAs' staffing needs included ensuring HQT compliance for high school intervention specialists and assisting preK-3 licensed teachers in obtaining a Grades 4/5 endorsement to increase staffing flexibility.

Using TeachOhio funds, ESCs offered teacher participants a range of support from advisement, professional development, transcript evaluation, and reimbursement for books, tuition, and Praxis assessment fees. ESCs provided different support structures and required specific criteria of teachers and LEAs in order to receive support.
ESC TeachOhio Partnerships with preexisting IHE partner relationships were better prepared to execute the work of the Partnership. ESC leads indicated that they attempted to negotiate tuition reductions with IHE partners with differential success.

Some Partnerships focused on regional short-term needs like meeting teachers' the requirements for Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee. Most Partnerships have not begun developing regional long-term teacher supply plans and/or strategies.

Barriers and Facilitators. The 2-year Program has been practically condensed. Most ESC leads shared that Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee (legislated in Summer 2012) impacted their proposed plans for TeachOhio and delayed implementation.

ESC TeachOhio leads reported that flexibility of the TeachOhio Program has facilitated adaptation to the diverse educational settings in the 15 Partnerships.

Promising Practices. Three practices have emerged as promising means to reach the broader goals of the TeachOhio Program.

1. One Partnership worked with its LEAs to select a cadre of teachers to lead a regional reading endorsement network; thus, distributing the benefit of TeachOhio across the region, mobilizing the trained cadre for other regional reading initiatives.
2. Some ESCs are serving as facilitators between LEAs and IHEs. In that facilitation role, ESCs are serving as college course counselors, co-developing courses and delivering courses on-site.
3. One Partnership has developed an intern program that grooms a select cohort of pre-service teachers from a regional IHE for specific, anticipated openings in partner LEAs.

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