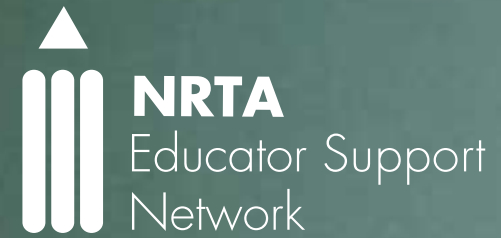


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History

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HISTORY AND STATUS REPORT

JUNE 2005

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INTRODUCTION

The numbers are alarming. The costs are prohibitive. The impact is far-reaching and demoralizing to the profession. The issue: extremely high levels of turnover among teachers and administrators in America's public schools. In fact, the high levels of attrition would likely put a private sector business *out* of business. Many school systems are trying to curtail the high levels of turnover through a range of support and induction programs, but more help is needed. With the support of AARP and a network of affiliated state and local retired educators associations (REAs), along with collaborators from across the full spectrum of the K-12 and higher education communities, NRTA: *AARP's Educator Community* has created a multi-year initiative to help address this critical issue in American education: the NRTA Educator Support Network (ESN). While the initiative continues to grow and evolve, this report offers a summary of the history and key activities of ESN, thus far.

The development of the NRTA Educator Support Network – a joint national and local effort to support today's teachers and administrators – is reflective of, and has been inspired by, the interests of age 50+ educators. NRTA's current and former educators take pride in their profession and are very concerned about the devaluing of teachers in our society, the high levels of educator turnover and the repercussions of both on student achievement. Additionally, the members of NRTA and its network of affiliated REAs have a tradition of, and unparalleled commitment to, giving of themselves to help others. NRTA and REA members are highly engaged and regularly lend their time and talents to young people, to fellow educators and to their community at large. Through a broad array of community service and advocacy efforts, these members continue to be a vibrant resource, helping strengthen education and our communities.

Through this strong partnership with REAs and with the support of AARP, NRTA is uniquely poised to respond to critical issues facing educators and education – and to engage others to take action as well. Now in its 58th year, NRTA, its members and affiliated REAs have long encouraged individuals to become educators, supported them in their careers and retirement, and advocated for their health and economic security. Today, NRTA members stand to serve as thought leaders and can effectively support educators – both newly minted and those entering in mid-career or after retirement.

PART ONE

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION: A CRITICAL CHALLENGE FOR EDUCATION

While there are many challenges facing our education system, one of the most pressing and critical areas is the profession's high level of turnover among new teachers and administrators. On average, national data indicate that 33% of teachers leave the profession in the first three years of their employment and in urban areas, the percentage reaches as high as 50%. The high levels of teacher attrition have created a situation where far too many students, especially those in high-need schools, don't have the benefit of learning from experienced and highly qualified teachers. Similar patterns of attrition also appear to be evident among school administrators and principals. If America's children are to succeed and prosper, *wherever they live*, our nation's schools must be supported by the competence and caring of qualified educators.

Background

Since the early 1980's, education policy researchers forewarned the formidable shortage of K-12 school teachers. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in its report titled *Predicting the Need for Newly Hired Teachers in the United States to 2008-09* notes that "Each year, over 150,000 public school teachers are hired to meet the ongoing demands of replacing teachers who retire or who have left the profession, filling new positions in growing school districts, or addressing special needs or meeting new requirements." The report projects that between 1.7 million and 2.7 million newly hired public school teachers will be needed by 2008-09. Over the years, two demographic trends were consistently cited: increasing student enrollments and the "graying" of the teaching force. According to this view, the pressure of teacher shortages resulted in lower qualification standards, creating a "snowball" effect where there were increasing numbers of under-qualified educators and more low performing schools. There was also a disturbing trend that high-need schools experienced even higher levels of under-qualified educators.

Throughout the 1990's, the policy response to the school staffing crisis was to initiate programs to increase the supply of teachers. Initiatives like **Teach for America** were used to attract well-educated young people and professionals from other industries into the teaching profession. Many states also instituted alternative certification programs and financial incentives – signing bonuses, student loan forgiveness, housing assistance and tuition reimbursement. Additionally, in January 2002, the **No Child Left Behind Act** began providing some federal funding for teacher quality initiatives.

Because older teachers greatly outnumber younger teachers, many analysts concluded that retirement was the most significant factor driving school staffing problems. However, a new examination of data revealed that younger teachers have higher rates of departure.

A New Perspective

After a decade of studying the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data from its *Schools and Staffing Survey* (SASS) and *Teacher Follow-up Survey* (TFS), Dr. Richard Ingersoll, Associate Professor of Education and Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania, concluded that the conventional wisdom on teacher shortages is a case of a "wrong diagnosis and a wrong prescription." He found that the source of the problem is not that we are making too few new teachers, but rather that too many existing teachers are leaving their jobs long before retirement. He also found organizational characteristics and conditions of schools are behind the high levels of teacher turnover. He summarized these findings in a recent report published by the Consortium for Policy Research in Education titled *Is There Really a Teacher Shortage?* This landmark work on educator retention and recruitment has served as a "touchstone" for the development of the NRTA Educator Support Network.¹

The Revolving Door Effect

▶ **“School staffing problems are not principally due to teacher shortages; they do not seem to stem from an insufficient supply of qualified teachers but from an excess demand. The data indicate that a revolving door exists, that large numbers of qualified teachers are departing their jobs for reasons other than retirement.”**

— RICHARD INGERSOLL, PH.D.

The national data show that teaching has an annual turnover rate of around 15%. Dr. Ingersoll noted that the rate at which teachers leave their jobs is far higher than in traditional professions. Ingersoll also pointed out that many new teachers leave the profession early in their careers and that impoverished schools are the most impacted by educator shortages.

After extensive study, Dr. Ingersoll concluded that two reasons directly related to the working and organizational conditions of teaching are, together, the most prominent source of turnover:

- job dissatisfaction
- a desire to pursue a "better" job/career

In conclusion, he offered several strategies to directly address educator job dissatisfaction:

- Raise salaries.
- Reduce student misbehavior.
- Increase teacher influence over decision-making, especially over the creation of school policies concerned with student behavior and sanctions.

¹ To download a copy of *Is There Really a Teacher Shortage?*, visit www.gse.upenn.edu/faculty_research/Shortage-RMI-09-2003.pdf

The creation of the NRTA Educator Support Network was particularly influenced by Ingersoll's suggestion that "a fourth approach suggested by the data would be to increase support from school administrations, especially for new teachers.

▶ *This increased support might range from providing more classroom supplies to offering mentoring for new teachers. The latter is crucial.*

PART TWO

SHAPING A RESPONSE



As a national organization, NRTA has had the good fortune of being able to tap into a highly effective network of state and local retired educators associates (REAs) to extend the reach and local impact of a national initiative. In order to shape a response – and ultimately create an action plan – to a critical issue facing America's education system, it was essential to begin by listening to the views of REA members and other 50+ educators across the country. Through a process of information sharing and joint exploration, NRTA and the REA Network were able to

gauge the level of interest among their respective membership for leading and participating in a concerted effort to address educator recruitment and retention issues. This approach was in keeping with NRTA's practice of first testing a concept with its core constituencies to determine the relevance, level of interest and likelihood of participation in an initiative. As with other NRTA-led initiatives, NRTA was ultimately able to galvanize support for a joint effort through invitation and engagement, rather than through an un-vetted pronouncement.

NRTA National Guidance Group Consultation

2002 ▶ May–August

To inform the strategic direction of NRTA's national efforts, as well as to create and support implementation strategies for priority initiatives, NRTA depends upon its national Guidance Group. The Guidance Group is a leadership council composed of REA presidents, past presidents and executive directors, as well as AARP state and regional volunteer leaders and staff.

Through a series of formal and informal meetings, conference calls and electronic conversations, NRTA's Guidance Group evaluated the potential of engaging retired educators in a variety of roles to effectively address issues relating to recruitment and retention. The group concluded that NRTA and its network of REAs are especially credible and qualified to lead a nationwide process of dialogue and discovery, and to help develop solutions to this critical need in American education.

NRTA Phone Survey of 1,000 Working and Retired Educators

2002 ▶ August–September

NRTA's first national omnibus phone survey of 1,000 adults age 45+ was fielded with participants who were either working in the field of education or had done so in the past. Seven in ten had K-12 experience; more than 25% reported working at the collegiate level. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents who were aware of NRTA reported that they were “extremely” or “very interested” in remaining involved in education-related activities in their retirement years.

The respondents' interest in continued involvement in the school community signaled a strong likelihood that many retired and partially-retired educators would be willing to participate in activities that support new educators.



NRTA Focus Groups Reveal High Interest in Supporting New Educators

2002 ▶ September

NRTA convened a set of focus groups with current and prospective members in three states: Indiana, Pennsylvania, North Carolina. A total of six focus groups were held with retired or active educators in a public (K-12) school or at a public college/university. The focus group participants noted that educator shortages and the need to improve retention rates were vitally important to the future of education. Individuals who felt that NRTA should address the issue of educator retention suggested that the organization should do so wholeheartedly.

▶ **“Obviously, I think this is a great idea, and would I be 100% behind it? Yeah, I would.”**

▶ **“Even though I’m retired, I still believe in public education... I’m still passionate about it and I want to stay that way.”**

— FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

PART THREE

THE LAUNCH: A VISIBLE PLEDGE OF SUPPORT

Having identified and examined a critical issue facing America's public schools and having evaluated the interest among its members to help address this need, NRTA was now prepared to publicly launch the NRTA Educator Support Network (ESN). Buoyed by strong support from state retired educators association (REA) leaders, NRTA began building the framework for a multi-year initiative to support new teachers and administrators by engaging age 50+ educators, a nationwide network of 50 state and 2,700 local REAs and the collective resources of AARP and its 35 million members.

AARP and NRTA Leadership Pledge Support

2002 ▶ September

▶ **“To bring about significant and positive social change, we need to be engaged with the schools and children in our communities in a variety of ways...and school-based mentoring will be a core activity.”**

— BILL NOVELLI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CEO, AARP

In September 2002, NRTA gathered state REA presidents and presidents-elect for a Leadership Conference in Washington, DC. Bill Novelli, Executive Director and CEO of AARP, announced the organization's firm commitment to the national problem of educator retention and called upon NRTA and its network of affiliated state and local REAs to engage their members to help address the increasingly pressing situation. Novelli also shared, “My son is an elementary school teacher in St. Paul. He's taught me a lot about the enormous challenges new teachers face...but we believe we are uniquely positioned to make a real difference.”



▶ **“NRTA is poised to respond to this critical issue and has the ‘collective brainpower’ of educators who have spent twenty, thirty and sometimes forty years in the classroom. These retired educators succeeded in spite of difficult odds and are willing to share their experience and expertise.”**

— ANNETTE NORSMAN, PH.D, DIRECTOR, NRTA: *AARP'S EDUCATOR COMMUNITY*

The REA state leaders thoroughly discussed the concept of supporting beginning educators and explored potential roles for retired educators. The group generated a continuum of possibilities, including mentoring and coaching, working directly with students, gathering curriculum, donating supplies and serving as substitute teachers, so that new educators could be released to observe exemplar practitioners. Participants also completed surveys to evaluate their impressions of the NRTA Educator Support Network's mission and NRTA's ability to serve in a leadership position on key issues related to educator retention. The response was decidedly positive.

**Educator Support Network Briefing Kit
Mobilizes 50 State & 2,700 Local Retired Educator Associations**

2002 ▶ November

Guided by suggestions made during the Leadership Conference and recommendations from the Guidance Group, NRTA crafted a Briefing Kit to invite associations across the country to participate in the NRTA Educator Support Network. REAs were encouraged to develop multi-year timelines to address recruitment and retention challenges specific to their states and local communities.

The first section of the Briefing Kit outlined a preliminary, step-by-step plan to involve REA offices and members. REA state presidents and executives were encouraged to query members about support activities currently in place and to identify communities that are facing a critical shortage of qualified educators. The leadership was invited to share information, strategies and best practices on this issue, as well as to explore coalitions with other community organizations.

The NRTA ESN Briefing Kit included customizable and flexible tools, such as a Fact Sheet, a sample article for an REA newsletter and a sample press release to announce the local Association's involvement in the national initiative to recruit and retain America's most qualified educators.



**NRTA/AARP Launch Educator Support Network
American Education Week**

2002 ▶ November

Washington, DC

With the support of 30 national organizations and the U.S. Department of Education, NRTA launched the NRTA Educator Support Network at a press conference/panel discussion in the nation's capital². After greetings from AARP's Executive Director and CEO, Bill Novelli, and Dr. Tom Nelson, AARP's Chief Operating Officer, U.S. Department of Education Under Secretary, Dr. Eugene Hickok helped to frame the national implications of educator recruitment and retention, if left unaddressed.

The panel discussion, moderated by Susan King from the Carnegie Corporation, included Dr. Richard Ingersoll, researcher, author and associate professor at the University of Pennsylvania and Amanda Brown of the Public Education Network. Two New York City teachers, Sarah Costelloe and Janice Wright, whose first-year challenges and frustrations were chronicled in a year-long PBS *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* series called "Making the Grade," shared their personal perspectives. At the launch event, NRTA released its strategic plans for benchmark national research to uncover the issues and best practices that are key to retaining quality educators.

Participants were reminded that REAs would remain at the heart of the ESN initiative – retired educators leading efforts to convene partnerships and multi-state panels to probe educator retention issues in diverse, local communities across the country.

▶ **“There's a tremendous knowledge base in this organization. Your expertise can show new educators that the task (of educating youth) may not be easy, but by working together, it can be done.”**

— COMMENTS TO NRTA MEMBERS
ROD PAIGE, FORMER U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

² The NRTA Educator Support Network was launched under a working title of the Community-to-Community [C2C] initiative. Shortly thereafter, the initiative was renamed the NRTA Educator Support Network.

PART FOUR

CONTINUING DIALOGUE TO GUIDE ESN

The development and direction of the NRTA Educator Support Network (ESN) began with extensive research and was further bolstered through invitations for input and feedback from key constituencies. As ESN has evolved, this practice has continued with on-going research and shared dialogue to chart new – and fine-tune existing – pathways to support educators and education.

NRTA Convenes Round Table of Key Education Associations

2003 ▶ January

Washington, DC

In order to garner advice and guidance from associations noted for expertise in the field of educator retention, NRTA gathered twelve leaders for an Education Round Table discussion. The participants shared insight about the existing data regarding educator retention and identified areas where additional research was still needed. These thought leaders reflected on staffing challenges in a variety of communities and settings along the K-12 continuum, and the impact these challenges may – or should – have on policy, advocacy and future research. The group also focused on uncovering opportunities where NRTA’s experienced educator members and state affiliates could lend support.



Round Table participants represented a cross-section of the education, research and civic engagement communities, including the U.S. Department of Education, New York City public schools, University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education, National Council of La Raza, National Alliance of Black School Educators, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, Civic Ventures, Public Education Network and AARP.

Education Round Table Recommendations

- Pilot programs with retired educators should be directed toward the “hardest hit areas” - those with low-income, minority and/or rural populations.
- The NRTA Educator Support Network initiative should leverage the pilots’ successes to influence further legislation and funding.
- The initiative should help to promote the overall value, dignity and importance of the educator role in society.

- REAs should play a meaningful role in the recruitment and retention of new educators. (Specific recommendations were offered for retired educators’ engagement in direct, community-based support.)
- Further research is needed, including a qualitative exploration of the reasons educators choose to stay or leave the profession, and an analysis of the costs of educator turnover at school, district and state levels.

NRTA Publishes *Exodus: A Study of Teacher Retention in America* 50 Who Stayed – 50 Who Left

2003 ▶ September

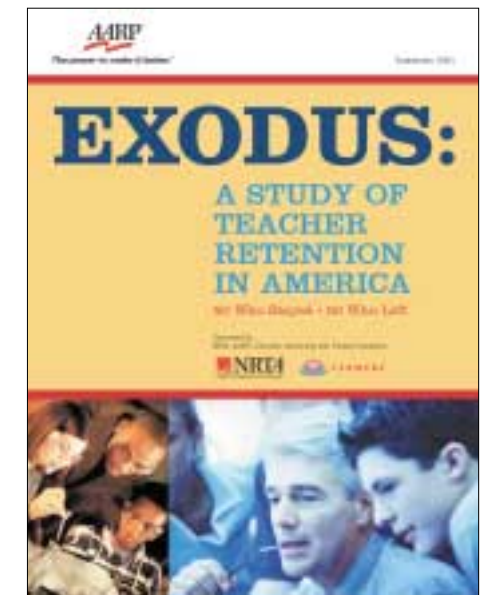
Exodus: A Study of Teacher Retention gave the actual views and opinions of 100 current and former K-12 teachers. The national survey offered insight into the dynamics surrounding whether a teacher stays in or leaves the profession during what can be the most difficult time, the first five years of employment.

▶ “I love the feeling that I make a difference in the lives....of 300 students a year!”

— FORMER TEACHER

The *Exodus* study found that current and former teachers were initially motivated to join the profession for similar reasons – their love for children and respect for the art and science of teaching. A passion for teaching, a calling, e.g. “destined to be a teacher,” role models in the past, and the desire to “give back” were the words used by former and current teachers. Interestingly, both groups cited the same moments as the most rewarding:

- Seeing the “light-bulb go on” as a student grasps concepts
- Interaction with students and watching them grow over the years
- Verbal appreciation from parents and administrators
- Parents recognizing the achievement of their child



Former teachers said the major reasons for leaving the profession included:

- Lack of administrative support
- Low pay
- Feeling undervalued by society and the community
- Lack of resources and parental support
- Impact of fellow teachers who appeared narrow-minded

Current teachers cited their biggest challenges in today's classrooms as:

- Motivating kids
- Classroom discipline
- Dealing with parents in justifying discipline
- Managing lesson plans
- Keeping lesson plans interesting
- School politics

While both current and former teachers agreed that formal mentoring, support and training systems are needed and would be beneficial for new teachers, former teachers added that regular access to a helpful mentor, in itself, was not enough to hold them in the classroom. They said other factors within the profession (administration support, parent/student behavior) cannot be solved by mentoring alone.

▶ **“Long hours, short supplies, no support or recognition...make for a miserable professional life.”**

— FORMER TEACHER

The online survey was conducted by Harris Interactive in July and August of 2003. A total of 117 respondents participated in the bulletin board groups and 14 of these respondents further participated in telephone interviews. The study represented the views of both private and public school teachers in grades K-12.³

▶ **“This study takes us into today's classrooms and gives voice to the millions of current and former teachers who have taken on the challenge of teaching America's students. It also allows us to more fully understand the reasons why 33 to 50 percent of our nation's teachers are leaving within the first three years of employment.”**

— RICHARD INGERSOLL, PH.D.

³ To download a copy of *Exodus: A Study of Teacher Retention in America*, visit www.aarp.org/nrta.

NRTA Focus Groups Pinpoint Need for Interactivity When Training ESN Volunteers

2003 ▶ October

Florida, Arizona, Oregon

Six focus groups were convened to explore the characteristics of a satisfying learning experience for educators age 49-65. While this data was initially collected to aid NRTA's work in creating a range of potential “Living and Learning” opportunities for its members, the information was particularly helpful to the ESN initiative. A training component for NRTA and REA members interested in serving as ESN volunteers will be an essential element to the initiative. Focus Group participants reported that effective training sessions for adult learners should:

- Offer opportunities for hands-on, interactive learning.
- Allow for socialization with others in the learning environment.
- Involve knowledgeable, energetic instructors.
- Provide information that is applicable to their life or supplements their career-related knowledge base.
- Involve learning about a subject or skill outside their everyday experience, or move them outside their comfort zone.

Many respondents stated that they shun lecture-type venues and traditional classroom settings; instead, they relished opportunities to interact with others who share the same interests. The perceived value of the learning experience is often affected by the format.

▶ **“What makes a satisfying learning experience? Collaboration. The give-and-take (is) a fascinating process.”**

— FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

Participants anticipated being active and involved during their retirement years. Most respondents were staunch believers that keeping the mind active delays or minimizes the mental deterioration associated with aging.⁴

Participants completed surveys about the concept of supporting new educators. Respondents were very concerned about the lack of respect society gives to educators and noted the trend to criticize rather than support the education community. The most frequently mentioned suggestion for state and local retired educator associations was to focus on providing volunteer opportunities.

⁴ Please see Appendix for *Staying Sharp* research regarding cognitive benefits for retired volunteers.

NRTA Convenes National Educator Support Network Forum

2003 ▶ November

San Francisco, CA

Over one hundred of the nation's most committed educators gathered in San Francisco for a national conversation about how to effectively retain and recruit qualified educators nationwide. Dr. Annette Norsman, Director of NRTA, noted the importance of joining with a diverse group of national, state, and community partners to address this critical issue. Forum participants included⁵:



- Over 40 educators from California, spanning all possible roles from classroom teacher to school district administrator to Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program Director
- More than 15 university participants, all recognized for their research, study, and practice in the area of educator retention
- Representatives from:
 - 8 state retired educator associations
 - 15 national & California educational organizations, foundations & corporations
 - NRTA's pilot projects in Chicago and Baltimore
- California partners, including the Department of Education, Commission on Teacher Credentialing, Farmers Insurance, California Retired Teachers Association, AARP California, and WorldLink

Two overarching questions guided the content of the Forum:

1. What are the most pressing needs of teachers and administrators in schools?
2. What is the most appropriate and effective way for retired educators to help meet those needs?

The program integrated presentations on current national research, showcased the California Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) Program, and provided multiple opportunities for small group conversations.

▶ **“Your varied backgrounds and experiences will help us to learn from one another and plan together how we can raise to a national priority the importance of the education profession.”**

— ANNETTE NORSMAN, PH.D.
OPENING COMMENTS, ESN NATIONAL FORUM

⁵ Refer to the Appendix for a complete directory of participants at the ESN Forum.

NATIONAL EDUCATOR SUPPORT NETWORK FORUM

Session One: National Panel

After video greetings from then U.S. Secretary of Education, Dr. Rod Paige, and former U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, Dr. Donna Shalala, distinguished guests took the podium – Dr. Richard Ingersoll, University of Pennsylvania; Ms. Kelly Green, National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF); and Dr. Ray Pecheone, Stanford University. The moderator for this panel was Ms. Ellen Moir of the New Teacher Center at the University of California at Santa Cruz.



▶ **“There is no better organization in the country to lead an initiative like the Educator Support Network than NRTA.”**

— ELLEN MOIR
NEW TEACHER CENTER - UCSC

Ms. Moir noted that California already invests significantly in beginning teacher support and assessment, and that mentor programs are beginning to change the culture of schools across the region. Dr. Richard Ingersoll then shared the sobering national statistics related to teacher retention – 40 to 50% of those who enter the profession are gone within five years – and suggested that the educational sector lacks a metric for assessing the cost and consequences for school communities. Touching on the opportunity presented by ESN, Dr. Ingersoll commented:

▶ **“On the one hand, we have this huge need. We have hundreds of thousands of new teachers in schools who are desperately trying to learn the ropes and survive and succeed – as are principals in the sense of making their schools work. On the other hand, we have this vital untapped resource, retired teachers and administrators, people who learned the ropes and did survive and succeed. NRTA is uniquely positioned to bring the two together, matching needs and resources.”**

Dr. Ingersoll⁶ concluded his presentation by citing the growing recognition that induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers form an essential part of a healthy school community. Opening an inquiry that would last throughout the day, Ingersoll asked the audience:

- What kind of induction and mentoring do we want?
- What are the best models?
- How do we successfully integrate retired educators?

⁶ See Appendix for additional commentary from Dr. Ingersoll.

The next presenter, Ms. Kelly Green, shared the January 2003 NCTAF report, *No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America's Children*, which articulated the National Commission's goal of increasing teacher retention by 50% over the next three years. Ms. Green outlined NCTAF's three strategies for reaching this goal:

- 1) Organize schools for teaching and learning success, by creating small professional communities of teachers focused on what research tells us about how children learn.
- 2) Insist on high quality teacher preparation, accreditation, and licensure.
- 3) Create rewarding professional career paths that include mentored induction of novice teachers and rewards for accomplished teaching.



▶ **“We all know that [teacher] turnover and attrition costs are totally unacceptable. As a matter of fact, I might go as far as to say that it's a national disgrace.”**

— KELLY GREEN, NCTAF

Ms. Green connected NCTAF's work to the NRTA ESN initiative by offering a few strategies to get started:

- Thank a teacher.
- Become a mentor for a beginning teacher or peer.
- Form a support network.
- Visit your district and state representative.

The final panelist, Dr. Pecheone, reminded the audience that successful teachers practice for years, use a process of trial and error, and garner ideas from a wide range of sources — students, grocery store clerks, peers, books, conferences and more!

▶ **“The idea of becoming an effective teacher, a high-quality teacher, is a work in progress. We all know that, but we forget that story, we forget that journey.”**

— RAY PECHEONE, STANFORD UNIVERSITY

Dr. Pecheone encouraged the Forum participants, particularly retired educators, to reflect on their own journey of teaching and learning. He said, “You've all taken that journey. That's the promise, the gift that you are offering this country, with respect to the wealth of experience you have.”

Distilling his years of experience working with teachers and school communities, he shared his “three simple truths”:

- 1) **Teachers matter.** Student achievement is based on the quality of the teacher.
- 2) **Relationships matter.** High-quality schools begin with strong relationships. People in schools need time to work closely with peers, mentors, students, and parents.
- 3) **Experience matters.** We must nurture and respect professional practice. Education is supposed to foster critical thinking and lifelong skills, but these skills are rarely assessed by standardized tests.

The national panel concluded with moderator Ellen Moir's inspired reflection, “Learning to teach is a lifelong process. It's about deepening our practice and learning together. What all of us are saying is that it's going to take the whole village, every single member of the community, to build a better profession.”

NATIONAL EDUCATOR SUPPORT NETWORK FORUM

Session Two: California Retention Efforts

The Forum's afternoon session highlighted California's experience with teacher induction and retention. The Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program was created through state legislation in 1997 to provide formative assessment and individualized support for beginning teachers. Co-administered by the California Department of Education and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, BTSA's regional programs vary in organizational design and include individual districts, districts in collaborations with colleges and universities, and large consortia of districts, colleges, universities, and county offices of education.

Dr. Amy Jackson of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing noted that, after a decade of focused development and implementation, in 2003, BTSA:

- Served more than 150 programs in 97% of California's 1,000 school districts.
- Supported 20,000 new teachers each year.
- Provided specialized training to about 13,000 Support Providers each year.
- Secured a teacher retention rate of 93%.

The California Panel, moderated by Ms. Cindy Gappa, a BTSA Regional Director, provided multiple perspectives on the BTSA program. The panelists included a recent BTSA program graduate from San Diego County, a retired teacher and Support Provider for the Orange County Office of Education BTSA program, a principal in the Dublin Unified School District of Northern California and a BTSA Program Director for Stanislaus County.

During the discussion, one BTSA Director acknowledged that many retired teachers are located through informal networks, and that the major challenge facing the group was to systematize the process of recruiting retired educators, keeping records of recent retirees, their content areas and their willingness to take on hard-to-staff assignments.

Another participant reminded the audience that there is a wide range of opportunities for retired educators:

“When we talk about utilizing retired educators, there are many roles beyond being a Support Provider. There are many critical roles . . . such as working with school boards or legislators. There’s a whole world of possibility for retired educators to support children.”

Dr. Tom Lugo of California’s Department of Education then shared more words of support:

“I think the partnership that we are forming here today is not only a wonderful idea, but an idea that should have happened years ago.”

NATIONAL EDUCATOR SUPPORT NETWORK FORUM
Session Three: Small Group Conversations

A centerpiece of the Forum was a series of small group discussions which were seen as among the most valuable elements of the day-long meeting. Designed to encourage inquiry, each session was guided by a youth facilitator-recorder from the California Association for Student Councils. The robust interplay between the youth facilitators and the educators provided a tangible example of the rich benefits of cross-generational partnership.

The following themes offer a meta-view of the discussions and provide sample commentary from the roundtable dialogue:

Valuing the Teaching Profession

For educators to be truly supported in their work, society must value the essential role of teachers and administrators in preparing our future citizens. ESN has an opportunity to build professionalism among the educator corps and transform public opinion about the profession.

One participant suggested the need for retired educators to serve as “professional coaches for a professional culture.” As the image and prestige of the teaching profession grows, more and more qualified candidates will pursue the career. And as beginning teachers learn and practice new professional norms, educator turnover is likely to decrease while student performance increases.

Forum participants envisioned AARP and NRTA playing a leading role in advocating for educator retention. Several people mentioned the need for a “powerful voice” to craft and deliver a unified message.

A Culture of Educator Support

An educator reminded the group, “We need to find a way to ensure that support programs are incorporated into a school’s culture.” A common criticism of school communities is the isolation of teachers. A culture that values educator support is likely to emphasize collegiality, mutuality, mentoring, and staff development. By their presence, retired educators can nurture and develop these critical qualities.



Beginning teacher support programs, with a tradition of mentoring and peer review, validate the importance of reflection and dialogue among colleagues. Reflective conversations require “adequate time away from the classroom for mentors and beginning teachers to work together,” counseled participants. Participants also highlighted the need for administrative support of induction programs.

On the whole, participants suggested that a disparity exists between the demands placed on new educators and their capacity (resources and experience) to meet those demands. Small groups expressed a need for consistent funding earmarked for the support of novice educators. Until such programs are recognized as fundamental investment strategies by states and districts, it will be difficult to sustain cultural change.

Fostering Learning Communities

▶ **“We have 50 years of research telling us that a good school has coherence and continuity and community.”**

— RICHARD INGERSOLL, PH.D.

Forum participants imagined ESN as a catalyst for building and nurturing learning organizations and “communities of practice.” Ellen Moir noted that high-quality induction programs provide opportunities for new educators to acquire the norms and values of exemplary teachers. Several attendees spoke of their desire and efforts to incorporate current research into professional development programs. The use of data and assessment to guide ESN was a reoccurring theme.

▶ **“The Educator Support Network can play a vital role in evaluating the needs of new teachers.”**

— FORUM PARTICIPANT

Participants were also advised that, as ESN pilot programs emerge in different parts of the nation, understanding the unique needs of local school communities will be a key success factor.

A Spectrum of Roles for Retired Educators

Among the general roles cited were mentoring of beginning teachers and principals, student support, research and assessment activities, advocacy, administrative support and serving as a liaison to parents and caregivers. A sampling of specific roles, included retired educators serving as:

- On-site cultural mediators
- Tutors for ESL students
- Curriculum consultants
- “Voices” for educators in the community and legislature
- Presenters of parent workshops
- Resources for sharing effective classroom management techniques
- Interviewers of prospective teachers and administrators



Many participants acknowledged that certain roles – such as mentoring or assessment – often require additional professional development to deepen retired educators’ understandings and enhance their repertoire of skills. Participants also underscored the importance of establishing selection criteria for mentors; these individuals must have outstanding interpersonal communication skills and a passion for teaching and learning. Other participants stressed the need for experience with diverse learners.

Another issue that surfaced during the day was the question of compensation for retired educators. Clearly, retired educators are interested in a spectrum of roles, from pure volunteerism to paid service. For significant commitments of time and professional service, Forum participants felt that some form of compensation seems deserved and desired. Speaking to a related issue, several participants proposed a “professional development continuum” that begins in schools of education and continues through retirement. The promise of lifelong learning within the education profession offers a powerful rationale for ESN.

NRTA as an Intermediary

NRTA’s core competencies point to a role as an *intermediary*, defined as “one that acts as an agent between persons and things.” In this role, NRTA combines the resources of AARP and a network of more than one million retired educators, and assembles other leading organizations and individuals to build partnerships for action. As a national voice informed by state and local initiatives, NRTA could serve as a networking hub that facilitates the exchange of ideas and best practices.

Because participants viewed NRTA as a “trusted elder” of the educational community, NRTA would be uniquely situated to catalyze ESN and connect like-minded organizations in dialogue. Building a coalition of partners could increase the profile of ESN and attract additional sources of support. In light of NRTA’s history of public advocacy, participants look to the organization to articulate a unified message and communicate it to policy makers and the public-at-large.

NATIONAL EDUCATOR SUPPORT NETWORK FORUM

Session Four: Recommendations

The National ESN Forum brought together a core group of individuals and organizations dedicated to supporting new teachers and administrators. The participants revealed great enthusiasm for the initiative, but also cautioned that it may be necessary to temper short-term expectations as ideas are tested and refined. The group offered the following set of recommendations for the development of ESN nationwide:

1. Continue to define a research agenda.

NRTA has a tradition of using research to define problems and identify opportunities. Through ongoing research, ESN can play an important role by framing core issues and defining pathways for action. NRTA can also serve as a clearinghouse for research generated in-house, by national and state partners, and through ESN members working on a local level. Research that quantifies the cost of teacher and administrator turnover may provide a strong rationale for investing in beginning teacher/administrator support. One promising line of inquiry involves assessing the needs of beginning educators and assessing the needs and capabilities of retired educators.

2. Design a process to document and assess pilot projects.

Each ESN pilot project that is proposed and launched provides a valuable source of learning. To benefit from these experiences, a consistent process of documentation and assessment is needed. This might include common research questions, tools for collecting and analyzing data, and an evolving knowledge-base of best practices. A future ESN Forum might bring together participants from pilot projects to share case studies. Another work product might be an *Educator Support Network Guidebook* that outlines successful strategies for finding and utilizing retired educators.

3. Develop an infrastructure to effectively match needs and resources.

This may be the most important task facing ESN. Already, there is a fairly clear set of needs and resources. What is lacking is a structure and process for connecting the two constituent groups. A web-based infrastructure could contain a set of needs (articulated by school leaders) and a set of resources (articulated by retired educators and other older citizens). Identifying other formal structures for matching needs and resources might be part of this process.

4. Design and test models of professional development for retired educators.

Not all educator support roles require professional development. However, to maximize the success of retired educators in such roles as mentoring, research and assessment, and other practices, some form of preparation is recommended. In concert with its partners, NRTA could design and prototype a model of professional development for retired educators and other age 50+ adults. ESN pilot projects might test and refine the model, leading to the design of prototype workshops and curricula. Common standards and practices will build capacity for the initiative and encourage a lifelong continuum of professional development.

5. Develop an integrated public relations and advocacy campaign.

For ESN to succeed, the substantial benefits of the initiative need to be communicated to government leaders, the business community, and the public-at-large. A starting point for this dialogue might be to articulate a compelling set of goals and outcomes that motivate the initiative and chart progress over time. An integrated public relations and advocacy campaign might combine a branded media package with focused advocacy initiatives. One question to address is, “What is the best way to prepare and utilize retired educators in the advocacy process?”

Focus Groups Convened with AARP Members

2004 ▶ October

Las Vegas, NV

The quality of our nation’s public education system has long been of interest to citizens in general, not just educators. Additionally, the desire to actively support local schools is not limited just to educators and those individuals with children in school, but to a broader spectrum of community members, including grandparents with school-aged grandchildren and business owners seeking a rich pool of qualified, prospective employees.

Encouraged by AARP’s member opinion surveys that indicated high levels of interest in volunteering to work with youth, NRTA conducted focus groups with a random sampling of AARP members to gauge their interest in supporting the Educator Support Network. To ensure the widest geographic sampling of members, NRTA convened focus groups at *Life@50+ | AARP’s National Event & Expo*, where more than 25,000 AARP members gathered for educational sessions, entertainment and interactive exhibits. A&K Research selected 48 diverse participants who represented 17 states. The participants, who were divided into four groups, reflected the wide variety of



backgrounds and educational levels that make up AARP’s membership. Some members were former educators; some were not. The primary objective of the research was to explore ways in which current and past educators, *as well as non-educators*, might choose to be involved in educator retention.

When asked to list the challenges facing K-12 education, the most frequent “top of mind” responses were discipline, funding, teacher salaries, parental involvement, class size and lack of administrative leadership. As the discussion continued, though, the issue of teacher retention would eventually emerge. Almost all participants were surprised at the level of new teacher attrition and agreed that educator retention was a significant problem and perhaps a root factor in the areas that they had initially cited. Most participants were not familiar with ESN, but their reactions were very favorable after hearing the project description.

▶ **“New teachers drown. They are totally overwhelmed. They need [our] help.”**

— FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT/NON-EDUCATOR

Initially, most of the focus group participants had difficulty identifying how they, personally, could help retain new teachers. However, when aided by a list of potential roles, participants began to freely share that there were, indeed, some appealing roles that they could take on to support new educators. With a high degree of frequency among the focus groups, participants suggested having retired educators mentor new teachers and encourage lay volunteers to serve as assistants in the classroom, handle paperwork and other non-teaching activities. Because of some concern about non-educators being in the classroom, it was also suggested that retired teachers could be used to train volunteers, in addition to working directly with new teachers. The focus group discussions also identified non-school based activities, including voting for officials who truly want to improve the education system, lobbying for support of community schools and attending school board meetings.

▶ **“You don’t have to be an educator or a retired teacher. Any AARP member could do the ‘busy work’ of teaching.”**

— FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

In analyzing the focus group discussions, an impressive point emerged— both educators and non-educators alike would be willing to volunteer approximately *three to five hours per week* to help stem the premature attrition of qualified educators.

▶ **“One hour of service gives you ten hours of serenity.”**

— FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT/EDUCATOR

In light of AARP's access to more than 35 million members, this research clearly indicates the membership's ability to impact issues of educator retention on a grand scale. Therefore, as ESN informational materials are designed, volunteer activities should be described on a continuum, with NRTA members and other retired educators offered opportunities uniquely appropriate to former teachers and administrators. Other AARP members and age 50+ adults should be invited to participate in different ways, such as obtaining supplies, hosting welcome events, helping with administrative tasks and advocating on behalf of new teachers in the community and in the media.



▶ **“There wouldn't be an AARP without volunteers!”**

— FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT/NON-EDUCATOR

PART FIVE

ESN IN ACTION!

THE CHICAGO PILOT EXPERIENCE

*Chicago Public Schools, Retired Teachers Association of Chicago and NRTA
Launch Effort to Support Urban Educators*

The NRTA Educator Support Network's first pilot, known nationally as ESN Chicago, represents a collaborative effort between Chicago Public Schools (CPS), the Retired Teachers Association of Chicago and NRTA: *AARP's Educator Community*, with support from AARP Illinois. The project was announced in September 2003 and launched in January 2004 with 40 retired mentors embedded in 11 of Chicago's hard-to-staff schools. The retired educators helped guide 70 new teachers — 91% of whom returned to CPS the following year. CPS more than doubled the project's budget in 2004. In the 2004-2005 school year, 100 retired mentors are now serving 160 new educators in 30 hard-to-staff schools.

The Design Phase: Matching Needs with Resources



Locally known as the CPS/NRTA Retired Mentors Program, the ESN Chicago pilot began with a June 2003 exploratory meeting between CPS' Office of Professional Development, the AARP Illinois state office and NRTA to explore how AARP might offer a meaningful contribution to the city of Chicago for being the host city of *Life@50+ | AARP's National Event & Expo*. The notion of creating a project to support education was bolstered by the fact that the Retired Teachers Association of Chicago (RTAC) has approximately 10,000 members representing a wealth of volunteers with expertise and experience.

Throughout the summer of 2003, a series of conversations about the school district's needs, their existing programs, and the unique capabilities of NRTA, AARP and RTAC members took place in Chicago. NRTA learned that CPS had the GOLDEN Teachers program, a system-wide induction and mentoring program that utilized the skills of active teacher mentors. The GOLDEN Teachers program was helping CPS meet the Illinois State Board of Education's mandate that new teachers complete a 2-year mentoring program in order to advance from an Initial Teaching Certificate to a Standard Certificate. However, CPS was finding that first-year teachers assigned to hard-to-staff schools required more intensive support to withstand classroom challenges. The desire to augment the GOLDEN Teachers program and provide these beginning teachers with an enriched induction and support program gave birth to the ESN Chicago pilot program.

The Announcement and Launch of ESN Chicago

In September 2003, a press conference was held in Chicago to announce a joint CPS, RTAC and NRTA initiative to support new teachers in the city's hardest to staff schools. In attendance were Arne Duncan, CEO of Chicago Public Schools; Laurie Rich, assistant secretary for the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs; Robert Bures, executive director of the Retired Teachers Association of Chicago; Bill Novelli, AARP Executive Director and CEO; members of AARP's Board of Directors; and, Annette Norsman, Director of NRTA.



Immediately following the announcement, the CPS' offices of Professional Development and Human Resources collaborated to select the hardest to staff schools — those most impacted by teacher turnover and other factors. The ESN Chicago team was then given less than three months to design and implement a pilot program that would launch in January 2004 with funding from the Chicago Board of Education, mentors from RTAC and logistical support from NRTA.

Mentor recruiting began in October, 2003. RTAC distributed an informational survey to their membership and CPS contacted active substitutes; 140 retired educators responded, all former CPS teachers or administrators. By the end of December, 65 retirees had been interviewed for the pilot; 50 were selected to serve as complementary mentors to the primary, active teacher mentors already in place.

Orientation for retired educators began in January with an overview of the program, state standards of learning and the important role of mentors in beginning educator support. Retired educators were encouraged to consider a range of support activities that included:

- Team teaching
- Observing and mentoring
- Providing release time for new educators for peer and master teacher observation
- Providing technical support in lesson planning and unit development
- Assisting with individual and small group student instruction
- Assisting with professional development activities

The initial training also included an introduction to the “written logs” – a formal system of reporting for both the mentors and beginning educators. These weekly communications served to document mentor interactions, as well as mentor and new teacher reflections about observed teaching practices and the mentoring process itself. Each week, ESN Chicago mentors faxed the logs to the Office of Professional Development to aid in assessing the pro-

gram's progress. (To protect confidentiality, the logs were not made available to school site administrators.)

ESN Chicago mentors were placed in 11 elementary, middle and high schools. Each mentor supported first-year teachers one to two days per week for the next 26 weeks. Retired educators received \$126 per day of work.

When asked about the impact of being paid for their services, many of the ESN Chicago participants responded that they would “give it their all” whether paid or not. However, one mentor offered, “It's good to be treated and recognized as a professional.”

▶ **“When I was a principal, having veteran or retired teachers serve as mentors for new teachers was important to me. Programs like this one are beneficial because new teachers learn from the expertise and experience of our seasoned professionals and as a result, enhance their own classroom instruction performance.”**

— BARBARA EASON-WATKINS, CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER

From February through May of 2004, retired educators participated in mentor-to-mentor sessions to share experiences and targeted workshops on pedagogy, preparing them to re-join the education community as experienced leaders and guides. Every aspect of the training sessions was interactive – the workshops refreshed and re-energized the retirees' interpersonal and professional skills in classroom management and standards-based instruction. Training also enhanced the participants' coaching and mentoring skills. ESN Chicago mentors were offered strategies to encourage their new teachers' feelings of empowerment by emphasizing the use of reflective practice and analysis.

Chicago Public Schools More Than Doubles Size of ESN Chicago Program for the 2004-2005 School Year

At the close of the 2003-2004 school year, the Chicago Board of Education more than doubled the size of the program and the budget. ESN Chicago now serves 100 retired educators and 160 beginning teachers in 30 hard-to-staff schools. The retired educators are no longer complementing active, primary teacher mentors; instead, they are now serving as primary mentors.

The school district contributed \$500,000 toward retired educator stipends for the 2004-2005 school year. NRTA continues to contribute staff and logistical support for the extensive training of all retired educators. The ESN Chicago mentors were paid \$200 per day of work and were certified as “active substitutes.”

Mentors were seeded in high schools and elementary schools that demonstrated persistent teacher vacancies and turnover. The average age of the retired educators is 65-70 years. On average, they have had 33 years of teaching experience and have been retired for 4 years.

Each retiree was on-site for 1/2 day per week for each new teacher, mentoring one to two beginning teachers for a 28-week period during the school year. ESN Chicago mentors were encouraged to take an active role in the relationship by providing new teachers with technical support in curriculum planning, feedback on observed lessons, team teaching and by modeling direct interaction with students.

Three items surfaced from a February 2005 survey as top challenges for mentors:

1. Cooperation and relationship with school staff (e.g. administration support)
2. Relationship with the new teacher
3. Classroom management issues, especially those related to discipline

Classroom management continues to be the area of training most often requested by mentors. For that reason, a workshop held early in the 2004-2005 school year included activities that helped mentors delineate district-wide challenges from school-specific issues, and generated practical solutions, where possible. Mentors were encouraged to share “small successes” and helped to brainstorm specific strategies for keeping in touch with mentees, especially during the winter hiatus.

▶ **“My mentor is fantastic. She has been and is incredibly important for my progress and comfort level.”**

— BEGINNING EDUCATOR

In early 2005, the mid-term evaluations from beginning teachers revealed that:

- 75% felt that they had benefited from ESN Chicago mentor support.
- 82% reported that they enjoyed coming to work.
- 56% said that the ESN Chicago program has helped them become better teachers.

However, new teachers also had concerns about the clarity of the mentor’s role, confidentiality and the documentation process.

▶ **“The retired teacher has been very helpful, [but] the paperwork and Internet hours logging seem very difficult and burdensome.”**

— BEGINNING EDUCATOR



New teachers overwhelmingly identified students as the key source of positive impact, but positive influences also included mentors, colleagues, professional development and extracurricular activities. Negative influences included student apathy and behavior, lack of administrative support, principal turnover, lack of supplies and lack of parental support.

Respondents – both ESN Chicago’s retired educators and new teachers – requested that mentors’ assignments be made at the beginning of the school year, rather than later in the semester.

▶ **“I have seen and participated in other mentoring programs for beginning teachers, and this program gets an A+ for its effectiveness and for its real value to our school system and its children.”**

— BOB BURES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION OF CHICAGO

The Role of Research in ESN Chicago

An AARP senior research advisor has been documenting and developing assessment tools to help gauge the Chicago Educator Support Network’s impact on retired educators and their mentees. Survey instruments obtained baseline data to track the program’s activities and progress, to identify which factors relate to program goals and to indicate which program elements are successful, so that the pilot program will generate “best practices” for other ESN programs.

Most of the retired educators said that they volunteered because of their love for the teaching profession, but 76% wanted an opportunity to use their skills and 64% felt a need to contribute the community. More than half of the older participants believe that one person can “make a difference.” These wishes and feelings directly relate to what the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives, an NRTA strategic partner, has identified as key to staying cognitively healthy in later life – self-efficacy.

Surveys of beginning teachers in the spring 2004 pilot indicated that 75% of them felt they had benefited from the retiree mentoring support system. And the ESN Chicago mentors agreed. Verbatims from the retirees included clear perceptions of their success and importance in the ESN Chicago project:

- “I feel I’ve had a big impact on this young lady.”
- “I’m valued as a professional.”
- “I have a lot to offer.”

“Developing trust with the first-year teacher” proved to be very useful to 88% of the retired educators. In order for new teachers to feel validated, mentors are encouraged to be actively engaged in the relationship, relationships that satisfy what the Dana Alliance refers to as elders’ cognitive need for social connectedness.

▶ **“I think my new teacher feels heard, supported and appreciated.”**
 — RETIRED EDUCATOR MENTOR

ESN training sessions for the mentors provided both intellectual stimulation and opportunities for peer interaction. For example, 88% of the participants in the April 2003 training session reported that the general information presented was excellent. Furthermore, 85% liked the materials and activities – role playing, group discussions, interactive lectures and the exchange of techniques. Comments included:

- “I found it useful to hear the other mentors’ experiences.”
- “The subjects were structured to enhance our knowledge.”

The combination of training sessions with colleagues and on-site work with young teachers, school personnel and students, invited feelings of self-efficacy and satisfaction among the retired educators. In fact, an April 2004 survey of retired educators reported that 80% of participants would encourage friends to serve as volunteers in the program.

▶ **“The mentorship [program] strengthened [my] new teachers with wisdom often hard learned with time.”**
 — PRINCIPAL, CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Multicultural Competencies Added to Training of Retired Educator Mentors

Students in Chicago are approximately 50% African-American and 38% Latino. Strategically embedded in Chicago’s most challenging schools, ESN Chicago mentors reflect the diversity of the student body – approximately 80% are African American. To ensure that the mentors were sensitive to the ethnic and cultural environment of Chicago’s population, NRTA enlisted the expertise of the Community Teachers Institute to craft and present two 2-hour training sessions that may serve as models for other ESN programs across the country.

Based in Washington DC, the Community Teachers Institute (CTI) is a nonprofit organization that encourages, creates, and supports partnerships among higher education institutions, public school districts, and community organizations by increasing the number of high-caliber, culturally-connected teachers in K-12 classrooms. Noted for instituting programs for the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education, CTI works with colleges, universities and urban school districts.

Workshop evaluations were overwhelmingly positive — 87% of the respondents reported that the concepts and ideas presented would be useful in their role as mentor; 84% said that the workshop enhanced their awareness and knowledge of multicultural issues.

Participant comments from the multicultural training included:

- “Enlightening!”
- “Excellent introduction to living in a diverse society.”
- “One of the best “adult learning” workshops I’ve ever attended... and I’ve been to a lot!”

Use of Technology in ESN Chicago

In September 2004, written logs were replaced by a web-based management system called GOLDEN Teachers Online. The system enables online record-keeping, tracking, and reporting of beginning educators, mentors, activities, facilitators, standards, staff members, and schools involved in the induction/retention program.



Beginning educators can:

- Monitor mentor interactions and reflections, and personal progress toward completion of professional development hours.
- View and register for upcoming professional development activities.
- Submit external professional development activities.

Mentors can:

- Log interactions with beginning teacher(s).
- See a summary of their teacher’s progress.
- Register for mentor training sessions.

Principals can:

- Post beginning teacher activities that will occur at their school.
- Assign mentors to teachers at their school.
- View a snapshot of their school's new teachers' professional development activities and mentor interactions.
- Verify mentor and coach logs.⁶

⁶ The online comments of the beginning teacher and ESN Chicago mentor are confidential and not accessible to the principal.

Multiple training sessions have been devoted to the use of the computer and the integration of technology into the ESN Chicago documentation process. Bi-weekly informational emails are used as the primary means of communicating with the mentors. Mentors also have the opportunity to explore the use of technology in modern classrooms and strengthen their own ability to access critical, online information.

Public Awareness Efforts in Chicago

ESN Chicago has presented multiple opportunities for the general public to learn about the unique capacity of retired educators to enrich the community. Media coverage during the first year included *The Chicago Tribune*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, local broadcast and radio affiliates, including ABC and NPR, and the Midwest edition of the *AARP Bulletin*. Each time there has been media coverage about the NRTA Educator Support Network, more retired educators contact Chicago Public Schools about the prospect of joining the program.



THE CALIFORNIA MULTI-PILOT SITE EXPERIENCE

The NRTA Educator Support Network (ESN CA) is a collaborative effort between the California Retired Teachers Association (CRTA), the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program (co-administered by the CA Department of Education and the CA Commission on Teacher Credentialing), AARP-CA and NRTA. At the recommendation of CRTA's then president, Eva Hain, NRTA began working with CRTA members in the fall of 2003 to identify levels of interest and opportunities to create multiple pilot sites throughout the state. The pilot sites offer a range of volunteer and paid service opportunities to retired educators interested in supporting new teachers and administrators.

The Cornerstone: The California Retired Teachers Association (CRTA)

CRTA Presidents Introduced to ESN and Invited to Participate in Statewide Pilot

2003 ▶ September

CRTA Conference, Sacramento

CRTA was founded 75 years ago and has more than 53,000 members in 11 regions that encompass 88 local divisions. In the fall of 2003, NRTA met with key association leaders to explore the potential of CRTA involvement in ESN. The group discussed factors that lead to high educator turnover in CA schools and generated an extensive list of possible roles for retired educators. The CRTA division presidents were also asked to describe any support their members were already providing to beginning educators and to rate their interest in hosting an ESN pilot program. Respondents reported participating in a wide range of activities that included volunteering in classrooms, encouraging companies to donate classroom supplies, giving grants to first and second-year teachers, offering scholarships to those interested in education, and serving on school boards and the local BTSA Advisory Board. Over one-third of the divisions expressed immediate interest in ESN participation.

▶ **“Retired teachers are a great resource to mentor new teachers. We have the time and the expertise!”**

— CRTA SURVEY RESPONDENT

At the conclusion of the conference, it was decided that NRTA and CRTA should join forces to support new educators through a set of pilot programs seeded in communities across the state. These pilots would reflect the needs of local schools and also match the interests of retired educators in each area.

NRTA and CRTA Divisions Consider Potential Pilot Sites

2004 ▶ January to March

Statewide Outreach

NRTA offered an open invitation to local CRTA divisions across the state to consider developing a pilot program, conduct research, and/or build creative partnerships to foster civic engagement through the ESN initiative. CRTA divisions were reminded that ESN CA could offer a wide and flexible spectrum of paid and voluntary opportunities for retired educators to become BTSA Support Providers, tutor or work with small groups of children, obtain supplies, sponsor welcome events and fund small grants.

After extensive conversations with local CRTA division leaders, nine potential ESN CA pilot sites were identified — all quite different in their approach to supporting new teachers and administrators. AARP CA kindly offered to host the ESN Leadership meetings at their state office headquarters in Sacramento.

In an effort to foster the development of pilot sites that were reflective of community needs and volunteer interests, NRTA did not insist on a standardized approach for all of the sites. Instead, ESN CA pilot site leaders were asked to design their program using a general framework that considered the following points:

- Obtain administrative and school board support.
- Consider working with their local BTSA program.
- Look for opportunities to involve AARP and other community volunteers.
- Allow NRTA to gather documentation.
- Build opportunities for an individualized approach.
- Encourage site-administrator involvement.



New CRTA Presidents Invited to Participate in ESN

2004 ▶ May

Sacramento

Given that CRTA divisions are led by volunteers, a successful ESN CA initiative requires regular briefings to continue to engage each new wave of leadership. At the annual CRTA

Conference, 88 new association presidents representing more than 53,000 retired educators were gathered to explore volunteer opportunities for their members across the state. Several presidents related current educator support activities; others planned to link new or ongoing activities to ESN CA.

ESN CA Connects with Key Education Organizations and Leaders in State

NRTA Builds Relationship with CA Department of Education

2003 ▶ September – Present

Because NRTA and CRTA wanted to design an ESN pilot program that could augment or enrich existing teacher induction and support efforts across the state, it was important to establish a solid working relationship with the California Department of Education (CDE) and the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. In the fall of 2003, NRTA Director, Annette Norsman and AARP CA's State Director, Tom Porter, met several times with Tom Lugo, CDE Administrator of the Professional Development Unit and Amy Jackson of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. The purpose of these meetings was to explore the various ways in which retired educators and other age 50+ adults could support beginning teachers and principals, both formally and informally, in a manner that would complement the state's own induction and support efforts. (AARP CA has approximately 2,000 volunteers within its state-wide membership of 3.1 million.)

California has created and implemented a highly successful teacher induction initiative called the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program (see box on the following page for more information). This initiative provides formative assessment and individualized support for the first two years of a beginning teacher's classroom experience. BTSA is co-administered by the California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) and was created through state legislation passed in 1997. Funding for the program is provided through the state budget.

With the support of CDE and a genuine interest from the BTSA program leaders to uncover meaningful roles for retirees in support of new teachers, CRTA and NRTA committed to launching at least six pilot programs in the state. With the assistance of BTSA regional leaders, pathways for recruiting and training retired educators as BTSA Support Providers were identified, as well as options for less structured opportunities for CRTA members' involvement. AARP offered logistical support, making it possible to hold regular meetings for the pilot site participants at the AARP CA state office in Sacramento.

NRTA continues to offer regular updates to CDE and a representative from the Department often attends the quarterly pilot site leadership meetings. The ESN CA initiative has been enriched by the helpful attitude and insight of CDE staff.

The California Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (BTSA)

BTSA was created by 1997 legislation that encourages collaboration between local school districts, county offices of education, colleges and universities in the organization and delivery of new teacher induction. BTSA serves 29,000 new teachers and 13,000 support providers in 145 programs across the state. The programs are divided into six clusters or regions, and vary in organizational design — individual districts, districts in collaboration with one another and with colleges and universities, and large consortia of districts, colleges, universities, and county offices of education.

BTSA programs use an array of methods to provide targeted support to beginning educators. These programs extensively train experienced educators (Support Providers) to assist beginning teachers in collecting and interpreting evidence of performance, in reflecting on their teaching, and in identifying professional development activities that are targeted to their individual needs. For each beginning educator, the legislation provides \$3,000 that is then matched by \$2,000 from the local school district. Support providers receive five days of intensive, state-approved training and additional monthly training sessions. Some Support Providers work full-time and receive their regular salary. Others work part-time and receive stipends that vary by school district, averaging \$2,000 per year. All must meet with their mentees at least one hour per week. According to data from the last three years, retention rates for first- and second-year BTSA teachers were approximately 93% across all programs, regardless of program maturity, school size or location.

The New Teacher Center at UC Santa Cruz and NRTA Discuss Merits of Engaging Retired Educators

2003 ▶ September

University of California, Santa Cruz

Ellen Moir, Executive Director of the New Teacher Center at UC Santa Cruz (NTC) has had first-hand experience working with retired educators in roles to support new teachers and was instrumental in the creation of the BTSA program. When NRTA met with Ellen in the fall of 2003, she expressed great interest in the prospect of NRTA being able to increase the number of retired educators assisting with programs to support new educators. She suggested that NRTA adopt appropriate rigor in the selection of experienced educators who are willing to work or volunteer time to help new teachers. She also offered counsel on the value of a strong professional development component for the retired educator participants. Ellen asked NRTA to consider two long-term goals — developing a national corps of talented retired educators in service to our nation's schools and a network of “regional mentor academies” to provide a first level of training.

NRTA Confers with California School Boards Association

2004 ▶ April

The California School Boards Association (CSBA) is a collaborative group of virtually all of the state's more than 1,000 school districts and county offices of education. CSBA supports school board members, superintendents and senior administrative staff. After discussing the common interests of ESN CA and the CSBA membership, as well as the opportunity to develop proactive strategies for retaining and recruiting qualified educators, strong interest emerged in working together to address retention issues among administrators.

Association of CA School Administrators Interested in Potential of ESN CA to Support Administrators

2004 ▶ April

On-Going Discussions Begin

Founded in 1971, the Association of CA School Administrators (ACSA) is an umbrella organization that encompasses the key associations for school administrators, principals, superintendents and their staffs. With more than 9,000 members, ACSA is divided into 18 regions and more than 200 local chapters. Many CRTA members are former school administrators, a dynamic that has helped foster the relationship between ASCA and ESN CA. The state has instituted a rigorous certification program for all new school principals that requires participation in extensive training programs. Retired educators with an administrative background could be particularly helpful since they would potentially be able to serve as “substitute” principals, thus freeing the active principals to attend training sessions.

After exploratory conversations, ACSA expressed a strong interest in continuing a dialogue about a specific component within the ESN CA pilot to support new administrators. One area under discussion is the feasibility of supporting the Tier II Administrative Credential Program in the fall of 2005. Another area for consideration is a data gathering conference for school administrators to explore pathways of support from the ESN CA initiative.

NRTA Appoints ESN CA Coordinator and Hosts Pilot Site Leadership Meetings

2004 ▶ April - Present

To track, support and encourage collaboration among the widely dispersed ESN CA pilot sites and partners, NRTA retained a former BTSA Program Director and member of the BTSA State Task Force, Jaymee Kjelland, to serve as the ESN CA Coordinator. Charged with fostering communication and documenting “lessons learned,” the Coordinator works

directly with key contacts at each pilot site, serving as a resource, monitoring and documenting progress, and convening group meetings.

Working with school districts, county offices of education, state agencies, institutions of higher education and BTSA programs, the Coordinator also tracks and chronicles the use of retired educators in retention efforts across the state and shares strategies with potential pilot sites.

As the ESN CA pilots have developed, NRTA has regularly convened meetings for all of the site leaders. Held at the AARP CA state office in Sacramento and facilitated by the ESN CA Coordinator and NRTA staff, these quarterly meetings provide the site leaders with an opportunity to talk openly and question one another about challenges and areas of success, as they work with their local members and school districts. Additionally, resource materials are shared; each pilot site leader has also been given a notebook to store sample newsletter articles, surveys and other helpful items.

ESN-CA Pilot Site Summaries - April 2004 to Present

Bakersfield City School District Project in Kern County with REACT

This pilot project was developed by the local BTSA director and the CRTA division's volunteer program, REACT (Retired Educators Assisting Children and Teachers). The pilot involves 12 schools and 15 classrooms. In August 2004, REACT held an orientation meeting to survey its volunteers about grade levels, subject matter, schools, and/or other areas of expertise or interest.⁸ As a team, the REACT and BTSA Coordinators matched the retired educators' preferences with the needs of the district's beginning teachers to determine volunteer assignments. The BTSA Coordinator contacted the school administrators; the REACT Coordinator contacted each volunteer.

At the school district's New Teacher Orientation held in August of 2004, the Superintendent introduced ESN and invited the beginning educators to sign up for a REACT volunteer. Seventeen retired educator volunteers now work in elementary school classrooms instructing small groups of students, helping with organizing and conducting special projects, and lesson planning. Additionally, at the request of beginning teachers, REACT Support Providers and administrators observe lessons and provide feedback. The



⁸ Developed by the Bakersfield BTSA Director, this survey instrument has served as a prototype for ESN CA pilots statewide. A copy is included in the Appendix.

CRTA division also offers small grants to first and second-year teachers to purchase books for classroom libraries; these donations are a deeply appreciated component of the program.



Napa County Office of Education

This CRTA-driven project initially tested a model for attracting episodic volunteers. During the August 2004 orientation for Napa's new teachers, the local CRTA division staffed a special table to welcome the new teachers. Small education-themed gifts were given to the teachers and several CRTA members donated "gently used" teaching tools and resource materials from their personal collections for new teachers' classrooms.

CRTA members also offered to send periodic notes of encouragement throughout the school year to the new teachers. In November 2004, the CRTA President, County BTSA director and ESN CA Coordinator made a presentation to 50 members of the NAPA CRTA Division in order to further explore how retired educators in the area might choose to further develop volunteer opportunities in support of new teachers. There are now three retired educator volunteers working with beginning teachers in Napa.

North San Diego County

The North San Diego County pilot site represents two significant pilot activities—direct support to new teachers by retirees working in a complementary role to the BTSA program and a web-based tool for new teachers.

The direct support pilot includes 17 school districts and 3 BTSA programs. This county-wide program was orchestrated by local CRTA members, the BTSA Regional Director, NRTA and AARP CA. In August 2004, NRTA staff gathered CRTA and BTSA leaders to explore re-integrating retired educators into the school community. The project now involves 10-15 beginning teachers who are supported by twelve volunteers. The volunteers work with reading groups to facilitate differentiated instruction for gifted, ESL, and special education students. The volunteers also assist with clerical work and provide other help as requested. The CRTA division has helped promote these opportunities to prospective volunteers among its membership. The North Coastal BTSA Director coordinates all CRTA volunteer applications for the region and connects retired educators to the appropriate BTSA program.

The second pilot activity is being led by the Carlsbad/Oceanside CRTA division. Building on the technical expertise and talents of one of the division's leaders, an online database is being developed to match first and second-year teachers with retired educator volunteers throughout North San Diego County. Still in development, this web-based pilot will invite CRTA members to sign in and sign up for a wide range of volunteer activities, and offer grant opportunities and classroom management strategies for new teachers and experienced

educators who are facing new assignments. Additionally, the site will provide links to helpful resources for both new educators and retirees.

Roseville Unified School District in Sacramento County



The Roseville pilot now represents three emerging program sites: Placer County, Sacramento and Roseville USD. The Roseville pilot initially began because of interest expressed by the division's CRTA president (who is also a School Board member) and one of the division's members in Placer County. At this stage, an ESN coordinator has been named for each of the sites and efforts are underway to brief retirees about the program and pathways for involvement. There are currently two CRTA volunteers working directly with the BTSA Coordinator for the Roseville USD and three working with the BTSA Director in Sacramento City Unified School District. The BTSA Director and the ESN CA Coordinator are also developing a pilot orientation for retired educator volunteers. Additionally, a CRTA committee has been established to explore the possibility of awarding grants to new teachers.

Santa Barbara County Office of Education

The BTSA Director (a former Director of Elementary Education at CA State University, Santa Barbara), and a local CRTA officer who is adjunct faculty at the same university, jointly developed this project that involves training CRTA members to be BTSA Support Providers. Currently, there are three CRTA members working as fully-trained Support Providers. As a Support Provider, each retiree receives a stipend of \$3,000 per beginning teacher. An additional five CRTA members are scheduled to receive Support Provider training and plans are in place to recruit more volunteers.

Tehama County Office of Education

Initiated by a local CRTA member (a former superintendent of a county school district) and the BTSA Regional Director, the Tehama project's initial plan was to provide support to third-year teachers who have already completed the 2-year BTSA program. In August 2004, the County BTSA Director surveyed program graduates via email about their interest in having continued support from a volunteer retired teacher. Because the survey revealed that new teachers are in critical need of financial help to purchase classroom materials, this CRTA division is developing a grant process for new educators. Funding for the grants would be from the division itself, as well as potentially from community groups, including the local chapters of AARP and American Association of University Women (AAUW). Explorations are also underway to determine the level of interest among retired educators in participating in professional book clubs with new teachers in the region.

THE BALTIMORE PILOT SITE EXPERIENCE

Non-Educators Offering Support to Teachers

Although the NRTA Educator Support Network pilot sites primarily attract and engage retired educators, there is evidence from NRTA focus groups that non-educators might be willing to participate in the program. For that reason, NRTA has helped to fund one of the best and most vibrant projects that use non-educators to provide vital support to teachers – the Experience Corps program in Baltimore. This program, led by Linda Fried, M.D. and her team at Johns Hopkins University's Center on Aging and Health, engages over 100 older citizens as support resources to teachers and students in six of Baltimore's inner-city schools.

Experience Corps Baltimore is both a service program and a research study designed to determine if older citizens involved in voluntary service improve the educational outcomes of children in elementary school, while improving their own health and functional status⁹. Johns Hopkins University and the Greater Homewood Community Corporation are the leading partners in this project.

Begun in 1998, the well-designed Experience Corps Baltimore project places teams of trained older volunteers in schools, provides on-going support, supervision and evaluation, and works with the schools to continuously improve the program. The project serves teachers and students in grades K-3. Volunteers are assigned one or two to a classroom, and work at the direction of the teacher to support student literacy and attendance, parent involvement, behavior management, as well as offer library support. After an extensive training program in these areas, volunteers work a minimum of 15 hours per week and are paid a modest incentive allowance that primarily reimburses them for their expenses. The program provides a "critical mass presence" of 15-25 volunteers in each school.

NRTA is particularly interested in tracking this project to document the variety of meaningful roles that non-educators can offer to schools and best practices for the training and support of these volunteers. A research project conducted on behalf of NRTA by Dr. Fried and her team is in development. The purpose of the research is to:

1. Determine the potential impact of Experience Corps volunteers on levels of teacher retention, especially among new teachers.
2. Identify the factors related to teacher attrition that Experience Corps volunteers can most effectively impact.
3. Develop recommendations for the placement and training of volunteers to best support new teachers and administrators.

⁹ See Appendix for notes from Dr. Fried's research on the health benefits associated with volunteering in the Experience Corps Baltimore program.

As part of this research, they are collecting data on both personal and environmental factors related to teacher retention (including teacher satisfaction, absenteeism, and effectiveness), estimated costs of teacher attrition, and perceptions of the roles that older adults are capable of fulfilling. The data collection instruments and recommendations are being developed in partnership with retired teachers and administrators who are currently Experience Corps volunteers. The team is interviewing current teachers and principals, as well as these current Experience Corps volunteers.

**Release of *Who Stays in Teaching and Why? A Review of Literature on Teacher Retention*
Prepared by The Project for the Next Generation of Teachers
at the Harvard Graduate School of Education**

2005 ▶ February

As part of NRTA's ongoing efforts to contribute to the body of knowledge around educator recruitment and retention, NRTA commissioned Susan Moore Johnson, Ed.D. and a team from Harvard's Graduate School of Education to undertake an extensive literature review entitled, *Who Stays in Teaching and Why?* This report provides the most up-to-date and comprehensive summary of the research on teacher retention available. *Who Stays in Teaching and Why?* draws together information on the relevant issues affecting teacher retention (teacher preparation, hiring practices, compensation, working conditions, the school community and career pathways) and identifies areas that warrant further study. The book also includes an extensive annotated bibliography.



Released in February, 2005 with underwriting from Farmers Insurance Group, the 128-page book has been sent to the U.S. Department of Education and every state's Superintendent of Education. Additionally, the publication was given to the key national education organizations and their state affiliates. With the assistance of NRTA's network of state and local retired educators associations, the book will ultimately be delivered to an estimated 2,000 school districts. The book has also been requested by nearly one thousand teachers and administrators who were treated to a preview in the NRTA exhibit booth at several major education conferences.

NRTA Hosts Research Symposium on Recruitment and Retention at Harvard University

2005 ▶ February

Held on the campus of Harvard's Graduate School of Education, the inaugural symposium gathered 20 of the nation's premier researchers in the field of recruitment and retention from 15 universities and educational organizations, including Harvard, University of Pennsylvania, Stanford, Brandeis, Vanderbilt and SRI International's Center for Education Policy⁹. The symposium was designed with, and co-chaired by, the University of Pennsylvania's Dr. Richard Ingersoll and Harvard University's Dr. Susan Moore Johnson. With the goal of building more collaborative and productive approaches to studying issues of teacher recruitment and retention, one ultimate outcome of the symposium may be to help foster the release of timely and well-informed recommendations for policy and practice.



The day-long symposium began with an opportunity for informal dialogue and reflections about the nature and key findings of each participant's research to-date. Through a series of small and large group discussions that continued throughout the event, the participants identified areas of general agreement on "what's known" about teacher recruitment and retention. The experts also discussed the challenges and opportunities inherent in various methodological approaches, including longitudinal studies and measuring teacher quality. The day concluded with a preliminary discussion about where there appear to be gaps in the body of knowledge about recruitment and retention, and the additional research that is necessary to fill those gaps.

⁹ See Appendix for a complete listing of participants at the ESN Research Symposium.

CONCLUSION

In communities across the nation, ESN is mobilizing the energy and wisdom of one million retired educators and partners from all segments of society to strengthen American education. ESN is enfolded novice educators into the school community and preparing them for long-term success. And ESN is offering a range of volunteer engagement activities for age 50+ adults, activities that cross generations and support cognitive health.

As AARP's educator community, NRTA invites all who have a passion and affinity for education and learning — retired educators and other AARP members, government agencies and universities, researchers and policy-makers, foundations and corporations — to join in efforts to recruit and retain America's most qualified educators. As former U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala noted:

▶ **“The NRTA Educator Support Network will link retired and new educators in a variety of ways... pathways of support limited only by our imaginations.”**



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APPENDIX

NRTA's *Staying Sharp* Research Reveals Cognitive Benefits for Retired Volunteers

August 2004

NRTA is associated with a number of scientific projects that are exploring the health benefits of active engagement in activities like the NRTA Educator Support Network (ESN). In August, NRTA, in association with the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives (DABI), presented a panel discussion on *The Science of Learning and the Brain* and released *Learning Throughout Life*, the latest in the series of booklets called *Staying Sharp: Current Advances in Brain Research*. (The *Staying Sharp* initiative is a collaboration with DABI, a nonprofit organization of more than 200 leading neuroscientists, including 11 Nobel Laureates.)

According to the neuroscientists who work with DABI, the human brain has the capacity to structurally adjust itself to reflect life experiences. It is this “plasticity” that enables human beings to learn and grow at any age. Contrary to what was once believed, the aging brain can generate new neurons and, just as important, new connections between neurons in response to new experiences. Science is verifying the folk wisdom of “use it or lose it.”

Dr. Gene D. Cohen of The George Washington University released an interim report about a study of Creativity and Aging that was partially funded by NRTA. The study compared the health of a group of seniors who participated in active, organized cultural programs against a similar group of non-participants. The group who participated in creative activities reported significantly better health than the control group – active engagement in the arts offers opportunities for ongoing interaction in stimulating group activities and the challenge of enhancing individual mastery.

ESN is putting these scientific insights into practice, coupling the social benefits of the ESN program with personal benefits for the ESN participants. Training sessions for retired educators include specific strategies for building productive and trusting intergenerational relationships. The program encourages the development of a cross-generational support system made up of older adults, ESN staff and school district personnel.

The challenges of mentoring reinforce brain plasticity and growth. And increased physical activity is beneficial to both body and brain. Self-efficacy and believing that what you do makes a difference are key to brain and physical health in later years. The retired educators' efforts – mentoring young teachers by modeling best practices and problem-solving – help to retain the best and brightest in hard-to-staff schools. As a result, mentors re-discover that they can personally impact the future of education in their community.

Neuroscientists suggest that intellectual stimulation and challenging engagement forestall mental decline in later life. As ESN's retired educators use their expertise and practical experience to guide beginning teachers, they exercise a range of cognitive abilities, including memory, reasoning, attention, insight and planning. And the challenges encountered by these older mentors as they work in urban, "difficult" schools are highly unpredictable, creating multiple opportunities for abstract thinking and decision-making.

NRTA Educator Support Network Forum Participant Roster November 19, 2003

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An Interview with Dr. Richard Ingersoll

Richard Ingersoll, PH.D Interviewed
November 2003 – Philadelphia, PA

NRTA conducted an in-depth interview of Dr. Richard Ingersoll, in order to mine his depth of knowledge about retention issues and their impact on education. Dr. Ingersoll is Associate Professor of Education and Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania, where his research concerns the character of elementary and secondary schools as workplaces, teachers as employees and teaching as a job. He has conducted briefings of local, state and federal policy makers, and has spoken about his research before numerous groups, including Congressional Hearings.

When asked about the primary factors that contribute to teacher attrition, Dr. Ingersoll cited four key issues: salaries, student behavior problems, new teacher support and teacher involvement in school-site decision-making. His comments included:

On student discipline

“Schools with more student discipline problems have more teacher turnover. Sometimes people throw up their hands and say, ‘Well, gosh, that’s a no-brainer. But what can one do? This is a societal problem, influenced by television, the erosion of respect for authority, etc.’ That’s probably true. But the data also tell us that schools vary dramatically in how well they are able to cope with student behavioral issues and problems...those schools that do a better job of it have far less teacher turnover.”

On new teacher support

“Backing up teachers when there are discipline problems and the mentoring and induction of new hires [are] important because teaching traditionally has been characterized as a sink or swim operation. You get your job, the principal gives you the keys to your classroom and you’re on your own. Some swim and some sink...Places that provide more support have lower teacher turnover.”

On school-site management

“School communities vary dramatically. Do they exhibit a top-down command model of management or a collegial, professional model of decision-making? It makes a difference when it comes to teacher turnover. Buildings in which teachers have more say show dramatically less teacher exodus.”

According to Dr. Ingersoll, teaching is an occupation that has always paid far more attention to recruitment than retention, often viewing teachers as “expendable resources.” Key to this focus is the low ratio between senior and beginning salaries. Traditionally, education has solved its staffing problems by increasing recruitment. Current initiatives include *Teach for America*, alternative certification programs, signing bonuses and housing allowances. Unlike in the corporate world, little research has been dedicated to uncovering the costs of posting positions, interviewing, hiring, inducting and training new people.

On the costs of educator attrition

“We have 50 years of research telling us that a good school has coherence and continuity and community. Schools aren’t like factories. We’re talking about children here and young people. So the good school is more like a family.”

“There is some research out there that shows that high turnover can be devastating to any kind of long-term reform initiatives. We also need to add that some turnover is good...in any kind of workplace. However, there is a general consensus that high degrees of employee turnover — whether it’s teaching or any other kinds of occupation — are very costly.”

Dr. Ingersoll also expressed his concerns about the attrition of administrators, citing the lack of national data on the issues:

“If your building has a new principal every year, it’s going to have a hard time with any kind of continuity or coherence or community...it’s going to have a hard time improving itself.”

He commented that there is often some degree of conflict between faculties and principals; neither side is traditionally invested in the retention of the other.

Richard Ingersoll noted that retired educators offer a very significant set of resources to school communities:

On retired educators’ unique capabilities

“We’re not just talking about any old member of the public. We’re talking about a particularly informed constituency of the public — retired educators. There are a number of possible roles. Mentoring new hires is one. Volunteering, serving on the PTA, and serving on the school board...It seems to me that the sky is the limit in matching needs and resources.”

“On the one hand, we have a very large workforce with a large number of beginners who are desperately trying to learn the ropes and survive in these places called schools. On the other hand, we have this very large, underutilized resource of people who did learn the ropes and did succeed in these places called schools — retired teachers. It just strikes me as a wonderful, unique opportunity here, if we could bring together these two sides, these two halves, the needs and the resources. It really could be a win-win.”

The California Educator Support Network Retired Educator Interest Survey

This survey has been a helpful tool for the ESN CA pilots to match retired educators' interests and expertise with the needs of a school system's new educators.

Name: _____ Phone: _____ CRTA Division: _____

I would be willing to provide support at the following grade levels: (check all that apply)
 K___ 2___ 3___ 4___ 5___ 6___ 7___ 8___ 9___ 10___ 11___ 12___

Subject areas I can support: (please check any that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Math	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Studies
<input type="checkbox"/> Science	<input type="checkbox"/> Art
<input type="checkbox"/> Language Arts	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Music	Other _____

School district(s) I'm interested in supporting: _____

Schools I would be able to travel to in order to visit a new educator: _____

Please list any areas of expertise or particular interests you have that would be valuable to new educators:

Please indicate any other ideas for supporting new educators that have not been listed: _____



Please return to:
 Local CRTA Division President
 or
 Jaymee Kjelland, CA ESN Coordinator

Health Benefits of Volunteering

Notes from Experience Corps Baltimore Studies

As Director of the Center on Aging and Health and of the Division of Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology at The Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, Dr. Fried's core research interest is health promotion for older adults. She has published numerous articles on the causes and consequences of frailty and disability with aging, and both clinical and population-based strategies for prevention for older adults. In 2004, Dr. Fried and other Johns Hopkins researchers released four preliminary studies on the Experience Corps Baltimore program.

To test whether Experience Corps Baltimore improves key aging risk factors — declines in physical, cognitive and social activity — a research team designed a two-year pilot study that compared 128 volunteers, ages 60 to 86, with a control group. Participants in the study, predominantly African-American women, served as volunteers in a variety of roles in K-3 classrooms and libraries for at least 15 hours a week.

▶ **“Giving back to your community may slow the aging process in ways that lead to a higher quality of life in older adults.”**

— LINDA P. FRIED, M.D., M.P.H.
 CENTER ON AGING AND HEALTH AT JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

The majority of volunteers, almost 88 percent, said they signed up either because they loved children or wanted to help them. Of the rest, about 11 percent said they wanted to make a difference in their own lives or help themselves “feel good.” Only two percent said they volunteered to “stay active.”

▶ **“In contrast to other programs that target health care beneficiaries, the Experience Corps program is designed to attract all adults, including those less likely to participate in formal health-promotion programs.”**

— LINDA P. FRIED, M.D., M.P.H.

Researchers found that 98 percent of participants in the intervention group reported being satisfied with their experience, and 80 percent returned the following year. Such a high retention rate reflects the "health promotion potential" of Experience Corps Baltimore, the researchers said. The investigators also found evidence for short-term change in health outcomes:

- At follow-up, 44 percent of older participants reported feeling stronger, compared with 18 percent of controls, and there was a 13 percent increase in those who reported their strength as very good to excellent, versus a 30 percent decline among controls.
- Cane use decreased in 50 percent of users in the intervention group, compared with 20 percent in the control group. Falls also decreased.

- In terms of social activity, older volunteers reported a significant increase, compared with a decline in the control group, in the number of people they felt they could turn to for help.
- In measuring cognitive benefits to participants, the researchers said that increases in cognitive activities in the school were not offset by a decrease in book reading and other such mental activities at home. TV viewing, considered the most common low-intensity activity, declined by 4 percent in volunteers and increased by 18 percent in the control group.

▶ **“Physical, cognitive and social activity increased in volunteers, suggesting potential for Experience Corps and similar programs to improve health for an aging population while simultaneously improving educational outcomes for children. It potentially could have great social impact if taken to a large scale.”**

— FROM THE *JOURNAL OF URBAN HEALTH BULLETIN* OF THE NEW YORK ACADEMY OF MEDICINE

**ESN Research Symposium Recruitment and Retention
Harvard University
February 10-11, 2005**

Roster of Participants

Lora Bartlett
University of California – Santa Cruz

Sharon Feiman-Nemser
Brandeis University, Mandel Center

Pam Grossman
Stanford University

Daniel Humphrey
Center for Education Policy, SRI International

Karen Hunter Quartz
University of California – Los Angeles

Richard Ingersoll
University of Pennsylvania

Susan Kardos
Brandeis University

R. Hamilton Lankford
University at Albany, SUNY

Abigail Levy
Education Development Center, Inc.

Edward Liu
Rutgers University
Graduate School of Education

Susan Moore Johnson
Harvard University
Graduate School of Education

Richard Murnane
Harvard University
Graduate School of Education

Ruth Curran Neild
University of Pennsylvania

Jennifer Rice
University of Maryland

Bob Schwartz
Harvard University
Graduate School of Education

Jianping Shen
Western Michigan University
College of Education

Thomas Smith
Peabody College of Vanderbilt University

Michael Strong
New Teacher Center
University of California - Santa Cruz

Betsey Useem
Research for Action

Marjorie Wechsler
SRI International



AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. We produce *AARP The Magazine*, published bimonthly; *AARP Bulletin*, our monthly newspaper; *AARP Segunda Juventud*, our bimonthly magazine in Spanish and English; *NRTA Live & Learn*, our quarterly newsletter for 50+ educators; and our website, www.aarp.org. AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.



Founded in 1947 by retired educator Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus, NRTA: *AARP's Educator Community* (formerly known as the National Retired Teachers Association) is a division of AARP. The NRTA Network includes a national office in Washington, DC, 53 state and city associations, and more than 2,700 local associations which serve more than one-million active and retired educators and school personnel. One of our key projects is the NRTA Educator Support Network which helps recruit and retain America's most qualified educators by engaging retired educators and others in support of new teachers and administrators. Visit NRTA's website at www.aarp.org/nrta for more information.



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