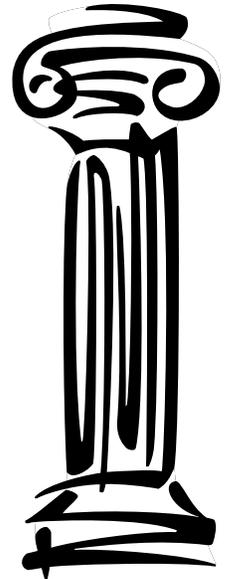


Building a Framework: Improving Working Conditions



*Keeping
Quality
Teachers*

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Building a Framework: Improving Working Conditions

“The climate within a school building and the workforce conditions it encompasses act as either a support or a deterrent for teacher retention.” (Westat, 2002c; Ingersoll, 2001; Gersten, et al, 2001; Johnson, et al, 2001). As previously cited in Section One, the climate within the school district and building reflects many factors that embrace a variety of working conditions. Further scrutiny reveals just how powerful working conditions are in influencing the retention of all teachers as demonstrated by the following observations.

“How teachers are paid was a part of it, but overwhelmingly the things that would destroy the morale of teachers who wanted to leave were the working conditions. Bad! Bad! Bad! Working in poor facilities, having to pay for supplies, etc.” Los Angeles teacher talking about a high-turnover school. (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

“Data suggest that the roots of the teacher shortage largely reside in working conditions within the schools and districts.” (Ingersoll, Smith, 2003).

“The high attrition of teachers from schools serving lower-income or lower-achieving students appears to be substantially influenced by the poorer working conditions typically found in those schools.” (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

When teachers leave, they tend to migrate to other teaching jobs or leave the profession altogether. Understanding why they leave and where they go can aid in determining how to retain the best and most promising. In a study of why teachers moved or migrated, the following basic improvements in workforce conditions were noted (Birkeland, Johnson, 2003):

- Appropriate work assignments: new teachers often get the least desirable classrooms and the most challenging students.
- Sufficient curriculum guidelines: the teaching subject matches the teacher qualifications and curriculum materials, and teacher guides are available.
- Efficient discipline systems: consistent, school-wide behavior policies

- exist and focus on classroom learning.
- Good communication with parents: parents are involved in the hiring process, and the school encourages various types of participation for parents.
 - Sharing ideas and resources with colleagues: opportunities to interact with other professionals and improve teaching skills.
 - Respect and support from administrators: principals provide supervision, instructional guidance, and express confidence in their teachers.
 - Opportunities for professional development: teachers are encouraged to try innovative approaches and seek professional growth.

Almost all the teachers in the study left to teach in schools with better achieving students and higher socio-economic levels. At first it might appear that these teachers were seeking to work with a different “class” of students, but in reality they sought better working conditions. It is the purpose of this section to identify those conditions and offer solutions that, if implemented, can positively impact retention of a quality workforce.

Working Conditions — Description and Self-Assessment

Several examples of working conditions affecting retention have previously been referenced in this document, including administrative support, induction and mentoring programs, and pay increases. Though they are included, in part, in this section, administrative support as well as induction and mentoring are both factors that have such a profound effect that they warrant their own sections in this document. All conditions have been categorized in the form of a self-assessment that administrators and leadership teams can review for the purposes of: 1) determining the factors supporting teacher retention in their schools, and 2) assisting and selecting strategies to effectively enhance those factors.

To assist in the application of the self-assessment, the working conditions are organized by those that affect all teachers and those that strongly impact special educators. The conditions are also organized by category. Though the research is replete with examples of working conditions, the following categories lend a structure previously absent. In an effort to keep the descriptions manageable, only several examples are provided for each category. A more complete list of examples is found in Appendix 2-1. The structure will enable local schools and districts to better organize this information and communicate it to their communities of support. The categories include the following.

Leadership/Decision Making

“When teachers are asked why they leave their jobs, working conditions are at the top of the list” (National Commission on Teaching America’s Future, 2003). The commission recommended three strategies in its report, all of which involve state, district and building-level leadership including

superintendents, special education administrators and principals. The eight working conditions listed under this category all possess a direct link to decision making at these leadership levels. School boards are also essential in setting policies that support teachers (see Appendix 6-6). In addition, all factors affecting general educators impact special educators. The conditions and examples that more strongly impact those teaching professionals in special education are identified as well.

1. Provide building and district level support for teachers (Ingersoll, 2003; Michigan State Department of Education, 2003).

Increasing support could range from a visible commitment to a retention plan to instituting opportunities for classroom visits.

Special Education. Traditional communication patterns tend to separate administrators and teachers as well as general and special education staff. Improving the knowledge base and communication for all involved is a critical support strategy (Michigan Department of Education, 2003; Council for Exceptional Children, 2002).

2. Establish policies that support teachers (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003).

Teachers want to know that schools are organized for success and that policies exist to support them in pursuit of that success.

Special Education. Systems support means that the district, school board and school administrators who understand the responsibilities of special educators collaborate with and support their special educators (Michigan Department of Education, 2003; Council for Exceptional Children, 2002).

3. Supporting teacher control over curriculum and instruction (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003).

Classical top-down school leadership needs to be re-examined, and teachers must be recognized as professionals who have expertise to make good learning decisions for their students.

4. Assure appropriate class assignments for teachers (Birkeland, Johnson, 2003).

Assignments should be based on the qualifications and experience of teachers, as well as consideration for preparation time.

5. Establish adequate pay scales and financial incentives (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2002; National Commission on Teaching America's Future, 2003).

Compensation systems signal what skills and attributes are valued and what kinds of contributions are rewarded.

6. Enforce equitable application of licensing and certification regulations (Birkeland, Johnson, 2003; National Education Association, 2003; Council for Exceptional Children, 2002).

States and school districts should not hire out-of-field and need to ensure that teachers have adequate credentials or licenses before hiring. In critical circumstances when provisional certification is allowed, a means for assuring eventual certification should be in place.

7. Establish induction and mentoring programs (Villani, 2002).

Connecting and supporting new teachers through mentoring and an overall induction process is a proven strategy for increasing teacher retention.

Special Education. Formal induction and mentoring programs have been found to increase retention. Simply meeting with other new teachers and receiving informal help from colleagues have been beneficial for special and general educators, but that is not enough. Formal mentoring programs in which mentors are trained and supported are powerful retention tools (Cook, Williams, 2003).

8. Establish and conduct personnel evaluation systems (National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education, 1998).

Teachers need regular feedback and accurate information on job expectations.

School Climate

“Even the best induction programs cannot compensate for an unhealthy school climate.” Many factors contribute to a climate that reflects the school culture in supporting all who work within. The four conditions described are among the most critical. (OSEP, 2002; Fieman-Nemser, 2003).

1. Establish and enforce a comprehensive student support and discipline system (Birkeland, Johnson, 2003).

Teaching is possible only in a climate of order, where consistent behavior policies that focus on student learning and support are shared by all.

2. Institute measures that assure student results and outcomes (National Commission on Teaching America’s Future, 2003).

Successful schools are learner-centered and assessment-centered where teachers use tools and strategies that provide continuous feedback that helps both students and teachers monitor learning.

3. Establish a safe environment for staff, students and community members (National Education Association, 2003).

Environments in which all feel safe are primary characteristics of small schools — schools that have high retention rates. Policies and practices that promote better attendance, higher student achievement, closer relationships, and a greater commitment to the school can be provided anywhere.

4. Assure that a climate of respect exists for all (National Education Association, 2003).

Teachers look for schools where they can feel like professionals — sharing ideas and resources with colleagues and receiving respect and guidance, and where school culture and norms reflect that respect for all.

Special Education. General education teachers and the public may have negative achievement expectations of students with disabilities that influence student efforts, actions, and outcomes (Birkeland, Johnson, 2003).

Infrastructure

Just as a system of transportation needs an infrastructure of roads, bridges, rail systems and the like to assure the delivery of needed commodities, the education system requires structures to be in place to assure the delivery of knowledge and skills in an environment conducive to retention of high quality administrators and teachers. The following seven conditions are aspects of that structure over which all schools have a measure of control.

1. Assure the teacher-to-student ratio supports students and doesn't overwhelm teachers (National Commission on Teaching for America's Future, 2003).
2. Provide adequate planning time for teachers (National Commission on Teaching for America's Future, 2003).

While all teachers work under tremendous time constraints, experienced teachers generally are able to complete their planning more quickly. For new teachers, adequate planning time can allay feelings of being overwhelmed.

Special Education. Survey results have indicated that teachers are dissatisfied with the non-instructional aspects associated with special education teaching that consume a lot of time such as meetings and legal issues. Collaboration is often required, but extra time is often not allocated for this planning (Menlove, 2003; Council for Exceptional Children, 2002).

3. Provide curriculum guidelines aligned with state learning standards (Birkeland, Johnson, 2003).

The presence of guidelines, materials and teacher outlines throughout a school and district can provide needed direction and guidance to beginning teachers.

4. Provide a structure for team planning and teaching (National Education Association, 2003).

Teachers often report feeling isolated in their classrooms. Team planning and teaching can be an important step in retaining a high quality teaching force.

Special Education. Special educators need to be a part of at least two learning communities — one with their school-based general education colleagues and the other with their discipline-based special education colleagues. Structural arrangements to facilitate collaborative instructional strategies are needed in addition to creating a sense of community (Breeding, Whitworth, 2000; Council for Exceptional Children, 2002).

5. Assure an adequate supply of materials (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2003).

Providing teachers with the necessary teaching tools to do a good job, without having to rely on their own resources, is basic to teaching. Teachers too often report they do not have the materials they need that are age appropriate and aligned with the curriculum and state learning standards.

6. Provide technological support in classrooms (OSEP, 2002; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003).

Teachers often report the need for adequate, up-to-date technology as well as the support and skill development necessary for using that technology.

Special Education. Special education teachers rated their skills lowest on using technology in education, lacking confidence in their ability to use technology in instruction (OSEP, 2002).

7. Provide assistance to special educators for completing paperwork responsibilities (Menlove, 2003; Cook, Williams, 2003).

Special Education. Frustration with paperwork requirements of special education is a major issue identified by many special educators leaving the field.

Content/Skills

An adequately prepared workforce requires skills, competencies and the opportunities for continuous improvement reflected in these two categories.

1. Provide opportunities for professional development (OSEP, 2002; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003; National Education Association, 2003).

Teachers are professionals whose practice must be continually upgraded as the content in their field changes, as research offers new perspectives, and as new technologies become available — strong professional development opportunities must be embedded in the fabric of public education.

Special Education. With needs expressed by special educators to build their skills in the areas of interpreting standardized test results, accommodating the learning needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students, and using literature to address teaching and learning problems, professional development opportunities need to be offered (Cook, Williams, 2003; Council for Exceptional Children, 2002).

2. Assure that teachers have the skills to work with a diverse student body (Sargent, 2003; National Education Association, 2003).

Students in schools comprise an increasingly diverse mix of races, religions, lifestyles, abilities, cultures and ethnic groups. It is essential that teachers have the skills they need to feel comfortable and teach effectively.

Community Involvement and Support

Increasingly, teachers in their desire to stay in a school or district are identifying community and parental involvement and support as supportive factors. Not only does this involvement contribute to the school climate, but also it provides the needed support to pass budgets and secure resources. Two categories are illustrated here.

1. Establish a system of communication with parents (Birkeland, Johnson, 2003).

Family support is a factor in student achievement and families make great teacher allies. Effective relations must be intentionally constructed.

2. Establish mechanisms for community involvement in support of teachers and students (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2002).

Though salaries and benefits are often thought of first in the context of community support, other opportunities for recognition and support are easily provided.

Special Education. Community support for education can be manifested in various ways. It is a crucial element to assure that the community understands the needs of its special education students and that students will be supported when they leave school to enter the community (Council for Exceptional Children, 2002).

Conclusion

The above working conditions and functions were cited in the literature as affecting retention of general and special educators. A school that has more of these in place and scores high on the instrument will have a more satisfied staff and student body with teachers more likely to stay, grow and become more effective in their roles. By applying the following Self-Assessment Instrument in Appendix 2-1, a school or district can begin to retain a quality workforce by identifying needed strategies and taking action.

Appendix 2-1 provides an instrument that focuses on numerous aspects of working conditions proven to influence the retention of a quality workforce. It is designed as a tool to assist in identifying areas of strengths and needs.

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Working Conditions: Self-Assessment Instrument

Introduction

This instrument focuses on numerous aspects of working conditions proven to influence the retention of a quality workforce. Each category is accompanied by a reference that will provide more detailed information should one wish to pursue it. The instrument is designed as a tool to assist in identifying areas of strengths and needs. Improvement strategies to address the categories, topics and activities are implied but should in no way limit possible interventions.

Implementation

The self-assessment can be implemented in any way that best suits the user's needs. It is recommended that before its implementation, a task force or retention team is created that will take responsibilities for reviewing the instrument, selecting sections to be used, and designing follow-through strategies once the information is collected. It provides several examples for each topic, but additional topics or factors will likely be identified during the self-assessment process.

A commitment at the district or building level is necessary for this to be an effective retention improvement strategy and should be incorporated into the larger retention initiative. "Bringing It Together" describes the context within which the instrument could be used. Please review the framework described by the five areas of inquiry to determine the most appropriate use for your school and/or district's needs. It is recommended that this intervention be inclusive of both general and special education, and include leadership reflecting both perspectives.

Therefore, the following elements should be decided before embarking on the implementation:

- Content within school improvement plan or retention plan.
- Timing of implementation.
- Task force membership.
- Categories to be assessed.
- Commitment to follow-up.
- Plan for ongoing assessment and improvement strategies.

Assessment Category: Leadership/Decision Making

Topic 1: Building/District Support for Teachers

(National Commission on Teaching America's Future 2003)

| | <i>Never</i> <i>1</i> | <i>Seldom</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Most of the Time</i> <i>3</i> | <i>Always</i> <i>4</i> |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) The principal and/or superintendent and special education director are involved in a teacher retention initiative. | | | | |
| 2) The school leader takes the initiative to bring general and special educators together on a regular basis for communication and consultation. | | | | |

Topic 2: Policy/Procedures that Support Teachers

(National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003)

| | <i>Never</i> <i>1</i> | <i>Seldom</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Most of the Time</i> <i>3</i> | <i>Always</i> <i>4</i> |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) Policies exist, are implemented and data is collected to promote retention of skilled teacher personnel. | | | | |
| 2) The superintendent and/or principal is conversant about special education law and regulations at the national and state levels and is a strong advocate for children eligible for special education. | | | | |

Topic 3: Teacher Control Over Curriculum and Instruction

(National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003)

| | <i>Never</i> <i>1</i> | <i>Seldom</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Most of the Time</i> <i>3</i> | <i>Always</i> <i>4</i> |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) Teachers are part of the team that determines the school and district curriculum and materials selection. | | | | |
| 2) Teachers are shielded from unnecessary disruptions so they may attend to teaching. | | | | |

Topic 4: Appropriate Class Assignments for Teachers (Birkeland, Johnson, 2003)

| | <i>Never</i> <i>1</i> | <i>Seldom</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Most of the Time</i> <i>3</i> | <i>Always</i> <i>4</i> |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) Teachers are assigned to teach subjects for which they possess credentials, and in classrooms for which they have demonstrated classroom management expertise. | | | | |
| 2) Para-educators possess the skills and knowledge they need to work effectively with the student(s) to whom they have been assigned. | | | | |
| 3) Smaller classes are provided for more challenging students. | | | | |
| 4) Caseloads for special educators are reasonable. | | | | |

Topic 5: Adequate Pay Scales and Financial Incentives (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2002)

| | <i>Never</i> <i>1</i> | <i>Seldom</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Most of the Time</i> <i>3</i> | <i>Always</i> <i>4</i> |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) The starting salary for teachers is competitive for the region. | | | | |
| 2) A program for financial incentives exists that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A signing bonus • Mortgage assistance • Loan forgiveness • Merit pay increases | | | | |

Topic 6: Equitable Application of Licensing and Certification Regulations (Birkeland, Johnson, 2003; National Education Association, 2003; Council for Exceptional Children, 2002)

| | <i>Never</i> <i>1</i> | <i>Seldom</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Most of the Time</i> <i>3</i> | <i>Always</i> <i>4</i> |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) Only teachers possessing license or certification are hired. | | | | |
| 2) Provisionally licensed teachers are given standard times and procedures for meeting certification regulations. | | | | |

Topic 7: Induction and Mentoring Programs (Villani, 2002)

| | <i>Never</i> <i>1</i> | <i>Seldom</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Most of the Time</i> <i>3</i> | <i>Always</i> <i>4</i> |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) New teachers have knowledge of the school and district practices. | | | | |
| 2) New teachers become part of a mentoring program immediately. | | | | |
| 3) Special education teachers and related service personnel are linked at a building and/or district level with mentors. | | | | |
| 4) The district has a close partnership with an institution of higher education as part of an induction program. | | | | |

Topic 8: Personnel Evaluation Systems

(National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education, 1998)

| | <i>Never</i> <i>1</i> | <i>Seldom</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Most of the Time</i> <i>3</i> | <i>Always</i> <i>4</i> |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) Teachers understand the expectations for job performance. | | | | |
| 2) Teachers receive regular feedback on their performance. | | | | |

Assessment Category: School Climate

Topic 1: Comprehensive Student Support and Discipline Systems

(Birkeland, Johnson, 2003)

| | <i>Never</i> <i>1</i> | <i>Seldom</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Most of the Time</i> <i>3</i> | <i>Always</i> <i>4</i> |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) Explicit school-wide behavioral norms and discipline policies exist for students. | | | | |
| 2) Policies and norms exist for teachers as well. | | | | |
| 3) Policies and norms are constantly enforced. | | | | |

Topic 2: Focus on Student Results and Outcomes

(National Commission on Teaching America's Future, 2003)

| | <i>Never</i> <i>1</i> | <i>Seldom</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Most of the Time</i> <i>3</i> | <i>Always</i> <i>4</i> |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) A school-wide commitment to improving student results exists. | | | | |
| 2) There are shared mechanisms for measuring results. | | | | |
| 3) These mechanisms emphasize continuous improvement and are not punitive. | | | | |

Topic 3: Safe Environment for Staff, Students, and Community Members

(National Education Association, 2003)

| | <i>Never</i> <i>1</i> | <i>Seldom</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Most of the Time</i> <i>3</i> | <i>Always</i> <i>4</i> |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) School-wide norms reflect the value of respect for and protection of staff, students, and community volunteers. | | | | |
| 2) The physical condition of the school is safe and attractive, and meets ADA requirements. | | | | |
| 3) The amount and type of space allocated for a particular activity is appropriate, functional and pleasant. | | | | |

Topic 4: Climate of Respect for All (National Education Association, 2003)

| | <i>Never</i> <i>1</i> | <i>Seldom</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Most of the Time</i> <i>3</i> | <i>Always</i> <i>4</i> |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) A system to acknowledge contributions from all school personnel exists including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers • Administrators • Staff • Students • Community members | | | | |
| 2) A welcoming activity or function is conducted for new faculty. | | | | |

| | <i>Never</i> <i>1</i> | <i>Seldom</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Most of the Time</i> <i>3</i> | <i>Always</i> <i>4</i> |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 3) All students (e.g., students with disabilities, bi-lingual students) are afforded opportunities to be acknowledged contributors to their school culture. | | | | |

Assessment Category: Infrastructure

Topic 1: Number of Students

(National Commission on Teaching for America's Future, 2003)

| | <i>Never</i> <i>1</i> | <i>Seldom</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Most of the Time</i> <i>3</i> | <i>Always</i> <i>4</i> |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) There is an adequate student-to-teacher ratio. | | | | |
| 2) There is an adequate para-educator-to-student ratio. | | | | |

Topic 2: Team Teaching (National Education Association, 2003)

| | <i>Never</i> <i>1</i> | <i>Seldom</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Most of the Time</i> <i>3</i> | <i>Always</i> <i>4</i> |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) Team teaching, if appropriate, is an expected methodology. | | | | |
| 2) Reflective opportunities for teachers exist with an agreed upon format. | | | | |
| 3) General and special educators work in collaboration to plan for shared student responsibilities. | | | | |

Topic 3: Planning Time Available

(National Commission on Teaching for America's Future, 2003)

| | <i>Never</i> <i>1</i> | <i>Seldom</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Most of the Time</i> <i>3</i> | <i>Always</i> <i>4</i> |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) Sufficient time is provided daily to allow planning for classroom instruction. | | | | |

| | <i>Never</i> 1 | <i>Seldom</i> 2 | <i>Most of the Time</i> 3 | <i>Always</i> 4 |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 2) There is flexible time available for special education planning that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family/faculty conferences • IEP meetings at different times during the day • General/special education team planning • Completion of paperwork | | | | |

Topic 4: Curriculum Guidelines
(Birkeland, Johnson, 2003)

| | <i>Never</i> 1 | <i>Seldom</i> 2 | <i>Most of the Time</i> 3 | <i>Always</i> 4 |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1) A description of the school and district curriculum exists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For all grades • For all subjects • Available to families • Reflecting standards | | | | |
| 2) Curriculum guidelines are reviewed periodically by faculty and administration. | | | | |

Topic 5: Adequate Supply of Materials
(Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2003)

| | <i>Never</i> 1 | <i>Seldom</i> 2 | <i>Most of the Time</i> 3 | <i>Always</i> 4 |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1) Every teacher knows how much money they have for materials purchases. | | | | |
| 2) Teachers are asked for their input into materials needs. | | | | |
| 3) Materials used in the classroom are up-to-date. | | | | |
| 4) All students have adequate materials. | | | | |
| 5) Assistance is available to teachers for materials adaptation for students in special education. | | | | |

| | <i>Never</i> <i>1</i> | <i>Seldom</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Most of the Time</i> <i>3</i> | <i>Always</i> <i>4</i> |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 6) Materials are aligned with the state's learning standards. | | | | |

Topic 6: Technology Support

(OSEP, 2002; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003)

| | <i>Never</i> <i>1</i> | <i>Seldom</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Most of the Time</i> <i>3</i> | <i>Always</i> <i>4</i> |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) Technology use is part of the school culture. | | | | |
| 2) Assistance is available to teachers for utilizing technology. | | | | |
| 3) Administrators and teachers utilize the assistive technology resources for students requiring special technology assistance. | | | | |

Topic 7: Managing Paperwork

(Menlove, 2003; Cook, Williams, 2003)

| | <i>Never</i> <i>1</i> | <i>Seldom</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Most of the Time</i> <i>3</i> | <i>Always</i> <i>4</i> |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) There is assistance available to general and special educators in the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-service training • Software • Website access • Para-professional support • Secretarial support | | | | |

Assessment Category: Content/Skills

Topic 1: Opportunities for Professional Development

(OSEP, 2002; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003; National Education Association, 2003)

| | <i>Never</i> <i>1</i> | <i>Seldom</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Most of the Time</i> <i>3</i> | <i>Always</i> <i>4</i> |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) Training needs for teachers are determined through an annual performance development plan based on an evaluation of student results. | | | | |

| | <i>Never</i> <i>1</i> | <i>Seldom</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Most of the Time</i> <i>3</i> | <i>Always</i> <i>4</i> |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2) Teachers are asked to identify their training needs. | | | | |
| 3) Opportunities offered by institutions of higher education and professional organizations are available to teachers. | | | | |
| 4) In-service opportunities are provided to faculty, staff and community members focused on new rules and regulations from the state and federal levels. | | | | |

Topic 2: Ability to Work with Diverse Students
(Sargent, 2003)

| | <i>Never</i> <i>1</i> | <i>Seldom</i> <i>2</i> | <i>Most of the Time</i> <i>3</i> | <i>Always</i> <i>4</i> |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) All teachers demonstrate skills and commitment to working with diverse students including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally diverse • Non-English speaking students • Students with disabilities | | | | |
| 2) General and special educators receive adequate training to develop the skills necessary for working with diverse students. | | | | |
| 3) Teachers receive sufficient, accurate, relevant information on their students. | | | | |
| 4) Teachers receive diagnostic information on their students relating to educational issues and needs when appropriate. | | | | |
| 5) Teachers receive information regarding a student's IEP goals and services when appropriate. | | | | |

Assessment Category: Community Involvement and Support

Topic 1: System of Family Communication

(Birkeland, Johnson, 2003)

| | <i>Never</i> 1 | <i>Seldom</i> 2 | <i>Most of the Time</i> 3 | <i>Always</i> 4 |
|---|-------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1) Family representatives are included in policy decisions made at the school/district levels. | | | | |
| 2) Family representatives participate in administration and faculty interviews and hiring decisions. | | | | |
| 3) Family and community members receive regular, periodic updates on school/district activities and issues. | | | | |

Topic 2: Community Involvement in Support of Teachers and Students

(Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2002)

| | <i>Never</i> 1 | <i>Seldom</i> 2 | <i>Most of the Time</i> 3 | <i>Always</i> 4 |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1) The community sponsors various activities in support of both students and teachers. | | | | |
| 2) A special education advisory council exists at the district level that meets regularly and disseminates information to the community. | | | | |