

## *A User's Guide to* **Peer Assistance and Review**

### *A User's Guide to Peer Assistance and Review (PAR)*

All students deserve great teachers, but too often they don't get them. Sometimes their teachers are inexperienced. Sometimes they are simply ineffective. This happens for various reasons. Many schools shortchange new teachers, failing to give them the support they need as they start their career. Administrators often neglect to make careful judgments about who deserves tenure. Some schools do not create a culture where teachers continually enhance and update their practice. Or, everyone assumes that it's impossible to dismiss poor teachers.

Many educators and policy makers—including President Obama and Secretary of Education Duncan—see great promise in Peer Assistance and Review (PAR), a program that began as a labor-management initiative in Toledo over 25 years ago. PAR relies on expert teachers to help both new and struggling teachers. It also ensures that teachers who should leave do leave.

This website draws on the experiences of seven school districts, each with an established PAR program. It offers a wealth of practical information and advice about how to create and sustain PAR. It describes how PAR begins and how it works. It lays out the choices to be made in creating a PAR program and it provides examples, insights and documents that will assist reformers in the process.



*A new teacher in Rochester meets with her Consulting Teacher*

#### **Barack Obama on PAR:**

**“Now, if we do all this and find that there are teachers who are still struggling and underperforming, we should provide them with individual help and support. And if they're still underperforming after that, we should find a quick and fair way to put another teacher in that classroom. Teacher associations and school boards in a number of cities have led the way by developing Peer Assistance and Review plans that do exactly this - setting professional standards that put children first. We owe our teachers that, and we owe our children that.”**

**— November 20, 2007**

A User's Guide to Peer Assistance and Review online:  
<http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~ngt/par/>

The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers:  
<http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~ngt/>

Table of Contents	2-3
What is PAR?	4
How does PAR work?	5-6
Who participates in PAR?	7
Costs and Benefits of PAR	8
What does PAR cost?	9
How do districts pay for PAR?	10
What are the financial benefits of PAR?	11
What are the other costs and benefits of PAR?	12-13
Designing your PAR Program	14
The Consulting Teacher's Role	15-16
Will CTs work full-time or part-time in their PAR role?	17
How will the CT application and selection process work?	18-19
How will CTs be trained, supported, and evaluated?	20-21
How will the CT's caseload be determined?	22
What will the CTs be paid?	23
What can or must CTs do when their term is over?	24
The PAR Panel	25-26
Under PAR, which responsibilities will the Panel assume?	27
How often will the PAR Panel meet?	28
Who will be assigned to the Panel, how will they be chosen, and will they be paid?	29-30
How long will Panel members serve?	31
Who will lead the Panel?	32
How will the Panel carry out its work?	33-34
The Novice Program	35-36
Who will be included in the Novice Program?	37
How will Consulting Teachers work with novices?	38
How will the novice's performance be reviewed?	39-40
Will the principal have a role in evaluating novice teachers?	41
The PAR Intervention Program	42-43
How will experienced teachers be placed on PAR Intervention?	44-45
What will be involved in the PAR Intervention process?	46
How will the PAR Panel review a teacher on Intervention?	47
What will happen once the Panel votes to dismiss a teacher?	48
Making PAR Work Day-to-Day	49
Who manages PAR day to day?	50-51
How does the program handle the paperwork involved in teacher evaluation?	52
What data does the district collect about its program?	53
Labor-management Relations	54
What are the challenges of collaborating to adopt PAR?	55
How do the union and management begin to develop a PAR program?	56
How is PAR negotiated and what is included in the contract?	57-58

What does it take to implement and sustain PAR?	59
Practical Issues and Advice	60
Getting Started	61-62
Implementing PAR	63-67
PAR Over Time	68-71
PAR in Practice	72
Cincinnati	72-74
Minneapolis	75-76
Montgomery County	77-79
Rochester	80-82
San Juan	83-85
Syracuse	86-89
Toledo	90-92
About the Study	93
About the Authors	93-94
Study Methods	95
Data & Resources	96
Research and References	97-99
Conference Papers	99
District and Program Information	100-107
PAR Outcome Data	108-112

## What is PAR?

PAR, the brainchild of union president Dal Lawrence, was developed in the early 1980s in Toledo, OH. In PAR, the local teachers union and district administrators jointly manage a program to improve teacher quality by having expert teachers mentor and evaluate their peers. In the past 25 years, other districts have relied on the "Toledo Plan" as their model for PAR,

adapting it to meet their local needs. Today PAR is well-established in a small number of districts nationwide, although it hasn't been adopted widely. That isn't surprising, since it's no simple matter to adopt an effective PAR program. PAR challenges most people's expectations about what teachers and principals should do. It requires unusual collaboration between the union and administration. It must be grounded in a systematic approach to teacher evaluation. And it involves a substantial financial investment. However, the potential payoff of an effective PAR program is great. Increasingly, policymakers, district officials, and union leaders have pointed to PAR as a promising component of an effective human capital strategy, thus fueling interest and initiatives across the country.

**"I'm a real supporter of PAR. I think it saves careers. The whole idea is to provide the help a teacher needs, and if they can't step up to the plate, then they really shouldn't be there."**

**—San Juan Principal**



*A novice teacher in Toledo*

Districts with PAR programs say that, although the program can be expensive, it has many important benefits. PAR's mentoring component helps beginning teachers succeed and, thus, increases retention. PAR also makes it possible to help ineffective tenured teachers improve or to dismiss them without undue delay and cost because of the program's clear assessment process and the labor-management collaboration that underpins it. This process of selective retention can lead to a stronger teaching force and promote an organizational culture focused on sound teaching practice. Union leaders say that the program professionalizes teaching by making teachers responsible for mentoring and evaluating their peers. With its specialized roles for Consulting Teachers (CTs), PAR also has the potential to differentiate the work and career opportunities of teachers.

### • How does PAR work?

PAR programs typically have several common elements drawn from Toledo's early model. Most have two components, one for novice teachers and one for ineffective experienced teachers. A joint labor-management committee, usually called the PAR Panel, runs the program and selects a group of expert teachers to serve as CTs. These CTs, who are the heart of PAR, support and assess teachers in the program. [More](#)

### • Who participates in PAR?

In designing a PAR program, districts must decide whether to include novices, experienced teachers or both. Including both groups from the start integrates PAR more centrally into the district's overall strategy, although this may be more difficult to do politically, cost more, and require greater capacity among staff to serve as CTs. [More](#)

## How does PAR work?

PAR programs take their main structures from the Toledo Plan. Although the details vary, most programs contain several common elements. A joint labor-management committee, usually called the PAR Panel, typically runs the program. Expert teachers, often called CTs, support and evaluate teachers in the program. The programs usually include different procedures for novice and veteran teachers. They also alter the traditional responsibilities of principals for teacher evaluation.

### • PAR Panel

The PAR Panel is a joint labor-management group that runs the program. It designs or refines the program's components, manages the budget, and is responsible for selecting, training, and supervising CTs. The Panel holds regular meetings where CTs present their assessments of teachers and make recommendations about their future employment. Panel members listen to these presentations, question the CTs, and eventually decide whether to recommend that the district retain or dismiss the teachers. The PAR Panel includes representatives from both the teachers union and administration. Most districts include an equal number from each group or, in some cases, a slight majority of teachers. Representatives from the union and administration either co-chair the meetings or alternate as chair.



### • Consulting Teachers

Consulting teachers, who typically are known and respected as expert teachers, mentor new teachers and assist low-performing veteran teachers. They are chosen through a competitive selection process conducted by the PAR Panel. In most districts, CTs are released full-time from classroom teaching for three to five years and are responsible for a caseload of 10 to 20 teachers. They earn a substantial yearly stipend (\$3,000 to \$10,000) in addition to their regular pay. A few programs use part-time CTs, who split their responsibilities between PAR and classroom teaching or carry out their PAR work on top of a full-time teaching load. The CTs observe their teachers at work and provide the support they think will help them succeed in meeting the district's standards. They also conduct formal observations and keep detailed records about each teacher's performance. Based on these assessments, the CTs write comprehensive reports, documenting each teacher's progress in meeting the district's standards. They present their reports to the PAR Panel and in most districts recommend whether the teachers in their caseload should be rehired or dismissed. *NOTE: Districts have various names for the CT role (e.g., Intern Consultant, Mentor, Teacher Evaluator).*

### • Novice Program

In most districts, PAR serves as the induction program for new teachers. In addition to providing advice on instruction and classroom management, the CTs help their novices set up their classrooms, secure class supplies, and navigate the first year of teaching. They provide detailed feedback and support to help their novices meet the district's standards and they assess their progress. In most cases, the CTs provide a preliminary report of their novices' progress to the PAR Panel several months into the school year. Then, in the Spring, they provide a summary assessment, reporting whether the teacher has met the district standards and, in most cases, recommending whether or not the novice teacher should be rehired.

### • Intervention Program

**“There is incredible power in having the president of the teachers association and several teachers in the room saying, ‘[This teacher’s ] behavior isn’t acceptable. We’ve got to make a change.’”**

**—San Juan Panel Member**

Most districts also include low-performing experienced teachers in their PAR program. CTs provide intensive support and assistance to teachers on Intervention. If they progress satisfactorily, the CT recommends to the Panel that they be released from PAR. However, if the teachers don’t improve, they can be dismissed. Usually, it’s the principal who refers an experienced teacher to Intervention, although in some districts an unsatisfactory evaluation automatically triggers a referral. Most districts allow teachers to refer their peers to PAR, although this rarely happens. Once a teacher has been recommended

for Intervention, the Panel typically assigns a CT to investigate whether the teacher is meeting the district’s instructional standards. If the teacher is found to be failing, the Panel assigns a CT to the case. As with novice programs, the CT works closely with the experienced teacher, providing assistance and assessing progress. In most districts, Intervention is an open-ended process which may last up to two years. The teacher remains in PAR until she has met district standards and can be released from the program or until the Panel decides she is not making enough progress and should be dismissed. Intervention is a high-stakes process, which lays out a path to dismissal and challenges veteran teachers’ assumptions about job security under state tenure laws.

### • Principals

Principals or assistant principals traditionally are the only ones responsible for evaluating teachers. That changes when a district adopts PAR and CTs evaluate some teachers. Having CTs assist with evaluation may open time for the principal to focus on other aspects of school leadership and increase the school’s capacity to support teachers. In addition, PAR eliminates the need for principals to single-handedly undertake the long process of removing ineffective teachers. However, some principals respond to PAR as a threat to their authority and either oppose or resist it. Over time, however, principals often come to accept and appreciate PAR, especially when they see the quality of work that the CTs do. Importantly, in most districts, PAR’s Intervention component cannot work effectively without principals’ support and participation in referring struggling teachers.

## *Who participates in PAR?*

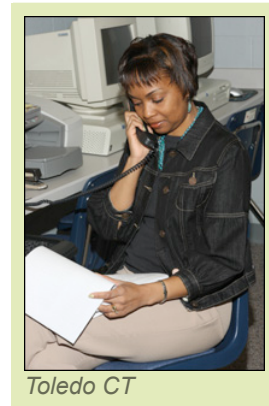
### **• Does the program include novices, experienced teachers, or both?**

Most districts start by including only novices in PAR, which serves as their induction program. If new teachers don't reach proficiency by Spring, their contracts may not be renewed. Over time, most teachers in the district have experienced the program, which reinforces a professional culture of teaching. Most districts also develop a smaller Intervention program, providing support and evaluation to experienced teachers who are struggling in the classroom. Teachers on Intervention must demonstrate clear improvement or they will be dismissed. Several districts also offer a voluntary support program for experienced teachers who decide they need additional help.

Most of the districts we studied include both novice and experienced teachers in PAR, although few did so from the start. Including both groups can enable the district to have a comprehensive and integrated approach to support and evaluation, thus sending a clear message that the district is committed to the same standards of professional practice for all teachers.

However, including experienced teachers in PAR can generate controversy among union members if they philosophically oppose peer review or personally know the teachers involved. New teachers have fewer personal relationships with other teachers and do not have permanent contracts or protections under state tenure laws. Thus, deciding not to renew a new teacher is far less challenging for a program than dismissing a tenured teacher. Thus, it may be simpler and more politically feasible to start with just a novice program. Within a few years, success with the novice component of PAR can build support for the more comprehensive program.

Because PAR programs are expensive, beginning with a novice-only program may also limit initial program costs. For example, Syracuse, which began PAR in 2005, focuses its program resources on novice teachers, although the district talked from the beginning about eventually including experienced teachers in a voluntary component.



*Toledo CT*



## Costs and Benefits of PAR

PAR programs are expensive, and districts often must be creative and draw on various sources to fund them. However, administrators and union leaders repeatedly said that PAR's benefits – both financially and in terms of its effect on teacher quality – far outweigh its costs. District and union leaders talked about the program as an investment in their teachers. By reducing district costs in other areas, most PAR programs appeared to pay for themselves.

**“A little bit over 70 percent of my budget is spent on people—\$680 million. It's all about people. It's all about talent. And the process, I think, is a great process in developing great teachers and retaining great teachers. The retention is amazing.”**

**– Rochester Superintendent Brizard**



*Jean-Claude Brizard, Rochester Superintendent*

### • What does PAR cost?

PAR programs are expensive. Estimates of program costs range from approximately \$4,000 to \$7,000 per participant. By far, the largest expense is the cost of hiring teachers to fill the classes that CTs leave. Districts must pay additional costs, including stipends for CTs and PAR Panel members, compensation for program directors and support staff, and administrative expenses like office space, computers, and mileage.

### • How do districts pay for PAR?

Most districts use local revenues to fund their PAR program, though many supplement those resources with state grants for teacher evaluation and mentoring as well as federal support for teacher quality initiatives.

### • What are the financial benefits of PAR?

Districts report that PAR ultimately helps them save money in several areas. First, PAR is an intensive induction program for new teachers, which may reduce costly turnover. Second, PAR programs reduce the cost of dismissing tenured teachers, which otherwise can be very expensive.



*A new teacher in Toledo*

### • What are the other costs and benefits of PAR?

Even though PAR is expensive, most people described PAR's broader effects rather than its financial costs and benefits. Respondents from all districts studied spoke of PAR as an effective way to attract, support, and retain teachers. Superintendents and union leaders both said that students pay the price for ineffective teaching. They saw PAR as a way to improve instruction, increase teacher professionalism, change the culture of teaching, and improve labor-management relations.



## What does PAR cost?

Few districts could list the exact costs associated with their PAR program because those costs often were shared with other programs. In general, though, administrators acknowledged that PAR requires a substantial financial investment. The biggest cost, by far, comes from hiring teachers to fill the classes of CTs who are released either full-time or part-time. Although these replacement teachers may have less experience and earn less than the CTs, the full cost of their salary, fringe benefits, and training is significant.

Beyond the costs of replacing CTs, PAR programs must cover other expenses which may include:

- Additional stipends for Consulting Teachers (ranging from \$3,000 to \$10,000 across the districts studied);
- Salary and benefits for a program director;
- Salary and benefits for administrative/clerical support staff;
- Stipends for PAR Panel members;
- Substitute teachers for PAR Panel members to attend meetings;
- Substitute teachers for teachers in the program to visit and observe other classes;
- Office space for CTs;
- Computers for CTs;
- Mileage reimbursements for CT travel; and
- Training costs for CTs and PAR Panel members.



*Rochester CT and new teacher*

The actual costs of PAR vary widely across districts, depending on the program's size and design. Toledo estimates that its total program costs just over \$700,000 a year, with the salaries of replacement teachers accounting for nearly 80% of the budget. Cincinnati reports that their peer review program costs approximately \$1.2 million a year, although this includes some costs for the larger Teacher Evaluation System. The Rochester program, which has a full-time director and nearly 200 part-time CTs, has a budget of \$2 million. Given differences in the size of the districts, these costs per teacher in PAR range from approximately \$4,000 in Rochester to approximately \$7,000 in Toledo.

Districts considering PAR should account for the costs of programs currently in place when estimating the costs of PAR. For example, PAR often takes the place of traditional mentoring programs, which exist in most districts across the country. Intensive mentoring, like the New Teacher Center's program, can cost between \$6,000 and \$7,000 per teacher. Similarly, some districts have developed career ladders that already reward teachers for specialized roles or advanced certification under the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. These teachers may be receiving a stipend yet not be performing additional, valuable work. PAR provides an opportunity to use these teachers' knowledge and skills more effectively. In estimating the costs of PAR, a district should only consider the incremental cost of the PAR program above other programs that it will replace.

## *How do districts pay for PAR?*

For the PAR program to be sustained, it must have consistent and stable funding. Most of the districts we studied paid for PAR from their local operating budget. This arrangement allows the district to start the program without waiting for external assistance, but it also means that the program's funding can change unpredictably from year-to-year. For example, in Cincinnati, where local revenues fund the program, the district feared that a tax levy might fail and force cutbacks in PAR. However the levy passed and the program was maintained.



*A new teacher in Toledo*

**“You need to secure funding. We’re in a position where we pretty much can predict the funding from year to year. We know what we can support. . . . I think it would be devastating to the program if we had to scrape every year to see if we could cover our expenses.”**

**—San Juan Panel member**

Given the costs of PAR, though, most districts combine local funds with support from state or federal grants. Rochester uses both federal Title I and state mentoring dollars to support its program. In San Juan, state support of PAR programs enabled the district to start its program. San Juan also relies on funding from federal Title II, Part A and state money.

## *What are the financial benefits of PAR?*

PAR programs provide several key financial benefits to districts. Studies suggest that the financial costs of teacher turnover are high, with urban districts spending \$10,000 to \$20,000 to replace a novice teacher who leaves. Some evidence suggests that PAR reduces teacher turnover. Rochester, one of the districts that did track turnover, reported a retention rate of approximately 90%, far greater than in other urban districts. Although the other districts that we studied did not track turnover systematically, they reported similar patterns. It's impossible to say for sure that PAR produced strong retention rates. However, union and district officials were convinced that PAR helps attract and keep good teachers in their districts because of the support it provides. They also said that PAR encourages selective retention, screening out teachers who fail to meet standards, identifying those who need help, and retaining those who are doing a good job.

Most districts with PAR have an Intervention program that can lead to the dismissal of experienced teachers. Dismissing teachers with tenure is ordinarily a very expensive undertaking. District officials reported that dismissals outside of PAR typically range into what one called the “double digit thousands.” PAR programs are built on strong labor-management collaboration, with union members being involved throughout the review process. Thus, districts reported that very few dismissal decisions were challenged, none successfully. Because PAR helps to ensure that teachers’ due process rights are met, unions can satisfy their duty of fair representation without facing legal challenges. In other districts, such challenges are so costly in time and dollars that the district avoids dismissals altogether.

Calculating the financial benefits of PAR is tricky, though, since the potential cost-savings of PAR often come in areas that districts tend to ignore. A district that introduces PAR won't save money on induction unless it already invests in a comprehensive program. Similarly, districts that don't dismiss incompetent teachers never incur the costs of dismissal. They may not save money with PAR because their dismissal costs are already negligible.



*New teachers attend summer training in Rochester*

**“The cost doesn’t bother me at all. It can be very, very expensive. But I think it’s an essential investment in launching teachers in our district successfully.”**

**—Rochester District Administrator**

## *What are the other costs and benefits of PAR?*

PAR programs clearly have financial costs and generate cost-savings for school districts. Nonetheless, district and union leaders did not usually talk about the program's costs and benefits in financial terms. Instead, they focused on the broader benefits for the district and the students it serves. Some expressed concern that the program removes expert teachers from the classroom, but they also noted these teachers can have wider influence in their roles as CTs. Across the board, these officials focused on how PAR raises teacher quality and can help improve student performance. They acknowledged that the strong induction component, improved teacher retention rates, and ability to assist or remove underperforming teachers can save the district money, but they spoke more about the positive effects that PAR has on teachers and, as a result, on their students. They viewed expenses of PAR as investments in the district's human capital rather than a cost the district had to bear. Several union members and administrators, including one Superintendent, called the program "priceless."

**"There's a huge benefit because, number one, if you tenure somebody that's not ready, those are million dollar decisions."**

**– Minneapolis District Administrator**

Administrators and union leaders also talked about the price students pay when they have a poor teacher. They told of many experienced teachers who improved substantially through their experience in PAR and noted that when that intervention failed, the teacher could be removed from the classroom. In both cases, students stood to benefit.

**"So to me, the biggest benefit is getting this dialogue, continuing this dialogue about what good teaching practice is."**

**– Cincinnati District Administrator**

Beyond these specific advantages, PAR can help bring about larger cultural changes in the district. Many said that PAR contributes to a strong, professional culture of teaching and increased collegiality among peers. A steady focus on teacher evaluation stimulates dialogue about good professional practice. Several individuals argued that PAR achieves the type of broader transformation that many other induction and evaluation systems promise but seldom deliver.

Furthermore, both administrators and union leaders reported that PAR improves labor-management relations in the district. Several union leaders reported that the number of grievances overall had fallen as the parties learned to work together in PAR. Having succeeded in establishing PAR, they ventured collaboratively into other areas.

**"I believe in this program completely. I have seen the difference it makes. The success stories are ones to really cheer about."**

**– San Juan Panel Member**

Key stakeholders in these districts viewed the novice program as a strong induction program, a worthwhile investment to launch careers in teaching. By closely supervising teachers as they enter the schools, PAR also improves decisions about tenure. Both administrators and union leaders recognized that granting tenure has long-term consequences for the district and said that PAR helps them make good decisions.



*Professional development for new teachers in Rochester*

**“[PAR] was by luck or genius or some combination of both, a very good thing. It was good for the district. It was good for those individual teachers. It was good for the lead teachers. It was good for the union, because it gave the union a different stake in what was going on.”**

**– Rochester Teachers Union Leader**

Finally, PAR benefits CTs, themselves. Most said that the role offered professional challenges and opportunities that were new and rewarding. Former CTs often said that the experience was the best professional development they'd ever had. They returned to the classroom revived and inspired by a sense of new possibility and a better understanding of what makes for good and successful teaching. These former CTs also enjoyed a measure of respect as instructional experts when they returned to their classroom, where they continued to influence others' practice more widely, even outside of their formal CT role. Other former CTs eventually moved into various leadership roles, carrying with them all that they had learned about teachers, classrooms, and schools.

## *Designing Your PAR Program*

Designing a PAR program is not a simple task. In most districts that we studied, teachers and administrators came together in a series of meetings to choose the elements for their program. Such a planning team has to choose how best to structure the program, how to align it with to the district's other initiatives, how to launch it successfully, and how to maintain it. Because each district is different, there is no one best design, no foolproof recipe for PAR. Instead each district must tailor PAR to its own context.

Nonetheless, the PAR programs in the districts we studied were similar in many ways. These districts had a wealth of experience with PAR and they were generous in sharing the lessons they had learned. Here, we provide information about several of the most important decisions that districts make as they design their PAR program. Click on the topics for further explanations about each component. For more information about how union leaders and administrators collaborated for program development, refer to the tab on Labor-Management Relations or [click here](#).



*Rochester's Novice Program*



## The Consulting Teacher's Role

Consulting Teachers (CTs) play a leading role in PAR by working with the teachers in their caseload to help them meet the district's performance standards. They do this primarily through frequent scheduled and unscheduled visits as well as ongoing email contact with each teacher. They provide support through such activities as:

- Developing a growth plan based on a teacher's strengths and weaknesses
- Observing lessons and providing feedback in post-observation conferences
- Co-planning lessons
- Modeling a lesson
- Providing resources and materials
- Arranging a visit to another classroom to demonstrate a new practice



Toledo CT and new teacher

At regular intervals throughout the year, CTs submit written and oral reports about each teacher's performance. Reports include observation notes along with an assessment of each teacher's progress in meeting the district's teaching standards. These reports, usually combined with in-person presentations, constitute the basis of the PAR Panel's employment recommendations. In some districts, CTs investigate whether an experienced teacher should be placed on Intervention. In many ways, the success of PAR rests upon getting the right people in the role of CT and ensuring that they have the skills and resources to do their work. Program designers need to consider how they will select, train, and compensate CTs, as well as how they will structure the role to maximize its effectiveness.

**“In general, principals are generalists. Some know content well and others know content not as well. The teachers know their content. If we choose the right teachers who are knowledgeable and have the experience in their content areas, you can't have a better group of people out in the field working with their colleagues, because they know what they are looking for. They know what should happen.”**

— Cincinnati Superintendent

well received by teachers and administrators involved in PAR. To ensure that PAR will attract CTs of the highest caliber, a program must conduct an open and well-organized hiring process, publicizing positions widely, recruiting strong candidates, assessing them carefully, and selecting them fairly.

### • How will CTs be trained, supported, and evaluated?

CTs take on new responsibilities. Coaching and assessing the work of peers calls for different skills than those required to succeed with students. Thus, CTs need to be prepared for a new role. Most districts provide training for new CTs, including summer workshops, professional development, and meetings throughout the year. Across the

### • Will CTs work full-time or part-time in their PAR role?

When they are appointed, most CTs leave their classroom for a term of three to five years. In some districts, however, CTs may carry a partial caseload of PAR teachers while continuing to teach their students. In deciding whether to appoint full-time or part-time CTs, a district is likely to consider whether they prefer a system that is largely school-based (which accommodates part-time CTs) or one that is centralized (which calls for full-time CTs).

### • How will the CT application and selection process work?

If CTs are skilled and respected, the program is likely to be



districts, CTs were variously supervised by Panel members, program directors, Lead CTs, and/or fellow CTs. Few districts had a formal process for evaluating the CTs' work.

- **How will the CT's caseload be determined?**

Most PAR programs have a full-time caseload of 10-15 teachers, though it can be as high as 20. When deciding how large a CT's caseload should be, program planners should consider how much time individual teachers will require. Districts will also have to decide whether or not to match CTs and teachers by grade level and/or subject area.

- **What will the CTs be paid?**

CTs receive additional pay for their work because it requires an advanced level of knowledge, skill, and responsibility. Some districts also compensate CTs for the extra time they spend in summer training days or weekend workshops.

**“They’re worth their weight in gold.  
We should have more.”**

**– Minneapolis District  
Administrator**

- **What can or must CTs do when their term is over?**

Many districts require that CTs return to the classroom after three to five years in the role, sometimes preventing them from entering administrative roles for a year or two. This is done to reinforce the sense that a CT is a “peer” and to ensure that the CTs will continue to enrich the schools with the best teaching practices.

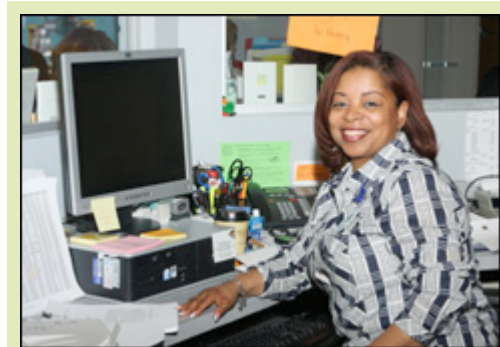
## Will CTs work full-time or part-time in their PAR role?

Most districts hire a cohort of CTs who leave classroom teaching for three to five years and serve teachers in schools throughout the district. In a few districts, however, CTs continue to teach either full-time or part-time while taking on a partial caseload of teachers in PAR. These design choices affect the CTs' work, the size of the CT cohort, the potential to match teachers by grade and subject area, and the management of the program.

**District-based CTs:** Most PAR programs have district-based CTs. The PAR Panel hires a team of teachers (between 10-40 depending on the size of the district) to serve as CTs for a designated term of two to five years. The number of CTs hired depends on the size and composition of the new teacher cohort for the following school year. For example, a district experiencing a great deal of turnover at the middle school level or in special education would appoint more CTs with those backgrounds. Most larger districts can match CTs and participating teachers by grade level and subject area. However, smaller districts that hire fewer CTs (six in Syracuse and ten in San Juan) have less flexibility with assignments and CTs have to coach and evaluate based on their general knowledge of pedagogy, drawing upon the expertise of fellow CTs or content specialists as needed.

**School-based CTs:** Rochester relies primarily on school-based CTs. Two-thirds of Rochester's Consulting Teachers (approximately 120) teach full-time while serving as a CT for one or two teachers with whom they meet during preparation periods, before and after school, and at lunch. Most of the remaining CTs continue to teach part-time and carry slightly larger caseloads of three to six teachers. As a result, CTs in Rochester generally work with teachers in their building and are usually closely matched by grade level and subject area. They say that this arrangement works well because they can help new teachers understand a particular school's norms, procedures, and expectations. Notably, because CTs' caseloads are small, Rochester employs close to 200 CTs each year, which keeps a full-time director very busy. The district also hires two or three full-time CTs each year to allow for more flexibility in assigning cases across the district.

Several districts maintain a pool of CTs who are trained and available to do the work but are not yet employed as CTs by the district. PAR Panels in Toledo, Rochester, San Juan, and Syracuse deliberately identify more qualified candidates than they need at any given time. These candidates then wait to be "activated" as CTs if a CT withdraws from the program, if the number of new teachers in a particular grade level or subject suddenly increases, or if the regular rotation of CTs out of the role creates an opening.



Toledo CT

**"It keeps me energized. It keeps my foot in what all these people are going through. I can totally help them with everything they need to be helped with, because I'm seeing it every single day."**

**– Rochester CT**

## How will the CT application and selection process work?



A PAR program's reputation depends to a great extent on the quality and credibility of the CTs. If they are skilled and respected, the program is likely to be well received by teachers and administrators. To ensure that PAR will attract CTs of the highest caliber, a program must conduct an open and well-organized hiring process, publicizing positions widely, recruiting strong candidates and assessing them carefully. CT positions are routinely advertised in the union bulletin and the district's job postings. However, many CTs said that they only decided to apply for the role when they were encouraged by colleagues, principals, union leaders, or current CTs, who thought they would do a good job. In districts where PAR has existed for some time, CTs often became interested in the role through their own positive experience as a novice teacher in the program.

**“CTs need to be quality people. They need to be master teachers. They need to know what is expected. They need to be driven in many ways, themselves, in pursuit of excellence and their knowledge and understanding of what it takes to get the job done and to do it right.”**

**– Toledo Principal**



CTs in San Juan

All districts require a minimum level of teaching experience to qualify for the role. Rochester requires seven years; all other districts require five. Several districts (Rochester, Cincinnati, and Montgomery County) that have career ladders require that candidates achieve “lead teacher” status before applying for the role.

Many CTs described the application process as rigorous—some called it “grueling.” In all districts, applicants must submit evidence of the caliber of their work, including some combination of references, written application, interview, and classroom observation. All districts require a recommendation from the teacher's principal and another teacher. In Syracuse, Rochester, and Toledo, teachers must also submit a letter of reference from their union representative. All districts require a writing sample and an

interview, which is usually conducted by the PAR Panel or a subcommittee. Most CTs recall the interview as an intimidating process in which they faced a number of interviewers asking tough questions. Many districts ask applicants point blank, “Would you be able to fire someone?” In addition to conducting in-person interviews, Panel members or Lead CTs in several districts observe the applicants teaching during announced or unannounced visits.

**“It was rather grueling. I had never been in an interview with so many people in front of me before.”**

**– Syracuse CT**

**“[During the application process,] someone would walk in your room, ask for your lesson plans, and watch you teach for an hour and critique you. So it was very stressful.”**

**– Toledo CT**

In most districts, there is serious competition for CT positions. Cincinnati, Montgomery County, and Minneapolis report that they receive at least ten applications for each opening. San Juan and Toledo receive two to six applications for each position, depending on the licensure area needed. Rochester, which employs close to 200 CTs each year, hires approximately four out of five applicants. In its second year of the program, Syracuse hired about the same proportion.

## How will CTs be trained, supported, and evaluated?



CTs take on new responsibilities. Coaching and assessing the work of peers calls for different skills than those required to succeed with students. Thus, CTs need to be prepared for a new role. They need to be well versed in adult development and understand how individuals surrender previously-held belief systems and adopt new ones. They must be able to build trust with colleagues, especially those who are feeling very vulnerable. And they must be confident in maintaining high expectations and encouragement when they encounter poor teaching or lack of effort. They also need to know how to allocate their time among the teachers in their caseload and how to keep detailed and accurate records of their work.



*Rochester CT and new teacher*

**“It’s a huge learning curve. People come to this position at the top of their game. They’re the leaders at their schools. And this is a sort of kick to the ego, because you have to learn so much in this job.”**

**– Montgomery County Lead CT**

Most districts provide CTs with formal pre-service and in-service training as well as informal opportunities to learn from their peers in the CT cohort. CTs praised the training they received in conducting standards-based evaluations, coaching their peers, and completing the paperwork and other logistical aspects of the job.

**“What I learned so much about is how to establish rapport with people when you’re trying to get them to trust you and how to use that rapport to help them find their own path.”**

**– Toledo CT**



*Toledo CTs Collaborate*

Pre-service training usually focuses on coaching techniques. Some districts offer a summer course conducted by a nationally-recognized organization, such as the New Teachers Center, Research for Better Teaching, or Pathwise. Training by experienced CTs also prepares them for the documentation that they will be required to complete and the legal issues they may encounter on the job. Some districts require new CTs to shadow experienced CTs before assuming their role. Toledo has new CTs attend a PAR Panel meeting as a way of learning about the role.

All districts also provide ongoing training for Consulting Teachers throughout the year. The frequency of this training ranges from once a week to once a month, with varying topics and structure. At meetings in Cincinnati and Minneapolis, CTs regularly discuss examples of teaching that they encounter in their work or watch on videos. This allows them to achieve shared judgments about the district’s standards. CTs say these sessions—though

sometimes tedious—are essential to ensure that their evaluations will be fair. Rochester's program director organizes voluntary "Collegial Circles" where experienced CTs facilitate small group discussions (usually organized by grade level or subject) about coaching techniques. In Montgomery County and Cincinnati, pairs of Panel members (called "PAR Pairs", consisting of one teacher and one administrator) lead small groups of CTs to review individual cases and provide feedback on their work.

In addition to structured training, CTs in all districts report that informal support from their peers is tremendously helpful. In Toledo, San Juan, and Syracuse, CTs meet together regularly in a less structured format to share ideas and get peer feedback on their cases. Districts facilitate this exchange by having the CTs share common office space, where they complete paperwork and engage in informal discussions about their cases. CTs say that they turn to colleagues for help in developing growth plans, preparing for Panel presentations, solving problems and sharing feedback about individual cases. In Toledo, for example, CTs hold mock Panel meetings, role playing to practice their presentations. Their CT colleagues also provide the emotional support they need to carry out the difficult aspects of their work.

**"The support of this group [of CTs] is invaluable. There is no way I could do this in isolation."**

**– San Juan CT**

PAR Panels supervise CTs either formally or informally. In some districts, Panel members informally evaluate CTs when they present to the Panel. Other districts have developed more formal approaches, such as having Panel members observe and evaluate CTs at work or asking PAR Pairs to prepare written evaluations, based on how the CTs work with their caseload. Several districts survey teachers and principals about the work that CTs do. CTs in Rochester also evaluate each other by observing a CT colleague at work, providing feedback and submitting a peer evaluation to the director of the program.

**"We went and did a mock observation on a teacher at the beginning of the school year. And we all scripted it out. And then we compared notes to kind of calibrate."**

**– Cincinnati CT**



*CT Training in Syracuse*



### *How will the CT's caseload be determined?*

The caseload for full-time CTs is usually 10-15 teachers, though it can be as large as 20. A manageable caseload allows CTs to visit teachers in their classroom every week or two and keep up with demands of documentation—completing communication logs, reviewing observation notes, and filing formal reports.

The size of caseloads may change with budget cuts or increases. Also, most PAR programs reduce the CT's caseload when it includes a low-performing tenured teacher, who usually requires more of a CT's time than a new teacher. Districts usually expect CTs to visit and observe a teacher on Intervention at least once a week, although in practice, it often turns out to be more. As a result, several districts use a weighted formula in assigning caseloads. Toledo and Montgomery County count an experienced teacher on Intervention as the equivalent of two novice teachers, while San Juan counts that experienced teacher as the equivalent of three novices.

In most districts, experienced teachers must be referred to Intervention in the spring, which means that experienced teachers are assigned before novices and caseloads can account for different demands of the teachers. However, in Rochester and Minneapolis, experienced teachers may enter Intervention at any time during the year and there is no weighting system. If an Intervention case begins after the start of school, the PAR director of the program rearranges caseloads so that a CT in the appropriate subject and grade level can be freed up to work with the teacher on Intervention.



*Toledo CT*



### *What will the CTs be paid?*

CTs receive additional pay for their work, which requires an advanced level of knowledge, skill, and responsibility. This stipend ranges from \$3,000 in Cincinnati to \$6,150 in Toledo. Rochester CTs receive an additional 5% of base pay for working with one teacher and 10% for working with two. Districts also pay CTs to work additional days during the summer—four to five days in San Juan and Rochester to a full month in Montgomery County. The stipend and summer days combined can result in a pay increase for CTs of up to \$10,000. These are temporary benefits, though, which they relinquish at the end of their term. When they return to the classroom, CTs will be paid on the regular teachers' salary scale, having advanced a salary step for each year they worked as CT.



*San Juan CT*

## *What can or must CTs do when their term is over?*

Some district programs restrict the jobs that CTs can apply for when they complete their term. In Montgomery County, CTs are required to return to “school-based” positions which included staff developer and teacher but not school administrator or district curriculum developer, for example. In other districts that do not have such requirements, CTs often describe a union expectation that they will return to teaching once their terms were complete. There were three primary reasons for this expectation. First, union officials and CTs in particular said that it helps to establish their credentials as “peers.” They said that if the role were to be viewed as a stepping stone to administration, teachers would value the advice of CTs less than when the role is really considered to be a peer.



*Syracuse CTs*

Districts decide whether or not to guarantee that CTs can return to the classroom or school which they left when they became CTs. In some districts, Consulting Teachers are granted the right to return to their exact assignment; in other districts CTs are guaranteed a spot at the school where they worked or get priority if a space at their former school opens. In other districts, positions are not reserved and CTs enter the district’s general job pool at the end of their term.

**“And so, there was fear, definitely. ‘He’s no longer one of us. He’s one of them.’ There were people who definitely responded like that. I did a lot of PR work explaining to people: The first thing that I want to do is help my peers become better teachers. And as evidence of that, I cannot become an administrator in three years. That is not allowed.”**

**– Montgomery County CT**

The second reason is that returning to the classroom helps CTs stay current with the day-to-day experience of teachers. Most CTs said that after a few years, it is easy to forget the emotional demands of daily teaching. In addition, CTs said that they quickly become out of touch with new systems and curriculum introduced in the district. In order to be most helpful to the teachers whom they coach, they need to be close to practice themselves. And finally, district officials and some CTs also said that the requirement ensures that CTs share their newly-gained skills with peers in schools. After considerable professional development and years of experience coaching and evaluating practice, CTs are poised to be excellent practitioners and to contribute a great deal at the school level.

**“I went back a much better teacher. I went back knowing the big picture about the school system, instead of my little school, my little room, my little niche. . . . And I shared more outside of my [classroom] door, mentoring people who just needed me.”**

**– Toledo CT**

## The PAR Panel

PAR is unique because it is run collaboratively by the teachers union and district administrators—two groups who are often expected to be adversaries. Because PAR programs can be controversial and the work of the CTs can lead eventually to the tenure or dismissal of a teacher, the program must be carefully and fairly governed.

Representatives from the teachers union and the district administration work together to jointly govern the PAR program through its PAR Panel, composed of equal or nearly equal representation from each group. The Panel meets regularly and is responsible for managing all aspects of the program. Its primary responsibility, though, is to review the cases of participating teachers and to judge whether, based on evidence collected by the CTs, the district should continue to employ those teachers. The Panel's governing process works well when all Panel members are committed to a shared goal, ensuring that every teacher is effective. Because the Panel conducts its work as a single body, the decisions it makes tend to be widely accepted and are seldom challenged.

**“The people on the Panel are of a common mind. Whether they represent the teachers or they represent the administration, they are there with the interest in whether the teachers are meeting standards.”**

**– San Juan District Administrator**



*Meeting of Syracuse PAR Panel*

In designing the PAR Panel, districts must make a number of decisions:

- **Under PAR, which responsibilities will the Panel assume?**

In some districts, the Panel is responsible only for the PAR program, overseeing PAR's implementation, hearing reports about teacher progress, and making recommendations to the Superintendent about teacher employment. In others, the Panel has a wider set of responsibilities for teacher professional development and evaluation. How a district configures the responsibilities of the Panel depends on how PAR fits with its current evaluation and professional development programs. Ultimately, whether the Panel has responsibilities outside of PAR or not, most Panels are

responsible for a similar set of tasks related to governing the program.

- **How often will the PAR Panel meet?**

Some Panels meet as frequently as every week, while others meet only “as needed,” which usually means quarterly. Meeting schedules are determined by program size and other decisions, such as who will attend each meeting and what must be accomplished at each meeting.

- **Who will be assigned to the Panel, how will they be chosen, and will they be paid?**

PAR Panels have five to twelve members, including teachers, principals, central office administrators, and union leaders. The superintendent and the union president choose their group's representatives, and then they review the other's recommendations before the appointments are made.

- **How long will Panel members serve?**

Most districts do not specify term limits for Panel members, although Montgomery County recently introduced 5 year term limits.

- **Who will lead the Panel?**

Typically, the Panel is jointly led by one union leader and one administrator, who either co-chair the meetings or alternate annually as meeting chairs.

- **How will the Panel carry out its work?**

Because the Panel is uniquely designed to provide equal voice to teachers and administrators in the oversight of PAR, it can ensure due process for teachers. Teachers and administrators are involved from the moment that teachers are first referred to PAR and the process is widely perceived to be a fair one.

### *Under PAR, which responsibilities will the Panel assume?*

Program planners will decide, based on the other programs and professional development in their districts, whether PAR will be governed by its own Panel or if PAR will be one of several programs overseen by one larger governing body. Within PAR, the specific responsibilities of PAR Panels vary, but most are responsible for:

- determining eligibility for teachers' involvement in PAR,
- overseeing the selection, training, supervision, and evaluation of CTs,
- reviewing reports and hearing presentations about the progress of the teachers in PAR,
- making recommendations to the superintendent about future employment of teachers in PAR,
- setting the budget and monitoring spending, and
- evaluating the program.

Having a Panel dedicated solely to PAR may mean that members have enough time to closely monitor all aspects of the program. However, it may also mean that PAR is not connected to other important initiatives in the district. Thus, officials may have to take extra steps to ensure that PAR is well linked to the people and programs that should interact with it.

Having PAR integrated with other programs, and thus having the Panel exercise broader responsibility, makes it possible for PAR to be part of a larger human capital system. However, if the Panel has many diverse responsibilities and PAR is only one of them, the program may not get the time or attention it needs. Having a Panel with broader responsibilities usually requires delegating more management tasks to Lead CTs or a program director.

### *How often will the PAR Panel meet?*

Most Panels meet every month or six weeks, although Rochester's Panel meets weekly. Toledo's Panel meets one day in October to review possible non-renewals and for as long as is necessary in January and March to consider the cases of teachers who might be dismissed. At a final meeting in May Toledo's Panel hears appeals. Districts decide how often to meet in response to the scope of its program and needs. In some districts, the entire Panel meets every time, while others convene only sub-committees.

In Rochester, where the Panel oversees the entire Career in Teaching Program, the full Panel meets weekly. San Juan's Panel has decided to hear their CTs report about each teacher at 6-week intervals. The entire Minneapolis PAR Panel meets monthly to discuss broader issues, such as caseload or budget, while a sub-committee, called the PAR Review Committee, meets to review novice teachers who are not being recommended for rehire and veteran teachers who are being recommended for termination.

Some districts hold full-day review meetings twice each year and provide substitutes for Panel members who must leave their classroom to attend. Other Panels meet after school to try to minimize the disruption to Panel members' everyday jobs.

## *Who will be assigned to the Panel, how will they be chosen, and will they be paid?*

The PAR Panels we visited had five to twelve members. Most were composed of teachers and administrators in equal numbers, although several programs give teachers a one-person majority. Administrators on the Panels typically included principals and central office administrators. Some, though not all, teacher members were former CTs. Some districts save certain administrative seats on the Panel for whoever holds a designated position, such as the director of human resources.

The presence of principals on the Panel is important, since their work is directly affected by PAR and their acceptance of the program is key to its success. In Montgomery County, all administrators on the Panel are principals—no central office administrators are included. Toledo had no principals on its Panel until two years ago when an independent program evaluator recommended that one be added. Some involved say that having a principal on the Panel has improved communication with other principals in the district. Also, principals and union building representatives can attend one meeting, which allows them to better understand how PAR works.

The success of the PAR Panel rests on the joint character of their discussions and decisions. Thus, Panel members must not only know how to review teaching performance, but they also must be good collaborators. In most districts, the superintendent and the union president choose their group's representatives to the Panel. In Montgomery County, the president of the principals union chooses management's representatives, all of whom are principals. Often those appointing the Panel members review each other's recommendations before the appointments are made. This informal vetting across union-management lines helps ensure that the Panel meetings will be collaborative, rather than contentious. It also may contribute to the fact that all districts we studied reported that Panel members do not vote along party lines.

**“When we walked into this whole thing, everybody pretty much took their hat off and we are ‘The Panel.’ It’s not like ‘the administrative camp’ and ‘the teacher camp.’”**

**– Syracuse PAR Panel Member**

Having a majority of teachers on the Panel, as San Juan does, may make it easier to sell the program to teachers and to ratify the initial contract. However, in the long run, this appears not to affect the outcome of cases. In all districts the Panel members were said to “take off their hats” when they attended Panel meetings.

Some Panels compensate their members, while others do not. In Rochester, where the Panel meets weekly, members are paid \$5,000 per year. However, in other districts, such as Minneapolis, Toledo and Cincinnati, Panel members are not compensated beyond their regular salary. In districts where Panel members are not paid, substitutes are provided so that all teachers can attend meetings.





*Rochester novices succeed*

### *How long will Panel members serve?*

Usually, Panel members serve until they decide they should leave, find they have too many other obligations, or change jobs. Some principals move off the Panel after a year or two because of time constraints, whereas teachers tend to serve over a number of years. In a few cases, teachers served as Panel members and then continued as administrators on the Panel when they became principals.

Program co-chairs in several districts mentioned the importance of having continuity on the Panel so that people understand their responsibilities and how the PAR process unfolds. However, there also are good reasons for introducing term limits. The Panel benefits from new ideas and perspectives when the membership changes. Also, when their term ends, former members can effectively spread knowledge of PAR throughout the district. It is important, however, that terms be staggered so that continuity can be maintained.

**“I think it’s important that there’s continuity on the Panel, and so my commitment was ‘as long as you need me.’”**

**– *Minneapolis Principal***

### *Who will lead the Panel?*

The Panel is led by one union leader and one administrator who either co-lead every meeting or split the responsibility, trading off each year. Panel chairs said that the formal arrangement of Panel leadership is far less important than having the chairs communicate frequently about the Panel's work.

Panel co-chairs said that they are in regular contact throughout the year. They confer about meeting agendas and setting the program budget, and they often solve problems outside of meetings. Many of the Panel chairs we interviewed mentioned frequent email exchanges with their co-chairs and standing check-in meetings.

## How will the Panel carry out its work?

Panels we studied have very similar responsibilities. However, the way in which they do the actual work varies in practice.

**“We are all focused on the goal, and the goal is to protect children and to make sure that children get the very best adults to work with. . . . We are all equals in that room. We are all peers in that room.”**

**– Montgomery County, Panel Member**

### **Decide whether a teacher should be placed on PAR**

In most districts, the Panel decides, based on a CT's assessment, whether an experienced teacher who had been referred to Intervention should be placed in the program. In other cases, a substandard evaluation triggers automatic placement in PAR, provided the teacher's supervisor has met all contractual requirements during the evaluation process. This is the case in San Juan, where an “unsatisfactory” rating in two of the six performance areas means that a teacher is placed on PAR.

### **Oversee CT selection, supervision, evaluation and training**

All of the Panels were responsible for ensuring that the CTs were effective. They conducted a careful selection process and then supervised the CTs throughout the year. Often the Panel—or one member of the Panel—is responsible for matching CTs with the referred teachers by making the best match of subject and grade level. The Panel is often responsible for arranging CT training, as well. In some districts, Panels delegate some of these responsibilities to program directors.

Montgomery County and Cincinnati support CTs by assigning each to a “PAR Pair”—one administrator and one teacher from the Panel who jointly supervise a small group of CTs. The PAR Pair may troubleshoot about problems, confer with the CTs about their caseload and reports, and provide feedback in practice presentations. Those who use PAR Pairs reported great satisfaction with this arrangement.

**“It is our responsibility to make sure that the CT and the referred teacher are getting everything that they feel they need to be successful.”**

**– San Juan Panel Member**

### **Review the progress of the teachers in PAR**

Reviewing the CTs' reports about their work with teachers is central to the Panel's responsibilities. Panels decide how often to review these cases and whether to deliberate about every case, only cases where the teacher is not meeting standards, or only cases about which the principal and CT disagree. In general, districts give more time and attention to Intervention cases because the consequence—potential dismissal of a tenured teacher—is greater. Usually CTs attend Panel meetings only when teachers in their caseload are on the docket, although Toledo's CTs attend all Panel meetings.



Principals who are involved in the cases may also attend these review meetings. Having principals attend ensures that they are informed about the case and allows them to present their views and observations to the Panel.

No matter how districts choose to structure their meetings, agendas are detailed and predictable, affording an opportunity for all involved parties to speak. Often the Panel requires CTs to submit their reports to the Panel in advance of the meeting. In most districts, CTs have a set amount of time to present their case, including descriptions about the teacher's progress and current challenges. Panel members then may ask the CT questions. In some districts, the referred teacher is invited to attend the meeting. Minneapolis allows the referred teacher to present a written statement about her experience with the process.

Most Panels prefer to reach agreement unanimously about the progress of a teacher in PAR. However, if agreement is not possible, districts require that a majority of Panel members must approve the action. One district, Toledo, requires a super-majority—six of nine votes—for all decisions. Again and again, Panel members said that votes never split along party lines, and that, based on the discussion, it is never possible to tell “who is labor, and who is management.”

**Other responsibilities**

Often PAR Panels are responsible for setting PAR's budget for the year, although often, as in Cincinnati, Panel co-chairs oversee the budget. Others Panels take on responsibility for program evaluation, collecting data to gauge others' satisfaction with the work of the CTs or the effectiveness of the program. Panels can benefit from having regular and thorough evaluations, which can inform them about how to refine and strengthen their PAR program.

**“The Panel is the best management team in the district and everyone knows that on both sides. We can have our wars, but this isn't a battlefield. We all want quality.”**

**– Rochester Union President**

## The PAR Novice Program

PAR programs usually are designed to serve both new and experienced teachers, but because there are usually more new teachers in the program, districts commit most of their resources to the novices. The novice program helps new teachers meet the district's teaching standards and succeed during their first year on the job. Districts see this as a worthwhile investment because they are convinced that successfully launching the careers of new teachers will lead to higher retention rates and more learning for students. To achieve this, CTs mentor new teachers by helping them to build skills in classroom management, lesson planning, assessment, and general pedagogy. In addition, they advise the novices about day-to-day matters such as paperwork, deadlines, and procedures.



*Toledo CT meets with new teacher*

**“These new teachers soar, if they get the right kind of support, if they're able. If they're not able, it's different.”**

**– Minneapolis CT**

responsibilities in a single role is not only possible, but wise. New teachers appreciate being evaluated by a skilled teacher who knows them and their work well. In describing their approach, CTs confirm that building trust with the novice is essential and say that they can do this effectively even while they are evaluating a teacher's work.

### • Who will be included in the Novice Program?

Districts define “novice” in different ways when they decide who will be included in the program. Some PAR programs provide a CT for every new teacher, including those who have taught elsewhere. Other programs assign CTs only to those who are teaching for the first time. Finally, districts with few resources may assess the needs of new teachers and provide CTs only to those who seem to need them most.

On the surface, PAR looks like many mentoring programs. What sets it apart, though, is the extensive over-the-shoulder coaching that CTs provide and the fact that CTs not only assist the new teachers, but also assess their progress in reports to the PAR Panel. Many believe that the person responsible for coaching a teacher should not be the same person who evaluates him. However, experiences with PAR suggest that combining these

**“There is no way an administrator could go in and offer the support at the level that our PAR consultants do. Not because they wouldn't want to, they just can't.”**

**– Syracuse Panel Member**



*Novice teacher in Toledo*

- **How will Consulting Teachers work with novices?**

CTs help novice teachers meet the district's performance standards primarily by observing their teaching and giving feedback. In addition, they frequently assist in lesson planning, teach model lessons, share resources and offer ongoing consultation by phone or email.

- **How will the novice's performance be reviewed?**

PAR Panels require CTs to submit reports on each novice teacher's progress at regular intervals throughout the year. Reports include descriptions of the novice teacher's practice and evidence from the CT's observations. Final reports include the CT's assessment of whether or not the teacher meets standards. Based on these assessments, the Panel recommends to the Superintendent whether the teacher should be rehired by the district, dismissed, or, in some cases, provided a second year of PAR.

- **Will the principal have a role in evaluating novice teachers?**

PAR typically requires that CTs, rather than principals, evaluate new teachers. Some principals object to this change, arguing that they, alone, should oversee the work of teachers in their schools. Districts have resolved this issue in several ways. In some, CTs are solely responsible for evaluating novices, although administrators may provide supplementary documentation if they choose. In others, administrators maintain formal responsibility for evaluation, even while novices are coached and assessed by CTs. In these districts, PAR Panels consider an administrator's evaluation only when it conflicts with the CT's report.



## *Who will be included in the Novice Program?*



*A San Juan CT at work*

Districts define “novice” in different ways when they decide who will be included in the Novice Program. Some provide a CT for anyone who is new to the district, including teachers who have taught elsewhere. Other districts limit their program to those teaching for the first time. Still other districts make individual decisions based on whether they think a new teacher needs support.

The size of the Novice program, which affects which new teachers will be included, depends largely on the budget and the availability of CTs. Most districts try to support as many new teachers as possible. However, when resources are tight, districts may target them toward the teachers who seem to need them most. For example, Minneapolis first assesses new teachers who have achieved tenure in other districts to see if they need to be in the program. Rochester includes all

first-time teachers and, if enough CTs are available, some experienced teachers who are new to the district.

Many districts prefer to include all new teachers, regardless of their past teaching experience. For example, Cincinnati hires teachers from suburban schools, who may be unfamiliar with the demands of teaching in an urban setting. For this reason, Cincinnati’s Novice Program includes all new teachers, thus ensuring that everyone will be introduced to the needs of the district’s students as well as the district’s culture, norms, procedures, and evaluation process.

It’s important to keep in mind, however, that having a broad definition of “novice” increases the program’s size and cost. Including more teachers in PAR requires the district to select, train, and pay more CTs.

## *How will the Consulting Teachers work with novices?*

CTs across districts work in very similar ways. They commit the time and attention needed to build strong relationships with new teachers and use a variety of strategies to provide feedback and coach them. At the beginning of their work together, CTs explain the expectations of PAR and assist the teachers in getting started, for example, by helping them set up their classrooms or finding the materials they need. Soon after school begins, CTs start to observe each teacher at work and meet with the teacher to discuss what the CT observed. In some districts, these observations focus on areas identified in a formal needs assessment, conducted by CTs for each novice in their caseload.



*Rochester novice and CT*



CTs tailor their support to the teacher's needs. Their assistance may include joint lesson planning, modeling lessons, arranging visits to other classes, and, most frequently, observing lessons and providing feedback. This feedback usually addresses whether or not the teacher is meeting the district's standards and what the teacher should do to improve her practice.

**“It’s not this warm, fuzzy mentor induction program, where you can go and cry on your mentor’s shoulder. This is about real professional help.”**

**– Syracuse Teachers Union  
President**

CTs conduct announced or unannounced observations of each teacher in their caseload approximately once a week. After the first few months of school, CTs tend to redistribute their time, allocating more to those novices who seem to be struggling and less to what one district called the “high fliers.”

## How will the novice's performance be reviewed?



All districts require Consulting Teachers to conduct formal observations of novices and summarize their findings in written reports for the PAR Panel. These reports provide evidence of each novice's growth towards meeting the district's standards. PAR Panels use these reports, as well as information from CTs' presentations, to decide whether to recommend renewal of a novice's contract.



*A new teacher in Rochester*

CTs' responsibilities for evaluation are much the same across districts. PAR Panels require them to keep careful records of all their work with teachers, document their observations, and submit formal reports at regular intervals to the Panel. Although the frequency of these reports varies across districts, the content is largely the same. In their reports, CTs provide detailed examples of the teaching practice that they have observed and relate it to the district's teaching standards. As their work with the novice draws to a close in the spring, CTs submit summary reports stating whether or not the teacher met standards. The PAR Panel then reviews these reports and makes its decision, often after the CT presents the report in person and answers questions.

**“It's not just what I think is good teaching. It's not just my judgment. It is based on those performance indicators. That's what we're looking for.”**

**– Syracuse CT**

No district we studied requires that student achievement data be included in these reports, although some CTs review this information as they reflect on a teacher's growth and strength. In Montgomery County, several Panel members said that, in reviewing the teachers' performance, they like to know how student achievement in the novice teacher's classroom compares with that of students in similar classes.



*Syracuse CT Observing Novice*

The number of formal reports that CTs submit varies across districts. Minneapolis requires a minimum of one each year. Toledo requires CTs to report in October about possible non-renewals and submit evaluations for all of their teachers at the end of each semester. Writing reports is an exacting and time-consuming process, since they are reviewed closely by the Panel and could be used if a legal challenge were to arise. For this reason, it's important to consider about how many reports to require. Although they include useful feedback about progress for both the teacher and the Panel, more time for reports places a greater burden on CTs.

**“I’m not telling you how to do your job. I’m telling you what a good teacher looks like. Now you can choose to be a good teacher or not, but this is what the district has decided a good teacher looks like. This is your rubric.”**

**– Cincinnati CT**

consecutive instances) of the teacher’s meeting this objective before the Performance Goal is lifted. Unlifted Performance Goals can result in automatic ratings of “unsatisfactory” on formal evaluations, which are submitted twice a year in Toledo.

In some cases, when a CT thinks a novice teacher is performing well, the CT can recommend that the novice be released early from the program. In most districts, within a few months into the school year, CTs lessen their focus on successful novices and increase the time they commit to novices who struggle the most.

Several times a year, the Panel meets to review teachers’ progress in meeting the standards. In Rochester, CTs submit only written reports. In all other districts, CTs both submit written reports and appear before the Panel to share their observations and answer questions about the services they provided as well as their assessment of the teacher’s performance. Some districts require CTs to present on every teacher in their caseload. Others, especially larger ones, require presentations only about those novices who are below standard and/or cases where the principal disagrees with the CT.

At the final hearings, the PAR Panel determines whether or not to recommend renewal for novice teachers. Panel members consider CTs’ reports and testimony, and in some districts, written reports from principals. Most Panels ask questions and deliberate after hearing the oral presentation(s), often seeking to reach consensus. Toledo moves directly from questions to a vote.

Over the years, each district has adopted a policy of granting a second year of PAR support when it seems appropriate. When this occurs, it is usually because the CT believes that the teacher has made progress and is likely to meet standards with one more year of support. Montgomery County’s Panel uses a list of “criteria for a second year of PAR” to guide their discussions about individual cases. These include such factors as whether a teacher was assigned out of his/her certification area and whether the teacher had adequate preparation before entering the classroom.

Some districts have special procedures that apply when a novice teacher is not meeting standards. For example, in Rochester, CTs may file an “Early Warning Report” with the PAR Panel any time after the first four weeks of school. If the intern continues to have “serious difficulties,” the CT files a mid-year Unsatisfactory Report. In such cases, the Panel may move to dismiss the teacher before the end of the year. When a novice continues to struggle in Toledo, the CT establishes a “Performance Goal” indicating what the teacher must do to meet a specific standard. The CT then must observe repeated success (two or three

**“I was never in doubt, after spending a year with these people, about my recommendation. That might be vain of me, but I felt like I really knew the case well and I was very comfortable. . . . I just kept looking at the data and looking at the data. And it was just jumping out at me. Would I want my own child in that classroom? And when the answer was “no,” I made my recommendation.”**

**– Montgomery County Former CT**

## *Will the principal have a role in evaluating novice teachers?*

PAR typically shifts some or all of the responsibility for evaluating new teachers from principals to CTs. Some principals object to this change, arguing that they should oversee the work of all teachers in their schools. However, having the CTs provide detailed reports and assessments can be a great help and can increase the capacity of the school to improve instruction.

**“I actually think it’s a support to principals that we have someone who is qualified come in and model lessons and demonstrations and provide the extra support and assistance to this teacher, who desperately needs it.”**

**– Cincinnati Principal**

Districts have resolved this issue in several ways. In some, the PAR Panel considers the CTs reports to be the sole and final evaluations of teachers in PAR. Toledo, for example, grants CTs the exclusive right to conduct evaluations and administrators are prohibited from evaluating teachers in PAR during their first year. This is meant to ensure that there will be a single recommendation. In a teacher’s second year in the district, the principal conducts the formal evaluation. In other districts, the Panel considers administrators’ evaluations or other forms of input alongside CTs’ evaluations. A principal may conduct observations but cannot enter formal

comments into a teacher’s file. In Cincinnati, building administrators may submit a letter for the Panel to consider as they review the CT’s report on a teacher’s progress. Finally, some districts, such as Rochester and Montgomery County, require principals to evaluate all new teachers, whether or not those teachers participate in PAR. In Montgomery County, union leaders said the CTs’ reports are part of a system of “checks and balances,” which ensures that administrators’ evaluations are fair.

It is important for PAR programs to clarify these roles and procedures in order to avoid misunderstanding or conflict between CTs and principals. However, it’s worth noting that these seemingly important differences in the design of programs across the districts seemed to have little effect on how the CTs did their work or how the Panels weighed their reports. Across all districts, CTs described conducting evaluations in much the same way. They collected evidence by observing the teacher, reported on the teacher’s progress, and stated whether the teacher had succeeded in meeting the district’s performance standards. Because they thoroughly documented their work, Panels tended to take their judgments very seriously.

**“In my role as a principal, I can say exactly the same thing that a teacher colleague can say and, because it came out of my mouth and not the teacher colleague’s, it’s interpreted differently.”**

**– Minneapolis Former Principal**

## The PAR Intervention Program

Intervention, PAR's second component, is meant for tenured teachers who are not meeting the district's standards for acceptable performance. There are various reasons that these teachers have problems. They may be overwhelmed by the demands of a new teaching assignment, set back by health difficulties, or distracted by the stress of a family crisis. Or they may have more basic problems—not knowing their subject, lacking basic classroom management skills, or not respecting students.

**“This is not a gotcha system. We are truly here to assist, to ensure that the students in the Cincinnati Public Schools are receiving high-level instruction.”**

**– Cincinnati District Administrator**

**“Ultimately, it really is a good program. We've saved a lot of careers. Those teachers are now in the classroom doing really good things. We've gotten some people moved out that needed to be moved out, and we got them out quicker than in the old process.”**

**– San Juan Superintendent**

Many reformers who express interest in PAR see Intervention as a way to dismiss struggling or weak teachers. However, those who are responsible for making PAR work stress that Intervention is, first and foremost, a way to rescue a failing teacher and save a valuable career. Every PAR program has teachers on Intervention who improve steadily in response to a CT's close mentoring

and who eventually meet standards.

However, if the teacher rejects help or fails to improve despite the CT's best efforts, Intervention can lead to the teacher's dismissal. Given these high stakes, it is essential that the process be thorough, fair, and fully understood by everyone involved.

### • How will experienced teachers be placed on PAR Intervention?

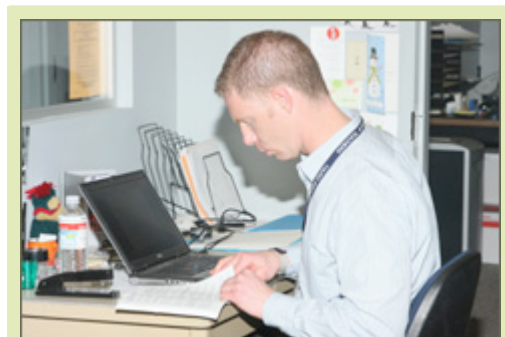
Depending on the program, a teacher can be referred for Intervention by a principal, colleague, or school-based team. In some districts, an unsatisfactory evaluation can automatically trigger a referral. Once the referral is made, the PAR Panel typically conducts an investigation before deciding whether to place the teacher on Intervention.

### • What will be involved in the PAR Intervention process?

An experienced teacher who has been assigned to PAR is paired with a CT—sometimes the same CT who conducted the investigation—for one or two school years. The CT usually develops an improvement plan with the teacher and provides intense assistance and detailed feedback to help the teacher meet standards. Periodically, the CT reports to the PAR Panel about the teacher's progress.

### • How will the PAR Panel review a teacher on Intervention?

At least once a year—and usually more often—the PAR Panel meets to review every Intervention case, hearing from the CTs and sometimes the principals. The Panel may decide to release a successful teacher from Intervention, to continue a teacher who is improving, or move to dismiss a teacher who, despite intensive assistance, has failed to improve. Due process is monitored very carefully throughout the review process.



Toledo CT

- **What will happen once the Panel votes to dismiss a teacher?**

Ultimately, it is the school board that must vote to dismiss a teacher. If the PAR Panel decides that a teacher on Intervention has failed, it usually submits a recommendation of dismissal to the superintendent, who in turn makes that recommendation to the school board. With rare exceptions, superintendents concur with the Panel's recommendations. Because the union and administrators have jointly managed and monitored the process of assistance and review, the Panel's recommendation is rarely challenged and virtually never overturned.



## *How will experienced teachers be placed on PAR Intervention?*



This is one of the most important decisions a district makes in designing its PAR program. A teacher can be referred for Intervention by a principal, colleague, or school-based team, depending on the district's plan. Only the principal has the authority to refer a teacher in San Juan. However, in Minneapolis, a teacher can be referred for PAR services by principals, colleagues, or school-based Professional Development Program teams. In Rochester, the union building representative can make the referral. Whatever the available options, it is rare for anyone except the principal to refer a teacher to Intervention, although often the principal is moved to act by complaints from the teacher's colleagues. Thus, although not a peer, the principal continues to play a key role in the success of peer review.

**“Sometimes in the teaching profession, where you get tenured, you can get a little bit lazy. . . . And if you're not meeting standards, this is a great way to put you back in touch with people who are going to help you so you can meet standards.”**

**– San Juan Principal**

In most districts, a teacher cannot be placed on Intervention unless he or she has received one or more unsatisfactory evaluations. The district's standard evaluation process is set forth in the teachers contract or school board policy. These evaluations, conducted by principals or assistant principals, are based on standards for good teaching, which are used across the district. These evaluations usually play an important role in the referral process. Rochester only allows a teacher to be referred if her overall evaluation is unsatisfactory. A San Juan teacher who has two unsatisfactory ratings on five possible standards is automatically placed on PAR, while a Montgomery County principal can initiate a referral when a teacher falls below standard in just one area.

In response to a referral, most districts' Panels conduct a formal review by assigning a CT to investigate and report back about the case. Typically, the CT arrives unannounced to observe the teacher's classes. In Montgomery County, CTs focus on the teacher's instruction, but may speak with other staff with the teacher's permission. In Toledo, the CT consults with both the principal and union building representative during the investigation. And in Minneapolis, CTs who investigate a referral can spend up to 30 days meeting with the teacher, conducting announced and unannounced classroom observations and discussing the case with the principal and others on the teacher's school-based professional development team. Ultimately, the CT recommends to the PAR Panel whether the teacher should enter the Intervention program. Based on the principal's evaluation and the CT's report and recommendation, the Panel decides whether or not to place the teacher on Intervention. In Toledo, the CT can also recommend that the teacher participate in a voluntary support program. San Juan is unusual in that the Panel can respond to a referral by deciding without further evidence whether to place a teacher on Intervention.

**“There's a number of dates and things you've got to pay attention to. So I think some principals get a little discouraged and are not as aggressive as they should be about getting teachers there.”**

**– San Juan District Administrator**

Although Intervention provides a clear route to improvement or dismissal for poor teachers, it is not a short-cut. In completing evaluations, principals must comply with the procedures and timelines set forth in both board policy and the teachers contract. Most Panels will reject a referral if the principal missed even a single deadline in the process, although Montgomery County allows somewhat more leeway. Usually principals also must demonstrate to the Panel that they have offered the referred teacher support and provided the chance to

improve. For example, San Juan requires principals to raise their concerns early with the teacher, state their expectations explicitly, conduct frequent informal observations, and offer support. Before referring a Rochester

teacher to Intervention, a principal must have offered “resource help,” a timeline for improvement, and other counseling or assistance from district personnel.

Few teachers file grievances about the investigation process because it is conducted by a member of the teacher's bargaining unit and the Panel includes representatives of both labor and management, who ensure that the teacher's due process rights are protected. In San Juan, however, where there is no independent investigation by a CT, unsatisfactory evaluations trigger a referral. Therefore, a referred teacher can file a grievance if the principal fails to comply with required procedures. Also, a San Juan union representative, who is responsible solely for monitoring due process, attends all Panel meetings. A representative from the Minnesota Bureau of Mediation Services attends Panel meetings in Minneapolis to oversee the process. Most people who learn about PAR expect that the Panel's deliberations will be adversarial and result in close votes between labor and management. They are surprised to learn that when votes by the Panel are not unanimous, they virtually never split along labor-management lines.

PAR provides a clear process through which struggling teachers may improve or be dismissed. Many principals actively use PAR to assist struggling teachers and review their performance, but other principals resist using it altogether. This may be because they think PAR generates conflict. Or they may believe that the process is too demanding or takes too much time. Some principals use PAR only as a last resort, believing that they—rather than CTs—should provide their teachers with the assistance they need. However, principals who have successfully made referrals under PAR usually contend that its procedures are fair, realistic and consistent with their role as an instructional leader.

**“I think all of us would admit that the percentage of our teachers who are struggling is definitely higher than what is getting referred to PAR.”**

**– San Juan Principal**

**“Frankly, I think that there is a difference between representing people and defending the indefensible. I think in this day and age, in this age of accountability, true accountability, we have to draw a line.”**

**– Syracuse Teachers Union President**

Administrators, union officials, and CTs often report that there are more teachers failing in their schools than currently are being referred to PAR. Some central office administrators work with their principals to increase the number of teachers referred to PAR Intervention. In Montgomery County, both a district administrator and the president of the principals union provide site administrators with targeted training about PAR in an effort to generate more referrals and to ensure that they are of high quality.

## What will be involved in the PAR Intervention process?



Toledo CT

Each teacher assigned to Intervention works closely with a CT—often the same CT who conducted the initial investigation. It's the CT's responsibility to support the teacher on Intervention, although some districts allow or require the principal to conduct formal or informal evaluations at the same time. In Minneapolis, the CTs work is closely coordinated with a school-based team that oversees the teacher's progress.

CTs generally provide the same types of support for experienced teachers as for novice teachers—help with lesson planning, model teaching, ongoing observations and feedback, as well as identifying additional staff supports. However, in contrast to the Novice Program, a CT's efforts during Intervention are more intensive and focus squarely on the problems that were identified during the investigation. At the start of the process, CTs in Rochester and Minneapolis prepare a detailed intervention plan with goals and timetables. A San Juan CT is expected to provide approximately 30 hours of one-to-one support and one formal observation, including pre- and post-observation conferences, every six weeks. During the year, Cincinnati's CTs

conduct six formal, unannounced observations with written evaluations, each discussed with the teacher. These significant demands for CTs' time are often reflected in the caseload formula, with the teacher on Intervention accounting for twice or three times the weight of a novice teacher.

The process of Intervention varies in timing and duration across districts. Some follow a standard calendar, assigning teachers to PAR in the spring and beginning Intervention in the fall. Others assign teachers to PAR at any time during the school year, although the timing may affect when dismissals can occur. For example, if a Cincinnati teacher is not placed on Intervention by December, he or she cannot be dismissed until the following school year. Districts report that teachers sometimes game the system by taking sick leave or trying to transfer to dodge being placed on Intervention. It is important that the program have an explicit process and include safeguards to ensure that teachers can't avoid a timely review once they have been referred.

**"I was naïve in thinking that everybody would be thrilled to have the help."**

**– San Juan CT**

**"You want them to do well and you keep encouraging and giving them ideas and suggestions. But if they don't do it—that's their choice."**

**– Cincinnati CT**

Intervention typically lasts one or two school years. In Rochester, however, it can end at any time and the teacher recommended for dismissal if the CT and Panel judge the process to be unsuccessful. In Minneapolis a tenured teacher cannot remain on Intervention more than nine months, although the Panel can recommend dismissal in less than that time if the teacher is unable or unwilling to improve.

## How will the PAR Panel review a teacher on Intervention?

Districts have different voting requirements for deciding whether a teacher on Intervention will successfully leave the PAR program, continue for another year on Intervention, or be recommended for dismissal. Toledo requires a super-majority six votes from the Panel's nine members in order to affirm or reject a CT's recommendation, although most districts require a simple majority. In practice, however, Panels were widely said to reach agreement on all decisions. Clearly, in order to do so, the members of the PAR Panel must operate with a high level of trust and collaboration.

**“If you were just a fly on the wall, you wouldn't be able to know who's the union rep and who's the district rep. If anything, sometimes the union can be harsher on poor performance than administration.”**

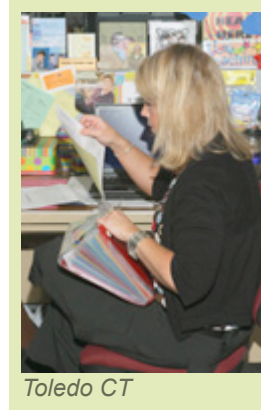
**– San Juan District Administrator**

meets to decide what the next steps for each teacher will be. For such meetings, CTs prepare detailed, evidence-based reports about each teacher on Intervention. Usually, the CT attends the meeting and is expected to read or summarize the report. For example, in Cincinnati, CTs submit their reports in advance of the meeting and also present them in person at the Panel meeting. In Montgomery County, principals also are expected to attend the Panel meetings and report on the teacher's performance. Most Panels discuss each case before voting, although Toledo's Panel votes without deliberating.

**“You have to have your ducks in a row and you need to know your people. And most of us do. We get up there and we know our people like the back of our hand.”**

**– Toledo CT**

and Panel members often say that, if teachers on Intervention are going to succeed, it will be apparent during the first year.



Over  
the  
course  
of

Intervention, the CT reports about the teacher's progress to the PAR Panel or to a subgroup of Panel members. San Juan CTs submit written reports every 6 weeks and discuss them with the Panel. Rochester CTs submit status reports at mid-semester and at the end of the semester. At least once each year in every district, the PAR Panel

By all accounts, PAR Panels weigh these decisions very carefully, keeping in mind the interests of students and the legitimate needs of the teachers. It is a serious matter to dismiss a teacher who is not progressing adequately, but it is also the Panel's responsibility to see that students are not shortchanged. The practice of giving teachers a second year on Intervention is currently being reviewed by some districts, since a second year imposes additional costs, both in student learning and scarce CT time. CTs

## *What will happen once the Panel votes to dismiss a teacher?*

Ultimately, it is the school board that votes to dismiss a tenured teacher. Thus, the Panel makes a recommendation to the superintendent, who in turn may recommend that the school board dismiss the teacher. In a very few instances, the superintendent has rejected that recommendation; most districts treat the Panel's recommendation as final. The fact that the union participates in all steps of the process minimizes subsequent challenges. In Rochester, a teacher may appeal a recommendation of dismissal to the Panel, while Montgomery County provides teachers who are dismissed the right to a hearing before an administrative law judge.

Usually, however, once the Panel has recommended dismissal, district officials offer the teacher an opportunity to resign or retire before the case becomes public at a school board meeting. Many times it is not apparent that Intervention is effective in moving low-performing teachers out of the schools because the teachers resign and the cases never move to formal dismissal. Sometimes districts informally negotiate the conditions under which the teacher will leave the district, offering to extend the teacher's health benefits or salary for a limited period of time in order to cushion the impact of dismissal. Other districts make no such offers.

**“Teachers, themselves, generally feel fairly treated. They know that people gave time and effort to support them, and that they have had time to improve, and that a panel of their peers considered the situation.”**

**– Minneapolis District Administrator**

**“The CTs don't decide it [dismissal] and the PAR Panel doesn't decide it. The PAR Panel would recommend it to [the superintendent]. . . . He ultimately makes that decision, but he is making the decision based on the chain of command.”**

**– Montgomery County CT**

Many states provide teachers with the right to challenge their dismissal by a school board, though they almost never overturn a dismissal on substantive grounds; there must have been a violation of procedure. Unions can also be sued for failing to fairly represent their teachers. However, in the districts we studied, the few suits that were reported were unsuccessful. One of the distinct advantages of PAR is that the union and management collaborate and carefully monitor the process. Because they have been involved throughout, local unions have no obligation to advocate for a teacher who has been dismissed under PAR, thus eliminating the enormous legal costs typically associated with dismissals.

## *Making PAR Work Day-to-day*

For a PAR program to be successful, it has to be well managed. The PAR Panel is responsible for governing the program and making major changes. However, the district must decide how to handle the everyday tasks of running PAR, such as selecting new CTs, assigning CTs to their caseload, responding to questions, keeping data about the program, and managing the budget.

- **Who manages PAR day to day?**

Panel members all work full-time at another job. Therefore, they must figure out who will run PAR day to day. Some districts call on each CT to do a share of work. Others appoint one or two Lead CTs to manage the program. Finally, some districts hire a program director to oversee all of PAR.

- **How does the program handle the paperwork involved in teacher evaluation?**

Because teacher evaluation under PAR has implications for teachers' jobs, the program must document the process fully, a detailed and complicated task. Most PAR programs have developed strategies to standardize this process and make it more efficient. Many have CT handbooks that include needed information and forms.

- **What data does the district collect about its program?**

Few districts have kept detailed data about their PAR program. However, having a comprehensive data system makes it possible for programs to review what they have accomplished. The people we interviewed recommended that programs track as much information as possible, including data about: (1) teachers in PAR, (2) dismissals/non-renewals, (3) characteristics of CTs, (4) teacher retention, and (5) financial costs.



## Who manages PAR day to day?

In all districts, the PAR Panel is ultimately responsible for the program. These programs are complicated and involve many administrative tasks. Panel members usually can't do all of this work because they have full-time jobs as teachers, principals, union officials, or administrators outside of PAR. Only in Syracuse, which is a relatively new program, did Panel members assume responsibility for running the program day to day. Therefore, most programs find they must develop alternative ways to ensure that the work is done in a timely and efficient way. Districts approach this differently. Some ask all Consulting Teachers in the program to do a share of the work. Others appoint a few individuals to be Lead CTs, who assume administrative responsibilities in exchange for a reduced caseload or additional stipend. Yet, other districts—typically those with large, complicated programs—hire a program director to manage PAR.



*Toledo CT and Novice*

**“Not only did [the Lead CT] carry a lot of first- and second-year teachers, on top of that, she took care of all the administrative stuff—from budgets to trying to get us new training, to go to a conference, to meet with the PAR panel. She was kind of the intermediary between the administrative side and our side.”**

**– San Juan CT**

In some districts, the program asks current and former CTs to take on a share of management responsibilities. For example, one Toledo CT serves as the “office manager” and handles administrative tasks, while a former CT helps coordinate Consulting Teacher hiring and placement. The program relies on other CTs and Panel members to serve on ad hoc committees that make many decisions, including which applicants to hire. The PAR Panel Co-Chairs manage the budget.

Other districts, such as San Juan and Montgomery County, rely on Lead CTs to help manage the program. They carry a reduced caseload in exchange for coordinating and supervising other CTs' work, which can be a very big job.

They also serve as liaisons between the CTs and the Panel. In Montgomery County, the Lead CTs not only make CT assignments and attend district-wide organizational meetings, but they also supervise individual CTs' work. Before every Panel meeting, the Lead CTs meet with each Consulting Teacher to go over the reports the CTs will present. The Lead CTs also attend all Panel meetings and provide their fellow CTs feedback on their presentations.

Rochester and Cincinnati hire a full-time program director. Minneapolis has a program director under the Deputy Superintendent and a CT serves as the program facilitator. These programs all have complicated structures with many components. For example, the school-based approach to PAR in Rochester involves nearly 200 part-time positions that must be carefully coordinated. The program director not only handles the logistics of matching potential CTs with teachers in PAR, but also helps to manage relationships with the many principals involved. Cincinnati, which has integrated PAR into a broader Teacher Evaluation System for all teachers, has a full-time administrator to oversee this complex system.

**“[The Director's] awesome. She knows everything. She's that key person that keeps it all connected and is very crucial.”**

**– Rochester Principal**



Although having a program director costs more, having a single person in charge can ensure that the program has continuity in a system where CTs turn over regularly. A director also can also be the point person whom others contact when they have questions or encounter problems. At a minimum, a director can take over some administrative tasks from the PAR Panel and CTs, freeing them to focus on evaluation and support. However, most directors also advise CTs on how to handle particularly challenging situations or work to resolve conflicts or misunderstandings between a CT and a principal. Rochester's program director said she received up to ten calls a day at the beginning of the year to troubleshoot problems. Program directors also make routine programmatic decisions, convene training or discussion sessions, or assist with PAR Panel meetings. In some cases, the same person also handles other program management decisions, such as budgeting and supervision, relieving top district and union officials of that pressure.

## *How does the program handle the paperwork involved in teacher evaluation?*



Because PAR becomes the primary evaluation system for all novices and selected experienced teachers, it involves a great deal of paperwork. As part of the legal record, teacher evaluations must be documented carefully. Because CTs conduct many evaluations each semester, the program generates a lot of important paperwork. For experienced teachers, particularly those with tenure rights under state law, the program must find ways to fully document the support and recommendations offered by the CT as well as the performance of the teacher over time. Districts have created systems that help CTs, Lead CTs, and directors keep up with this paperwork.

Over time, districts have developed clear, easy-to-use templates that support CTs throughout the assessment process. Most districts have forms for CTs to use as they record their classroom observations, provide summary feedback to the teacher, record specific recommendations for improving practice, document the assistance the CT provides, and prepare the final summary report. In addition, many districts have developed a range of documents that help Panel members and others do their jobs efficiently.

**“It wasn’t until I was a year on the panel that I realized how important every little piece was and how meticulous you really need to be. Because you are dealing with people’s lives.”**

**– Cincinnati Panel Member**

Most districts have a single source where CTs retrieve the templates of key documents. Some include them in CT Handbooks. San Juan uses a secure website. Montgomery County gives every CT a portable “flash” drive with the relevant information, which the CTs wear on lanyards so that they can always pull up the needed information on the nearest computer.

## What data does the district collect about its PAR program?



Of the districts we studied, only Montgomery County had a comprehensive data collection system in place from the start of its program. As a result, the district has a wide range of data about program use and what happened to teachers after completing PAR – whether they remained in the classroom, resigned, or were non-renewed or dismissed. Toledo and Cincinnati, two of the oldest programs, have also maintained good records about the number of novice teachers in PAR and the number of veterans referred to it. Cincinnati and Minneapolis also track which principals and schools refer veteran teachers to PAR.



Districts can benefit from having a comprehensive system for data collection. Several union officials and administrators recommended gathering data on everything possible, so that the record of the program is clear and stakeholders can know if PAR meets its goals. In Montgomery County, the data collection became especially important when the district encountered a legal challenge, but with good data, the district won its case. Having a data collection process from the beginning of a program can prevent the need to urgently comb through old files or fading memories for answers.

**“We have been preaching to the consultants, ‘Make sure you have your data. Keep your data. We need to know all of that. We have to be able to look back and get the data.’”**

**– Syracuse Teachers Union Leader**

Finally, good data can also be used to identify areas for improvement. For example, in her regular examination of district data, Rochester’s program director noticed that the district’s retention rates of foreign language and bilingual teachers lagged behind the district average. She looked into this pattern further and realized that they had a shortage of CTs in these areas and that mentoring matches for novices were less than ideal. As a result, she recruited and hired more foreign language CTs. Since then, retention rates have risen.

We recommend that programs develop data systems that track information on teachers in the program, dismissals/non-renewals, retention of teachers in the district, and financial costs. At a minimum, programs should track the following information:

- Number of new teachers in the program and the outcome for each during their year in PAR (referred for 2nd year, resigned, non-renewed)
- Number of experienced teachers referred to Intervention and who referred them
- Number of experienced teachers actually in Intervention, and the outcome of their time in PAR (referred for 2nd year, resigned, retired, dismissed)
- Length of time for each experienced teacher in Intervention
- Retention data for novice teachers beyond their first year
- Financial data on program costs

To reflect on and improve the program, districts should think broadly about what information might be useful. For example, they might consider collecting retention data for Consulting Teachers after completing their term, including the subsequent roles they take, or evaluation scores and results for teachers who have been through PAR.

## Labor-Management Relations

Implementing PAR requires sustained collaboration between the district and teachers union. Collaboration of any kind between labor and management can be hard to achieve because of the historically adversarial relationship between the two. One purpose of PAR—to provide a program in which teachers evaluate other teachers—often provokes opposition from both sides. Administrators may believe that evaluation is their responsibility, while union members may believe that peer review is fundamentally anti-union. PAR relies on the PAR Panel as a forum where labor and management work together to build a sense of common purpose and sustain PAR. However, in order for PAR to work well, collaboration must be apparent and exercised throughout the schools as well.

**“The joint development of this program between the district administration and the teachers union really shows a commitment to professionalism.”**

**—Syracuse Principal**

### What are the challenges of collaborating to adopt PAR?

Collaborating to design and implement PAR is not easy or routine. Traditional collective bargaining pits the union against management, but PAR is at its core a joint program between the two parties. In order for PAR to work, everyone from the bargaining table to the classroom must come to see peer assistance and evaluation as serving the interests of both students and teachers.

### How do the union and management begin to develop a PAR program?

Despite the importance of collaboration, it's not necessary for the parties to have resolved all their differences before embarking on PAR. In several districts we studied, the union and management found common ground in planning their PAR program, despite tensions and uncertainty about how it would work. This doesn't happen overnight, though. Often leaders from the union and district carefully lay the groundwork for PAR months or even years before they settle on a design.



*Labor-management collaboration in Minneapolis*

### How is PAR negotiated and what is included in the contract?

Most districts establish joint committees to design the program in detail and then their decisions are ratified in collective bargaining. Most districts carefully work out the details of their program well in advance of bargaining and present it as a complete package. Districts differ in whether they include the details of PAR in the contract or simply provide the basic elements and designate the PAR Panel as the governing body to make further decisions about its design and implementation.

### What does it take to implement and sustain PAR?

The structure of the PAR Panel formalizes the labor-management collaboration that is central to the work of the program. The Panel's regular meetings and procedures provide a blueprint for moving ahead, which can then be elaborated or amended as needed. If the program is to truly work, collaboration must extend to the schools as well. PAR depends on principals' active participation just as it depends on CTs steady work, yet the process and procedures for such school-based collaboration are not yet well explained or understood.

## *What are the challenges of collaborating to adopt PAR?*

Implementing PAR is not easy or routine. The idea behind PAR—that teachers assist and evaluate their peers—seems to many to violate the basic tenet of union solidarity as well as challenge assumptions about top-down management of schools. In districts where unions and administrators have successfully established PAR programs, the parties often worked for years to ensure that the program they created would be accepted and would work well. Usually those involved saw the limits of competing over scarce resources in conventional bargaining and realized that their larger, shared goals for the district's students could not be achieved without collaboration. Even after they have accepted joint responsibility for establishing PAR, however, representatives of the union and district must participate in careful, collaborative planning to make the program a reality.

**“The union would say, ‘Look, we don’t want poor teachers, either.’ And they have no intention of hanging on to poor teachers. It doesn’t look good for them.”**

**– Minneapolis District Administrator**



*Labor and management leaders celebrate success in Syracuse*

PAR faces several significant roadblocks on the road to successful implementation. Union leaders who promote PAR often encounter resistance from members who believe that the contract should protect all teachers rather than set out a process for dismissing some. Similarly, administrators must contend with charges that they have abdicated their responsibility for running the schools by allowing teachers to assess their peers. Therefore, it is important for those involved to become well-informed about how PAR works in other districts and how it can enhance the professionalism of teachers.

Frequent turnover, especially among superintendents, can also disrupt progress in developing a PAR program. Therefore, it is important to establish continuity in the planning process by involving many individuals, who work as teams to explore the possibilities of PAR and to design the district's program.

## *How do the union and management begin to develop a PAR Program?*

In most districts, it is the union leaders who first propose a PAR program, many having learned about it from their counterparts in other districts. Some districts formed joint committees to investigate the possibility of a PAR program as a first step in gaining local understanding and acceptance. In an effort to build support on all sides, these joint committees may recruit and convert the skeptics early. Committee members might include union leaders, teachers, principals, district administrators and school board members. Members of the committee will often visit successful PAR programs in districts across the country or bring experts to their district to speak about PAR. A joint committee might meet for months while members collect information, weigh options, discuss alternatives, and make tentative decisions about the program.

**“The buy-in from both Union and Management is necessary. That culture, that climate of working together really needs to be there.”**

**— Syracuse Principal**

work together through that process. As one said, this experience “helped to open up the doors” for PAR. In Minneapolis, a small committee composed of both union and management leaders met to improve the supports that were already in place for teachers who were struggling in the classroom. The committee met regularly for a few years as they worked to change the existing system to one in which a teacher could actually be dismissed. In the process, they learned about Toledo’s PAR model and their committee evolved into the PAR Panel.

These districts’ experiences suggested that, although leaders of the union and administration must be ready to collaborate, their relationship need not be smooth or tension-free. What seems important is that the parties be ready to take some risks and trust one another’s good intentions.



*Labor-management collaboration in Syracuse*

Often PAR

develops in districts with some history of working collaboratively on related topics. For example, before implementing PAR in Syracuse, union and district officials had created new standards for teacher evaluation and were exploring alternatives to evaluations for veteran teachers. Those involved described having learned how to



## *How is PAR negotiated and what is included in the contract?*

Conventional bargaining is not effective for designing a complex program such as PAR. Therefore, most districts carefully work out the details of their program and present it to be ratified as a package at negotiations. Because so much thought and effort from both labor and management has gone into the plan, by the time it reaches the bargaining table, it usually is accepted with few changes.

Districts often implement PAR in stages, starting first with a Novice Program and subsequently adding an Intervention Program. This staged approach has the advantage of starting with a component that is less likely to alarm traditional unionists, since it does not threaten tenured teachers. Once teachers recognize the success of the program in supporting teachers, they may be more willing to endorse the Intervention component. Also, the Intervention Program is more challenging to implement because the teachers are less eager to participate than novices and the stakes for tenured teachers are clearly higher. Therefore, it makes sense for the Panel to establish its patterns of collaborative work before initiating the more challenging and controversial component.

**“Having it in the contract was a stroke of genius because it really institutionalized it. It set all the operating conditions, and it’s darn hard to change it once it’s in the contract.”**

**— San Juan Panel Member**

Some leaders in districts we studied believe that having PAR included in the contract is the best way to ensure its survival and to guarantee adherence to both the spirit and the detail of the agreement. Those in other districts have chosen to treat PAR less formally, by including it in a trust agreement or a memo of understanding (MOU), as Syracuse does. An MOU is time-limited and must be renegotiated after a certain period of time. However, it has the advantage of allowing for changes outside of formal bargaining if the parties agree. These alternative

approaches are not bound by the contract bargaining schedule and are more flexible, while still affording PAR a legal standing.

When PAR is included in the contract, the provisions typically define terms, set timelines, and establish the specific responsibilities of the PAR Panel and teachers who are involved in the program. Whether this section is long and detailed or short and simple seems to depend on local tradition and the level of trust between the parties. Some districts we studied included only short descriptions (one to three pages) of PAR in their contract, which then referenced relevant handbooks or board policies. By contrast, Minneapolis specifies many details about PAR and the professional development systems on which it rests, such as what materials CTs will use in their work, the instructional standards to be used in evaluations, and the procedures by which the Panel is to recommend further employment. In the words of one of Minneapolis’s PAR program founders, having PAR detailed in the contract was a “brilliant move” that permits the program to run smoothly and by the book, allowing it to be “protected” from budget cuts or leaders who might not support it.

Codifying all the procedures of PAR ensures that they cannot be easily violated or ignored. However, a detailed contract may limit the Panel’s flexibility in responding to problems and needs as they arise. Most programs strike a balance between providing details that ensure the program will run as it’s intended while allowing for flexibility through the process of implementation. For example, Rochester’s contract spells out the duties of the PAR Panel and then assigns the Panel responsibility to establish guidelines for PAR and make joint labor-management decisions. Those who design the program must weigh the benefits of

**“We certainly had to carefully negotiate the structure of things and how it fit into the other structures that were already in existence. But I think it was a good, mutual collaboration around creating this.”**

**—Minneapolis District Administrator**



maintaining flexibility with a simple agreement that sets forth only the basics against the benefits of ensuring stability with a detailed agreement.

The districts have carefully chosen their approach to including PAR in their contract. However, we found no evidence that the level of detail in the contract had any effect on how and the extent to which PAR was implemented. Ultimately, that depended on the trust, resources, and day-to-day working relationships among the parties.

## *What does it take to implement and sustain PAR?*

Once a PAR program has been approved by the union and management, responsibility for its governance is handed over to the PAR Panel. With its co-chairs and members—equal, or nearly-equal numbers of teachers and administrators—the structure of the PAR Panel formalizes the labor-management collaboration that is central to PAR. The Panel's regular meetings and procedures provide a blueprint for moving ahead, which in most districts can be elaborated or amended as needed. Once PAR has been approved in bargaining, subsequent changes usually are made by the Panel, under the leadership of its co-chairs. The program will not likely succeed unless the co-chairs work well together and, in their working relationship, exemplify for others the kind of trust and candor that PAR requires.

Collaboration on the PAR Panel at the district level is not sufficient, however. If PAR is to truly work, collaboration must extend to the schools. Traditionally, the school-based labor relationship is an adversarial one between the principal and the union's building representative or steward. However, PAR introduces a new and unprecedented relationship between the CT and the principal. Under PAR, the role of principal as instructional leader changes as the CT assumes a share of responsibility for evaluating teachers. The CT, though a peer of teachers, has a supervisory role and the CT's judgments about whether teachers should be employed or dismissed may supercede those of the principal. Some PAR proposals have run into intense, sometimes legal, opposition by principals and their unions who initially object to surrendering their right to evaluate teachers. In virtually all cases, that opposition subsides once the program is well established.

**“I think if we all focus on what matters most, we can find common ground. The process, the road, may be slightly different. We may argue about the way we get there. But if we all agree it's about the children and improvement, we'll make a case for why this is the way to do things.”**

**— Rochester Superintendent**

**“I always brag about how much better this process is than the old process [where] the burden was entirely on the principal. But in the new system you have a consulting teacher, who is another set of independent eyes, who is providing that regular kind of support for the teacher... And that didn't exist before.”**

**— Montgomery County Panel Member**

Districts' experiences make it clear that PAR depends on principals' active participation just as it depends on CTs' steady work. In the most successful circumstances, principals actively identify teachers for PAR Intervention and work closely with CTs to improve those teachers' performance. As yet, however, we know little about what contributes to an effective working relationship at the school level between the principal and CT. Its conventions, structures, and procedures are not nearly as well defined as those of the PAR Panel.

## *Practical Issues and Advice*

### **• *How should we move ahead with PAR?***

If you've explored this website, you know that there's no simple recipe for PAR. Because PAR has several components, involves many people, and leads to high-stakes decisions, each program must be tailored to fit its district. There's no guarantee that what works in one setting will work in another. Therefore, if you're planning a new PAR program or want to improve the program you have, it's good to know in advance the issues you're likely to encounter. You can save time and avoid costly mistakes if you benefit from the lessons that others have learned.

The following questions follow PAR through several stages of development. The responses explain the issues behind these questions and provide practical advice, drawn from the districts of our study.



*San Juan CT consults with new teacher*

## Getting Started

### Can PAR be adopted at the bargaining table?

An effective PAR program can't emerge from traditional bargaining, assembled piece by piece as each side wins some points and loses others. The program won't work if it's simply a list of compromises reached by splitting the difference between extreme demands. In fact, that approach to adopting PAR would contradict one of its core features—labor-management collaboration. In order to work, the parts of PAR must be compatible, complementary, and coherent. This means that those who create PAR must take off their partisan hats and work on behalf of better schools, wherever that may take them.

Because collaboration is so important in planning for PAR, districts seldom leave the work to regular bargaining teams. Instead, the union president and superintendent usually appoint a special team of teachers and administrators to develop their district's approach to PAR. Thus, side by side, there may be an open and candid process for planning PAR and an adversarial process for bargaining the rest of the contract. Alternatively, districts that use interest-based bargaining to negotiate their contract may have a PAR work group that feeds into their negotiations. Although PAR depends upon labor-management collaboration, that doesn't mean that the sides have to agree about everything. They just have to agree to work together on PAR.

The teachers contract authorizes PAR, either by including the details of the program, pointing to other policies that do, or conferring responsibility for its development on a committee. In all cases, though, a group of teachers and administrators must come together to design the program. Beyond its basic components—peer assistance coupled with evaluation, consulting teachers (CTs), and a PAR Panel—there is no off-the-shelf template for PAR. It always requires local interpretation, adaptation, and adjustment.

Adopting PAR also takes time—often a number of years. Those who plan PAR have to envision what it can accomplish, recognize what must be done to adapt the program to their district's current policies and practices, and figure out how the program will work day to day. This is not only a technical challenge, but also an educational and political one. Teachers, administrators, and school board members who see unionism in traditional terms must change their view. Teachers and principals will have to redefine their roles. Everyone must learn to work in new ways. For many in the district, these changes only really begin once the program starts, and, even then, they take time. However, launching a solid program will require a core of teachers and administrators who understand what PAR means, anticipate the challenges it will probably generate, and are prepared to explain why it's worth doing and how it can work to improve teaching and learning throughout the district.

### Should principals help plan PAR?

The simple answer to this question is “yes.” PAR is widely viewed as a labor-management initiative involving the teachers union and district-level administrators. However, PAR also has important implications for principals, who often are held accountable—sometimes with financial rewards and sanctions—for the success of their school. Districts that overlook or exclude principals or their union from the PAR planning process often encounter a subsequent roadblock—a lawsuit in Rochester, a



*Toledo CT confers with a new teacher*

**“If you go to principals on this matter in a collegial way—and not “All right, your time is up. Now it’s our turn”—then I think they’re more likely to be proponents of [PAR].”**

**– Rochester Union President**

grievance from the principals union in Syracuse. In order for PAR to work, it must function effectively not only at the district level where the PAR Panel meets, but also in the schools where CTs and principals share or exchange responsibility for supervising and evaluating teachers. Therefore, principals should be engaged in exploring the possibility of PAR. Meanwhile, their union—if they are represented by one—should be well-informed about the process and possibly participate as a third party in planning PAR. Having a PAR plan that has been reviewed and endorsed by teachers and principals will increase the chances of smooth implementation.

### **How can union leaders convince the doubters?**

Many union presidents find that PAR is hard to sell at first. Teachers become alarmed to learn that their colleagues may evaluate them or that their union intends to encourage dismissals. In persuading union members to ratify a contract that includes PAR, presidents usually have to convince some of their members that they are not being sold out by their own union. Often, in order to accept PAR, teachers must change their beliefs about what a union can or should do. They must relinquish the idea that the union will protect all teachers, no matter how ineffective they are. And they must come to believe that PAR can professionalize their work and improve their schools.

**“You can only move in these progressive ways when you’ve taken care of old-fashioned bread-and-butter issues.”**

**— San Juan Teachers Union  
Executive Director**

In convincing teachers to accept PAR, union presidents often remind them that incompetent colleagues make their work harder and shortchange students. They may argue that teachers will have more public support if they uphold high professional standards. And they may contend that no one is in a better position to evaluate teachers than a teacher. The success of other districts in implementing PAR and the favorable testimony by those who know it well bolster the case for adopting PAR. However, this process takes time and must be started well in advance of a vote to ratify the contract.

Convincing the teachers is somewhat easier when the district plans to adopt PAR in stages, starting with a Novice Program and moving to introduce an Intervention Program only if the Novice Program proves successful. Usually, the Novice Program is easier for members to accept, since non-tenured teachers have few rights under state law. Also, the teachers who will be affected have not yet been hired when the vote on PAR is taken. Teachers recognize the benefits of having a strong induction program. Successful experience with a Novice Program appears to be the most convincing argument for expanding PAR to include either a Voluntary or Intervention Program.

**“This was very controversial at the time, especially when the state organizations weren’t supporting it and they were saying ‘teachers shouldn’t evaluate teachers.’ So we had to go to our membership here and show them that we weren’t here to try to punish people. We’re here to try to help and really create a pathway for success or a pathway for exiting this profession.”**

**— San Juan Teachers Union  
Executive Director**

## Implementing PAR

### How can a district fund PAR?

PAR gains credibility when its long-term funding is secure. Teachers and principals, who have seen promising programs disappear when a grant ends, are unlikely to take PAR seriously unless they believe that it has the kind of funding commitments that ensure it will last. Therefore, districts should carefully plan how to pay for PAR over time and how to make that stable funding obvious to all the stakeholders. Districts that secure short-term funding in order to get the program off the ground should continue to search for long-term support. Relying on established state and federal programs for funds usually makes more sense than counting on support from a foundation that promotes PAR today, but may change its priorities a year from now.

It's short-sighted, however, to look only for new money. A district's current operating budget can cover many of the costs of PAR if the program is integrated into the district's ongoing work, rather than treated as an add-on. For example, a Novice Program can replace a district's current induction program. It can also save costs in other areas, for example by increasing retention rates and avoiding costly turnover. Similarly, the expense of an Intervention Program can be met by funds that otherwise would be spent on legal costs associated with dismissing a tenured teacher.



*A San Juan CT at Work*

**“It’s intensive. It takes time. It takes bodies. It’s a process. But if they don’t do it, then they’ll have a raft of arbitrations and they’ll have bigger, more expensive due process problems.”**

**– Minneapolis administrator**

relying instead on checklists of practices thought to be effective. Often this has meant that no one takes evaluation seriously. When a district adopts a set of instructional standards and a process for using them to observe and assess teachers' work, the entire evaluation process can gain credibility and support improved instruction.

CTs find that having clear standards that are widely understood makes their work more straightforward and objective and helps them stay on course. Having standards that are endorsed by teachers and administrators ensures that the decisions of CTs and Panels will be well-informed and based on evidence.

Just as it takes time for everyone to understand and accept PAR, it will take time for new instructional standards to be developed and to take hold. However, having these standards is not a step that can be skipped in adopting

### Does PAR require a standards-based evaluation system?

The experiences of the seven districts we studied suggest that successful PAR programs rest on a strong foundation of instructional standards. In several districts, the committee of teachers and administrators that developed those standards later evolved into the group that planned PAR. Historically, districts have not had such standards,

**“PAR is part of the metamorphosis of the whole model for practitioner evaluation, where our work was grounded in changing the way we thought about teacher evaluation.”**

**– Syracuse Teachers Union President**

PAR, for if teachers lack confidence in the district's evaluation system, they will not endorse and play their part in PAR.

### **Should CTs be school-based or district-wide, part-time or full-time?**

Most districts employ a small number (6-20) of full-time CTs who work in schools across the district. A few districts employ a much larger number (100-200) of part-time CTs, who primarily work in their own schools. There is no convincing evidence that one approach is better than the other. In fact, during our interviews, CTs working under each arrangement extolled its benefits.

Full-time, district-wide CTs have flexible schedules, don't feel collegial pressure from other teachers in their school, and can benefit from the regular advice and support of fellow CTs. Because their full-time job is to be a CT, they don't feel torn between their students and the teachers in PAR. Often, too, they enjoy the status and recognition that come with having a full-time role as a teacher leader.

Part-time, school-based CTs also see distinct advantages in their arrangement. They can give the teachers accurate advice about their school's procedures, politics, and norms as well as the principal's expectations. Also, because they are present in the school, part-time CTs can respond quickly to a teacher's pressing question or need. Finally, they don't have to give up their own classroom. However, they may find it hard to juggle their two sets of responsibilities.

When a district is highly decentralized, with each school having a unique program or curriculum, it makes sense to have school-based CTs. However, if a district is seeking to bring more consistency to instructional standards and practices, having a core of district-wide CTs who are all on the same page may be a better approach.

This is a choice that PAR planners should make very carefully because it has other implications. It may be hard to find enough teachers who are sufficiently skilled and interested in working as part-time CTs. Also, a program with many school-based CTs is likely to need a full-time director to juggle and monitor the various assignments. A school-based arrangement for CTs may work better for a Novice Program than for an Intervention Program, which requires CTs to be unswayed by sympathies for their colleagues in the school.

Having a program with only full-time, district-wide positions also presents organizational demands. Because CTs are not engaged in the professional culture of their school, they will need ongoing support from others. They must have some kind of professional home and maintain regular and reliable connections to others in the district. Thus office space and the opportunity for regular meetings must be provided for full-time CTs.

### **Do principals have a place in PAR?**

By introducing CTs who support and evaluate teachers, PAR changes the principal's responsibilities. Initially, principals may see PAR as compromising their rights as managers and reducing their influence as instructional leaders. In fact, though, principals remain crucial to PAR's success.

**“Initially, like everyone else, we were threatened and intimidated as administrators, because we had done the work of evaluation.”**

**– Cincinnati Former Principal**



**“This job is the craziest job I’ve ever had. You don’t have that time to give individuals what you would want to. You’re so busy doing all the other stuff that has to get done. So, to have someone who’s really focused on a teacher that’s struggling, for whatever reasons—I think that’s invaluable.”**

**– San Juan Principal**

In some Novice Programs, CTs are solely responsible for evaluating new teachers. In others, however, principals share responsibility with CTs for evaluation. While the CTs are evaluating classroom instruction, principals may be assessing whether teachers contribute to the experience of students or colleagues outside the classroom. Even when CTs are the sole evaluators, those teachers eventually complete PAR and return to being the principal’s responsibility. For principals of large and/or challenging schools, having a skilled CT to count on can be a boon. If all new teachers have a skilled and dedicated CT working with them, the principal can concentrate on other staffing

decisions, such as whether third-year teachers should be awarded tenure.

All Intervention Programs depend on the principal to evaluate, identify and refer under-performing tenured teachers to PAR. Even though programs often allow other teachers to refer a colleague to PAR, that virtually never happens. At most, teachers urge their principal to refer a fellow teacher who is struggling or neglecting responsibilities. Most programs will only place a tenured teacher on Intervention once he has received an unsatisfactory evaluation and has been given recommendations and support for improvement. All this depends on the principal. Therefore, if PAR Intervention is to work, principals must be committed to doing their part.

**“There is a major role that the principal must play, and that is to trigger the request for an investigation. If that doesn’t happen, the teacher is allowed to continue to just float along. . . . Sometimes the principal ends up being evaluated. Because you can’t have a person that is so bad in your building and not know it—if you are doing what you are supposed to do.”**

**– Cincinnati Superintendent**

### **How long should a teacher spend in PAR?**

PAR’s two components—assistance and review—may be in tension when the Panel is deciding how much assistance is warranted and how soon to move to dismissal. The key to PAR’s effectiveness and acceptance by teachers, as well as its legal durability, is its provision of support. First and foremost, the program is committed to getting new teachers off to a strong start and assisting veteran teachers who can benefit from focused advice and support. Critics of PAR often say that school officials can and should make quick decisions about a teacher’s success or failure. However, many administrators are well aware that they must find a better replacement for any teacher they dismiss, and that there just may not be a ready supply of excellent teachers. Therefore, both CTs and administrators often are very deliberate in deciding whether to dismiss a teacher or offer more help. Human capital usually must be developed over time.

Still, there is another factor that can unwisely delay dismissal decisions. Educators, who believe that all children can learn, also tend to believe that all teachers can improve, if only they have enough time and support. Therefore, PAR Panels often face the question of how rapidly they should expect teachers to succeed. Clearly, if the Novice Program is to work, teachers must prove themselves before tenure is awarded. Otherwise, the district incurs long-term employment obligations. In some states this happens after two years of employment, in most others after three years.

Most Novice Programs last one year and PAR Panels usually are reluctant to grant a second year of assistance. However some programs grant a second year of PAR to new teachers who show progress, but have not yet met

standards. Usually, teachers who get extra time have very demanding assignments, such as teaching split subjects or grades or they come through a fast-track alternative program, where they didn't have the chance to do student teaching. However, given the costs of PAR, the scarce resource of CT time, and students' need for effective teachers, such extensions should be based on solid evidence of improvement, rather than simply wishful thinking.

This issue becomes even more pressing with Intervention, where veteran teachers are referred to PAR because they have serious problems. Programs vary in how long they allow teachers to remain on Intervention before the Panel moves to dismissal. A few leave their program open-ended, but most grant two years. Given how serious a professional and legal matter it is to dismiss a tenured teacher, the PAR Panel must ensure that the teacher receives reasonable support and a fair chance to succeed. Nonetheless, CTs and Panel members say that it is usually clear within the first few months whether the teacher will eventually meet standards. More often than not, a second year on PAR confirms their initial doubts about the teacher. Committing PAR resources to a veteran teacher who, despite all efforts, shows no significant improvement or makes very slow progress is an unwise use of resources. Moreover, it increases the costs that students pay when their teacher is ineffective. Many CTs and Panel members said that they find the resolve to move for dismissal by keeping those students in mind.

### **Should full-time CTs be required to return to the classroom once their term is over?**

Most PAR advocates answer, "Of course." Otherwise, they argue, PAR could become a stepping stone to administration. Many explain that, because PAR is a peer review program, its credibility with teachers depends on the CTs being true peers, individuals who know the demands of teaching, can offer useful support, and will be fair. Moreover, many say that PAR's potential for improving instruction increases when CTs return to their schools ready to share all that they have learned on the job. Principals report that former CTs often enrich and increase the capacity of their schools by assuming informal roles as teacher leaders.

**"A very persistent, recurring comment is 'I know my interns benefited, but not as much as I did. I learned more about teaching this year than in my first 20 years in the classroom.'"**

**– Rochester Union Leader**

However, some—though certainly not all—CTs said that their experience in PAR has changed their view of schooling and their hopes for a career. Having been classroom teachers, they were able as CTs to see "the big picture" and to exercise influence across the district. They enjoyed the respect they earned and the status they achieved. They also appreciated—and may had come to rely on—the extra pay that the role provided. Although these CTs recognized the rewards that they might gain by returning to the classroom, some wanted to explore new ways of extending their influence. Districts, such as Montgomery County, which offer other formal roles for teacher leaders, have loosened their requirement that CTs return to the classroom, allowing them instead to assume a "school-based," non-classroom role (such as staff developer) for at least two years. Other districts permit experienced CTs to return for another term as a PAR CT, once they have completed a year or two in the classroom. Most programs we studied prohibit CTs from becoming school-site administrators for a year or two. However, some speculated that this rule might not hold over time.

**"You are really treated much more as a professional than you are when you are a teacher. . . . Somebody is not checking up on you every minute to see where you are or what you are doing."**

**– Syracuse CT**

The CT role is notable, not only because it introduces peer review, but also because it has the potential to change the career path of teachers. Rather than being a flat career without opportunity for formal advancement, PAR introduces new roles for CTs, who are selected for their expertise as master teachers and given significant responsibility. They are awarded higher pay, both for their skill and for the demanding work they do. Districts might decide to capitalize on the potential of CTs to differentiate the teaching career and systematically increase the

instructional capacity of the district. Rather than returning those teachers to a single classroom, they might encourage them to assume other formal roles meant to improve instruction. Eventually, this might even include

becoming a principal or assistant principal. This possibility has merit, since effective CTs may be among the best candidates to become a school's instructional leader.

## PAR Over Time

### How can a district show that PAR is effective?

PAR proponents are convinced of its success in launching the careers of new teachers, renewing the work of veteran teachers, and dismissing teachers who are ineffective. However, it is often difficult to provide convincing evidence to others that the program is effective and that money has been well-spent, especially during times of tight budgets. In assessing their Novice Program, districts point to higher rates of both retention and non-renewal than existed prior to PAR. More new teachers achieve early success and choose to remain in their schools, while the district quickly identifies and dismisses those who fail to meet the district's standards. Before PAR, teachers might not have received the support they needed to feel effective, while failing teachers might have been awarded tenure before anyone noticed their shortcomings. As a result, the district would have long-term financial obligations to these teachers and students would continue to pay a steep price in the classroom.

Very often those who criticize PAR point to the small number of tenured teachers who are dismissed under the program. In part, they are correct, for in most districts there are arguably more low-performing teachers who are never referred to PAR. In part, however, PAR's true effect can't be found in the dismissal numbers, since those are the teachers who waited to leave until they were formally fired. Many other teachers on Intervention are counseled to resign or retire before they face dismissal by the school board. In districts with established PAR programs, teachers who fail to meet the expectations of the CTs and PAR Panel typically leave on their own, since they see little hope in challenging the process of assistance and review. Therefore, the only way to document the effect of Intervention on staffing is to subtract the number of teachers who succeed and return to the classroom from the number of teachers initially referred to Intervention. The difference is the number of teachers who left their jobs while on PAR—either through resignation, retirement, or dismissal. In all cases we studied, this number is substantially greater than it was before PAR, when tenured teachers could be virtually assured of a lifetime job.



*A new teacher's class in Toledo*

Some proponents of PAR believe that its greatest benefit—an enhanced professional culture that focuses energy and resources on instruction—is impossible to measure. They might credit the program with improving student achievement, although that would be a hard case to prove since so many initiatives contribute to such progress.

### Should a district expect its PAR program to grow?

Demographic changes can suddenly affect the size of a district's Novice Program. When student enrollment grows or an unusual number of teachers retire or resign, the district must hire more new teachers than usual and the Novice Program will expand. Conversely, when student enrollments decline, veteran teachers remain on the job, or budget cuts increase class size, fewer new teachers will be hired and the demand for the Novice Program will shrink. Thus, a PAR Program must anticipate responding over time to both growth and decline in its Novice Program.

**“[Principals] kind of threw up their hands in despair at times and said, ‘Oh, it’s just so hard to get a teacher into PAR.’ And that wasn’t the case. And so I just need to talk them through the process and help them to understand what they needed to do.”**

**– San Juan Panel Member**

**“You have to use the process as it exists. I was a principal who used the contract to my advantage. I didn’t look at it and say what I couldn’t do. I looked at it and said, ‘Oh, I can figure this out,’ and did it. And so there are people who want to talk about the process and not do it. And those are the principals who are not holding their teachers accountable. They’re saying, ‘woe is me. I can’t do it.’”**

**– Minneapolis District Administrator**

encouraging—even requiring—more principals to refer teachers to Intervention and are offering assistance with the procedures so that they will. These principals are also likely to need moral support as they deal with the personal challenges of this work. It’s important to note that increasing the size of the Intervention Program will require substantially more resources for CTs, since each teacher on Intervention typically requires double or triple the time that a Novice does.

### **Do PAR programs function differently over time?**

The basics of PAR remain much the same over time. However, districts that started with a Novice Program often expand to offer a Voluntary or Intervention component once the Novice Program is running well. Also, districts adjust various aspects of their program as they come to better understand their needs and discover what works well.

Some districts plan for such adjustments from the start by including only a few details in the contract and authorizing the Panel to make needed changes as the program develops. For example, a Panel might change the CT’s caseload, decide to hire lead CTs, or amend the process for placing a teacher on Intervention. A program that initially housed CTs in a closed school because space was available there might decide to move them to a more central location to promote new organizational connections. Many of the differences across the programs that are described in “Designing Your PAR Program” emerged over time as districts gained experience and devised ways to make PAR work better in their district.

In addition, these districts with successful PAR programs tended to adopt less formal ways of doing their work over time. Panel co-chairs met or talked frequently to head off or solve problems. Panels became less rigid about deadlines once they were confident that everyone was committed to protecting teachers’ rights and serving students’ interests. In the schools, principals dropped their guard once they realized that CTs would share some of their most difficult responsibilities and expand the instructional capacity of the school. Teachers, who otherwise would have challenged a PAR Panel’s recommendation for dismissal, increasingly realized that they were likely to lose and chose to resign instead.

Over time, PAR tends to find its place among the district’s other programs. Some districts approach this deliberately by adopting PAR as a key part of a human capital system. Others make such accommodations as they go, for example, reconciling the procedures for PAR with a mentoring program or an evaluation system.

The Intervention Program is not affected by such demographic changes. Thus, we might expect to see it to grow over time as CTs and the Panel become more experienced with the process. However, district data do not show such growth. The size of the Intervention Program generally remains constant and small. Across the districts for this study, many union leaders, administrators, CTs, principals, and PAR Panel members said that their Intervention Program was serving far fewer veteran teachers than it could or should. Some principals blamed this on the unrealistic demands placed on them to evaluate and support veteran teachers prior to placement on Intervention. Others, who believed that the requirements for referral under PAR were realistic, said that principals who steered clear of the Intervention Program often were simply avoiding the interpersonal conflict that came with confronting an ineffective teacher. Several districts are

**“You’re really talking about a re-culturing of every local district. Anybody who embarks on PAR is fundamentally re-culturing. It’s an evolutionary process.”**

**– San Juan Teachers Union Executive Director**

### Does PAR create new legal challenges?

PAR programs potentially face three types of legal challenge. First a tenured teacher may appeal a dismissal under state law. Based on U.S. Supreme Court decisions, a tenured teacher has a vested property right to his or her position under the due process clause of the fourteenth amendment. Thus the teacher has certain procedural guarantees—adequate notice, a fair hearing before an impartial decisionmaker, and the opportunity to present evidence prior to dismissal. Most states now permit local districts to dismiss or non-renew a first-year teacher without explanation or review. Other probationary teachers who have more experience may be guaranteed additional protections.

**“The Panel follows a fair process. It gives people the benefit of the doubt. We look at the evidence that is provided, and we all get to weigh in.”**

**– Cincinnati District Administrator**

States typically include “incompetence” as one reason for dismissing a tenured teacher and this is the basis of most PAR dismissals—that a teacher does not meet the district’s basic instructional standards. Although a state board of education may hear an appeal of a tenured teacher’s dismissal, it virtually never reverses a local school board’s decision on substantive grounds. That is, they don’t question whether this was the right decision, but do review how it was made. Given the CT’s extensive documentation

of a teacher’s experience on Intervention and the fact that labor and management have carefully monitored due process throughout, a PAR district’s decision to dismiss the teacher will very likely stand. No district in this study has had a reversal on appeal, although several experienced legal challenges during the early years of their program.

Second, a teacher facing dismissal may sue his or her union for failing to meet its Duty of Fair Representation (DFR). In exchange for being granted the right to represent all of a district’s teachers in collective bargaining, the union accepts a legal obligation to fairly represent each of those teachers. This means that the union must be even-handed and not participate in actions that are arbitrary, discriminatory, or taken in bad faith. This assurance extends to all teachers who are members of the bargaining unit—and thus are represented by the union—even if they choose not to join. However, the union is not obliged to take a dismissed teacher’s case to arbitration or to defend that teacher in court. In several of the districts we studied, the teachers union provides legal counsel for any teacher who is dismissed, but others do not. The structures and processes of PAR not only provide teachers with assurance that they will be treated fairly and that due process will be monitored, but they also present arbitrators and judges with evidence from both labor and management that decisions were made fairly. Although a local union may experience a DFR challenge early in PAR, that is usually not repeated once the legitimacy of the PAR process is established. Ohio and Maryland have passed laws explicitly endorsing the arrangements of PAR programs, but districts in other states have not been successfully sued under DFR.

Third, some proponents of PAR express concern that CTs might be excluded from the bargaining unit because they function as supervisors. This worry emerged from a 1980 Supreme Court decision about faculty unionizing at Yeshiva University. The Court withheld from the faculty the right to organize and bargain under the National Labor Relations Act (which regulates private-sector labor relations) because they were found to exercise managerial functions when they voted on tenure and promotion. Legal experts who have reviewed this case conclude that the Yeshiva decision does not threaten the foundations of PAR or the right of CTs to remain in the teachers’ bargaining unit. There are important differences between private and public sector laws and, although CTs exercise some supervisory responsibilities, they are not managers. Nonetheless, PAR districts often are careful to note that the Panel makes recommendations to the superintendent, but does not, itself, make dismissal decisions. In a few districts, CTs do not make employment recommendations to the Panel, reporting only on whether or not a teacher meets standards.

**“Because the union has participated in a process which says this teacher is not fit to teach, that will be very compelling evidence in front of a hearing officer to sustain the removal.”**

**– Rochester District Administrator**

Overall, PAR districts and unions said they encountered few legal challenges and incurred relatively little legal expense. They widely reported that the bilateral nature of PAR allows them to avoid the costs of arbitration and court cases. The union and management share responsibility for the process and monitor it carefully, keeping detailed records about what occurs from the time a teacher is referred to PAR through the final recommendation. Districts that embark on PAR should understand the importance not only of providing due process, but also documenting it.



## PAR IN PRACTICE

### *PAR in Cincinnati: Relying on Standards-Based Evaluation*

#### **A Consistent Champion of PAR**

Tom Mooney first proposed PAR on behalf of the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers' (CFT) in 1983 and continued to champion the promise of PAR until he died in 2006, while serving as president of the Ohio Federation of Teachers. Over those 23 years, Cincinnati made steady progress in establishing PAR as an effective standards-based program.



*Tom Mooney,  
former CFT  
President*

Mooney was impressed with Toledo's model and convinced Cincinnati teachers to support his PAR proposal in 1983, despite a long history of combative labor relations, a school

board that generally opposed the union's role in education, and principals who fought the idea because they were sure that they would lose authority under PAR. Mooney managed to build an effective working relationship with Superintendent Lee Etta Powell,

who also became a staunch believer in PAR. At the time, people said that Mooney succeeded because he was widely respected as a principled and creative leader, who ultimately was committed to improving schools for students. The initiative quickly garnered public attention, with the Cincinnati Post endorsing the CFT's efforts: "The Cincinnati Board of Education is trying to negotiate a labor contract with the teachers' union. The Cincinnati Federation of Teachers is trying to negotiate a new way of making policy for the public schools."

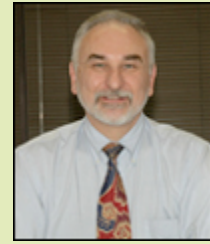
Cincinnati Public Schools	
Number of students:	36,872
Number of teachers:	2,357
Year program began:	1985
Program Type:	Novice, Intervention
Length of CT term:	3 years
Title of CT Role:	Consulting Teacher
Name of PAR Panel:	Peer Review Panel
Composition of Panel:	5 teachers, 5 administrators

In 1985 PAR was approved early in negotiations, although the sides continued to battle over other issues. Once implemented, support for the program grew steadily. At the end of the first year, a survey of principals revealed that they had come to value PAR, and their support continued to grow in the second year when PAR expanded to include veteran teachers. Teachers, too, widely endorsed the program, which offered attractive roles for especially skilled individuals: 70 applied for 10 CT positions during the second cycle of PAR.



*Rosa Blackwell,  
Superintendent  
(2008)*

Cincinnati's PAR Program developed and became more firmly established over the next decade. In 1994, under Mooney's leadership, the CFT developed a radical proposal for a pay system that would compensate teachers based on their evaluations. Soon after Mooney moved to head the union's state office in Columbus, his appointed successor was defeated in a presidential election by an opponent who argued that the evaluation system in place at the time did not provide an adequate basis for making decisions about merit or pay. Subsequently, the teachers rejected the pay plan and called instead for a revised approach to evaluation. Work on that plan, now called the Teacher Evaluation System (TES), began in 1997. Its current version serves today as a strong foundation for Cincinnati's PAR program, which continues to be well-supported by the current union president, Tim Kraus, a long-time friend and colleague of Mooney's.



*Tim Kraus, CFT  
President (2008)*

### **The Teacher Evaluation System (TES)**

Cincinnati teachers and administrators alike talk knowledgeably about what they call "The Placemat," a chart including the standards, sub-standards, and rubrics of TES. The program was developed with assistance from evaluation expert Charlotte Danielson and first used in 2000. All new and struggling experienced teachers in PAR are observed and evaluated in four domains of practice:

- Planning and preparing for student learning,
- Creating an environment for learning,
- Teaching for learning, and
- Professionalism

Cincinnati has invested heavily in training teachers and administrators to use TES and there is now a common understanding about what the standards mean and what they look like in practice. As one Panel member said, "Before we just had what we thought good teaching was. Now you have a set of standards that tells you what good teaching is."



*Julia Indalecio,  
Teacher Programs  
Manager*



*Angela Roddy,  
Teacher  
Evaluation System  
Facilitator*

All CTs wear two hats, one as PAR consulting teacher and one as TES evaluator for non-PAR teachers undergoing their required five-year comprehensive evaluation. When CTs work with teachers wearing their PAR hat, they offer intensive assistance to help those teachers meet standards. As in other districts, they eventually recommend whether the teachers they have assisted should be reappointed or dismissed. A novice teacher being reviewed by a CT must attain scores of Basic or better on all domains of TES in order to be renewed. When the CTs wear their TES hat with non-PAR teachers, they provide no assistance, instead visiting classes only to gather evidence and assess whether the teachers meet the standards.

Assigning teachers to Intervention under PAR also depends on TES scores. Any teacher who does not meet the standards—either during an annual evaluation by an administrator or a Comprehensive Evaluation by a teacher evaluator—may be placed on PAR and receive intensive assistance from a CT. If, after assistance, the teacher fails to meet the TES standards, she may be recommended for dismissal by the PAR Panel.

### **The CT: A Specialized and Demanding Role**

Being a CT in Cincinnati is a serious matter. The positions are in high demand, with as many as ten applicants for each slot. Only those who have achieved high ratings under TES are eligible, and those who are selected must demonstrate consistently outstanding teaching. CTs' training is intense and ongoing, including in-depth practice in how to collect evidence during a classroom observation and how to translate that evidence into an assessment about the teacher's level of performance. Superintendent Rosa Blackwell said, "If we choose the right teachers who are knowledgeable and have the experience in their content areas, you can't have a better group of people out in the field working with their colleagues. They know what they are looking for. They know what should happen." All new evaluators are assisted by experienced CTs as they practice assessing teachers' practice in videotaped lessons and live classes. Before becoming CTs, they must pass two assessments, one on gathering evidence and another on determining the levels of a teacher's performance.

Once on the job, CTs participate in bi-weekly "norming sessions" where they discuss standards and rubric language in detail. These sessions, run by program director Julia Indalecio, ensure that the expectations for evaluation are consistent. As one administrator explained, "They go through a lot of calibration to make sure that your #4 and my #4 are the same #4 that the paper says." An entire session may center on achieving agreement about what constitutes an "instructional rationale," required to progress from Proficient to Distinguished. This ongoing process of training and calibrating the use of TES standards prepares CTs to work with teachers and to explain their judgments. One CT explained why this intense preparation is worthwhile: "Every time you meet with them after an observation, they have a placemat and you're going through and having them mark on the placemat, so they know exactly what their scores are."

The CTs eventually prepare evaluative summaries for the PAR Panel, who expect extensive documentation and may question their decisions. It takes a lot of time to develop a strong case to support each of their recommendations to the Panel, but CTs say that the thoroughness of the process reassures them and others that PAR is an objective and even-handed process. "There are," as many individuals said, "no surprises."



*Lesley-Ann  
Gracey, CFT  
Professional  
Issues  
Representative*

## PAR in Minneapolis: Using Teams for Support

### PAR in Minneapolis Recently Endorsed

In spring 2008, Lynn Nordgren defeated the incumbent president of the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers by a margin of two to one, and proponents of the local PAR program breathed a sigh of relief. Minneapolis had developed PAR in the 1990s during an era of labor-management collaboration between long-time union president Louise Sundin and several successive superintendents. However, in an unexpected 2006 upset, Sundin was defeated by a challenger who criticized her close relationship with management. Although Sundin's successor did not move to dismantle PAR during his term, he was not a strong advocate of the program. However, Nordgren's decisive victory appeared to ensure renewed union support for PAR.

It was Nordgren who had overseen its development over 10 years before, coordinating the various committees that planned the details—a top-down and bottom-up process that she said “created more buy-in and trust.” And it was Nordgren who drafted the 60 pages of contract language detailing PAR's policies and practices.

Minneapolis Public Schools	
Number of students:	38,538
Number of teachers:	3,250
Year program began:	1997 (PSP)
Program Type:	Novice, Intervention, Voluntary
Length of CT term:	5 years, renewable
Title of CT Role:	Mentor
Name of PAR Panel:	PAR Review Committee
Composition of Panel:	6 teachers, 6 administrators



*Erin Glynn, Senior Executive Director, Academic Affairs; Bernadeia Johnson, Deputy Superintendent; Lynn Nordgren, President MFT*

At the same time that Nordgren was campaigning for president in 2008, district administrators were showing increased interest in PAR by moving it under the jurisdiction of Deputy Superintendent Bernadeia Johnson, recently returned to Minneapolis after a stint working in the Memphis Public Schools. She had known PAR as both a teacher and principal some years before and she was convinced of its potential to improve instruction. Johnson wanted to see the program both strengthened and expanded: “I really see this PAR process as part of our work.” She said that central administrators needed to “hold principals accountable and make sure that they're working with those [underperforming] teachers.”

### A Team-based Foundation for PAR

Professional support for all Minneapolis teachers is team-based. In 1995, the district replaced a traditional model of observations and evaluation by principals with the team-based Professional Development Process (PDP). PDP is designed to engage both novice and veteran teachers in ongoing learning and growth. Every teacher joins a school-based PDP team, whose members are expected to use the District's Standards of Effective Instruction as the basis for becoming better teachers. Principals and other school administrators participate as members of PDP

teams, providing support for teachers as they work on individual goals. In addition to providing ongoing professional development for all teachers, these PDP teams are the foundation for both the novice and veteran components of the PAR program. Until this year, principals only observed teachers when it was necessary to document poor performance or when a teacher requested feedback. Now the district has begun to reintroduce a traditional evaluation system for teachers to be used in combination with the PDP.

**PAR for Novices:** New teachers in Minneapolis participate in a 3-year induction and support program, called Achievement of Tenure (AoFT), during which they are required to meet a challenging set of expectations for professional practice. Novices choose the members of their school-based PDP team, but each also is assigned to work with one of the district's CTs, called a "mentor" in the Minneapolis PAR program. During her first year, the teacher receives intensive assistance from the CT and additional support from colleagues on her PDP team. Often the CT also participates in the novice's PDP meetings. In the spring of the teacher's three probationary years, the PDP team recommends to the CT and principal whether the teacher should be rehired. Ultimately, however, it is the CT and principal who decide whether the teacher will be renewed and they submit their recommendation to the district's Human Resource Office.



*Maureen Cleary, PAR District Facilitator, with CTs.*

**PAR for Experienced Teachers:** If a tenured teacher is struggling and the PDP team cannot provide sufficient support, a PAR Intervention process called Professional Support Process (PSP) is used. When a principal or peer thinks that a tenured teacher requires more support, a PAR CT is called in to review the case. If the CT decides that support is required, the teacher may be placed on a Guided PDP (GPDP) with a reconstituted team of teachers recommended by the principal and CT. If the CT determines that the problems are more serious or if a teacher on GPDP fails to improve sufficiently, the teacher may be placed on a Professional Support Program (PSP), with a new team whose members include the CT, two teachers, the principal, and a labor-relations administrator who oversees due process. Although the GPDP process is understood to be supportive and non-threatening, PSP is recognized as a serious intervention that can lead to the teacher's dismissal under PAR.

The PSP team plays a key role in assessing the teacher's progress. If the team decides that the teacher is not improving quickly enough to meet the district's Standards of Effective Instruction, it can recommend that the PAR Panel review the teacher for dismissal. Other districts' PAR Panels usually read reports and hear testimony only from CTs when they consider dismissal cases. In Minneapolis, however, the PAR Panel hears from the CT, principal, team members, and a CT who has not been involved with the case. In addition, the teacher may ask another teacher to testify on his or her behalf.

### **The Principal's Role in PAR**

The teams that serve as the foundation for the Minneapolis PAR process include principals, but principals also play a key role in deciding whether experienced teachers should be placed in PSP since it is usually they—rather than the teacher's PDP team—who call in a CT to review the teacher's performance. On occasion a teacher will make a self-referral, especially if he or she has been placed in a new assignment. As in other districts, Minneapolis principals choose to be involved in school-based teams and PAR to different degrees. Some welcome the chance to have a CT assist them in assessing and potentially dismissing a veteran teacher. Others take a laissez-faire approach to assessment, relying on the PSP teams to provide support and possible review. Chief Academic Officer Johnson's past experience with PAR as a Minneapolis principal was positive: "I used the contract to my advantage. And I didn't look at it and say what I couldn't do. I looked at it and said, 'Oh I can figure this out,' and did it." Now she expects the principals she supervises to more actively use PAR as a source of administrative support in improving the quality of the district's teaching force.



## PAR in Montgomery County: A Systems Approach

### The Payoff of PAR



*Superintendent  
Jerry Weast*

“Priceless!” That’s what Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Superintendent Jerry Weast said when asked about the cost of PAR in his district. The district’s PAR program stands as a pillar of its well-coordinated

Professional Growth System (PGS), which aligns staff development with teacher evaluation throughout the schools. In a district with 10,000 teachers—and as many as 1,000 new teachers each year—PAR provides both support and assessment to new teachers who have no teaching experience, and to experienced teachers whose principals find that they fail to meet the district’s standards. In explaining his enthusiastic endorsement of this well-funded program, Weast pointed to substantial student achievement gains under PAR and PGS.

Montgomery County Public Schools	
Number of students:	139,398
Number of teachers:	9,371
Year program began:	2001
Program Type:	Novice, Intervention
Length of CT term:	5 years
Title of CT Role:	Consulting Teacher
Name of PAR Panel:	PAR Panel
Composition of Panel:	8 teachers, 8 administrators

### Shared Governance from the Start

Not long before Weast’s appointment in 1999, district administrators and the Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA) began to use interest-based bargaining to negotiate about PAR. Initially, MCEA leaders, who had proposed PAR before Weast’s arrival, contended that teachers should have a majority of seats on the PAR Panel. However, principals were apprehensive about losing authority and their union president insisted that they remain equal partners in the process. Subsequently, principals worked with teachers and central administrators to develop the program.

The composition and work of the PAR Panel reflects the shared responsibility that labor and management assume for the success of teachers in the district. Since the program was created, the Panel has had equal numbers of teachers and principals. Today there are eight and eight. Teacher members are appointed by the MCEA and principal members are appointed by the principals union—the Montgomery County Association of Administrative and Supervisory Personnel (MCAASP). The Panel is co-chaired by Doug Prouty, vice president of the MCEA and Phil Gainous, a former principal and current vice president of the MCAASP. This structure reflects the responsibility that teachers and principals share for teachers’ success in the district. Participants agree that when there are occasional disagreements between the CT and principal about whether a



*Doug Prouty, MCEA Vice President and  
Co-chair, PAR Panel*

teacher meets standards, the parties don't split along labor-management lines. Instead, with representatives of both the teachers and principals unions on the Panel they jointly resolve these differences. Despite their initial opposition to PAR, principals now widely support it. An external evaluation of the program in 2004 reported that principals gave PAR "high marks."

The PAR program and its CTs are housed in the Office of Organizational Development (OOD), which is responsible for the district's Professional Growth System, and offers a wide range of programs, services, and opportunities. Its Implementation Team, which includes teachers and administrators, handles many of the responsibilities that PAR Panels have in other districts. Phil Gainous also works half-time in OOD as a liaison to principals, concentrating mainly on their role in PAR. If a principal's presentation to the PAR Panel is weak, he visits the principal and provides advice.

### Common Standards and Language

In building its PGS, the district developed a set of teaching standards, based on those of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Principals and CTs use these standards to review and document teachers' performance. So that teachers understand what those standards look like in practice, they are strongly recommended to take a 36-hour course—"Studying Skillful Teaching"—sometime during their first five years. Those who observe teachers—including principals and CTs—as well as PAR Panel members, who review the assessments and recommendations, take "Observing and Analyzing Teaching I and II." As a result of this extensive, consistent training, people across the district talk about teaching in similar ways and look for the same kinds of evidence in deciding whether a teacher meets the district's instructional standards. A former principal and current Panel member explained that being trained in "this whole knowledge base of what skillful teaching looks like" means that the district has a "common language now that has really spread and has had tremendous impact."

### Support First



*Bonnie Cullison, MCEA President*

Although PAR is the only system through which a teacher can be dismissed from the MCPS for instructional shortcomings, it is first and foremost a system of support. MCEA's President, Bonnie Cullison, expressed the view of many when she said, "I'm adamant that evaluation is about professional development." PAR provides intensive assistance for new teachers and for experienced teachers who are referred to PAR by their principals. In some instances, teachers fail to meet the district's standards despite receiving assistance, and they are dismissed.

However, this cannot happen unless the Panel is convinced that the teacher has received consistent support and a real chance to succeed. If the Panel finds that support was lacking, it will likely vote to give the teacher a second year in PAR. A principal who worked with PAR emphasized, "the first

response isn't a cut-and-run, fire someone and move on.... The first question you ask isn't how do we get rid of this person, but how do we support this person to improve?" He explained that education is a field "where shortages are always an issue—teacher shortages, leadership shortages. It's not at all practical to quickly jump to 'how do we move on to the next person' because it's always a growth process." However, he noted, PAR does not provide "blind support," since teachers are held to the district's standards.

This assurance of support in meeting standards is central to the system of checks and balances in MCPS PAR, which a union leader concludes "provides far more safeguards against arbitrary or capricious action than traditional evaluation systems." CTs emphasized that the process is a fair one, which teachers and principals can trust. In fact, the system successfully withstood several legal challenges during the early years of PAR. Today current teachers view a negative PAR decision as equivalent to a dismissal.



**Joint Responsibility at the School Level**

Principals are expected to do their part in making PAR work. Every new principal receives an overview of the PAR program from the vice president of the principals union, who co-chairs the PAR Panel along with the vice president of the teachers union. Other principals who are Panel members make presentations to their colleagues about PAR, explaining how it works and encouraging them to use it well. Since only principals can refer a veteran teacher to PAR by giving a “Below Standard” rating on the teacher’s formal evaluation, the Intervention part of the program depends on principals’ active and informed participation. Yet, once they refer a teacher to PAR, principals can count on the CT to join them in providing assistance.

CTs are highly-respected master teachers. Principals praised them saying they were “a gift to that classroom teacher,” “extraordinary,” and “like superman, superwoman.” Through a rigorous selection process, only one in ten applicants is accepted for the job. In addition to being first-rate teachers who form a strong cohort in their work together, every CT receives support from a PAR Pair—one teacher and one principal from the Panel—who meet monthly with a small group of CTs to offer feedback on cases, to advise about written evaluations, and to trouble-shoot with fellow principals when problems arise.

**Coordinated Resources**

CTs are not the sole sources of support for teachers. MCPS provides both an induction program with school-based mentors for new teachers as well as an ongoing professional development program for experienced teachers. The schools’ site-based coaches, department heads, and staff developers under the PGS meet regularly with CTs to plan goals for their “client.” As one principal explained, “You can’t have an effective PAR process if you don’t have a building full of resources to support those teachers.” But ultimately it is the CTs and principals who are responsible for assessing teachers and they communicate regularly. An outside evaluator concluded that PAR “seems to be having a positive impact on furthering MCPS’ efforts to infuse professional collaboration throughout the system.” PAR does not stand apart or alone as it contributes to improved instruction and student achievement in Montgomery County.

## *PAR in Rochester: Leading from the Classroom*

A large wall map of the Rochester City School District (RCSD) hangs in the office of Marie Costanza, director of Rochester's PAR program. It's crowded with bright push pins, each designating a CT who works in the district's PAR program. Other districts may have 5 to 40 CTs, but Rochester has 180, almost all working with no more than two teachers in the program. With very few exceptions, Rochester CTs (called "mentors") continue to teach either full-time or part-time as they move regularly between their own classroom and the classrooms of the teachers they assist, usually within the same school, but sometimes in a school nearby.

Approximately 60 % of Rochester's CTs are school-based, working with one or two teachers on top of a full-time teaching assignment. Each earns an additional salary stipend of 5% (for one teacher) or 10% (for two teachers). Another 40% of the CTs are released from their teaching assignments part-time to work with teachers in other schools. Overseeing this process and keeping it running smoothly requires a great deal of planning, ingenuity, and diplomacy. Costanza regularly mixes and matches CTs and assignments, juggling schedules while consulting her map to check travel distances. She checks in regularly with principals, who must agree to release some of their best teachers part-time to mentor teachers in other schools.

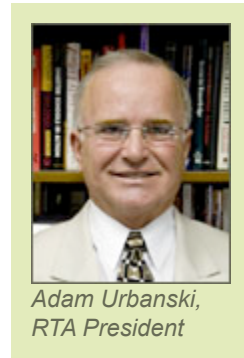
Rochester City School District	
Number of students:	34,096
Number of teachers:	2,861
Year program began:	1987
Program Type:	Novice, Intervention, Voluntary
Length of CT term:	2 years
Title of CT Role:	Mentor
Name of PAR Panel:	Career in Teaching Panel
Composition of Panel:	6 teachers, 6 administrators



*Marie Costanza, PAR Director*

Each spring, Costanza estimates the number of CTs the district will need. Only teachers who have achieved Lead Teacher status on the district's four-step career ladder are eligible to become CTs, although they must first pass the summer training program and then wait to be "activated" by Costanza. Activation depends on the number and distribution of new teachers in the district and the grade and subject area of the available Lead Teacher. Thus in a year when few elementary teachers are hired, a smaller number of elementary Lead Teachers will be activated, or each will mentor one rather than two teachers. In years with more hires in a particular subject or level, greater numbers of CTs will be released part-time from their classroom duties. At any given time, there are teachers across the district who have been trained as CTs and are ready and waiting to do the work.

The hybrid job of the Rochester CT is one component of the district's Career in Teaching (CIT) program, established 20 years ago to provide career advancement opportunities for outstanding teachers who seek to extend their expertise beyond their classroom while remaining grounded in teaching. CIT was created jointly during contract negotiations in 1987 by union president Adam Urbanski and former superintendent Peter McWalters. PAR, a central part of the CIT program, was implemented in stages. During the first year, only new teachers participated. During the second year, experienced teachers who were judged to need assistance were added to the program. Then in 1996, the district introduced a "professional support" program, providing confidential, short-term, and non-evaluative mentoring to any teacher who asks for it.



*Adam Urbanski,  
RTA President*

When Urbanski proposed PAR to his members, he argued that it would professionalize teaching. Not only would PAR allow teachers to determine the standards for teaching in the district, but it would also provide valuable leadership roles for teachers wanting to grow in the profession. Urbanski recalled that at the start some members opposed the very idea of peer review: "This is anti-union asking us to become snitches." In response, he explained the simple logic of peer review to an audience of 2000 teachers: "No one knows the difference between good teaching and bad teaching better than the best teachers, themselves." Then he asked his audience: "Anybody disagree?" Nobody did.

### **Emphasis on the Novice Component of PAR**

Although Rochester's CTs review the performance of peers and recommend that some should be dismissed, the program concentrates its resources almost exclusively on new teachers. All novices are assigned a CT during their first year and, if they have not yet succeeded but show promise, they may be granted a second probationary year in PAR. Experienced teachers who want the additional support of a CT can receive it on request. Only one or two tenured teachers each year are referred by their principal to the Intervention component, which can lead to their dismissal by the PAR panel.

This investment in supporting all new teachers and experienced teachers who seek help is consistent with the program's emphasis on the assistance aspect of PAR. Urbanski explained, "I'm not interested in peer review as a way to clean up after the damage only. I'm interested in peer review as a really effective vehicle for cultivating good teaching." Because PAR is jointly sponsored by the union and management, he believes "the union is viewed as no place to hide," but rather as an organization that "has ownership of the process."

Rochester officials note the success of their efforts. Over the course of 20 years, the district has achieved an 88% retention rate among new teachers, well above that of comparable urban districts. Meanwhile, on average, 12% of new teachers resign or are judged to be ineffective each year and are not renewed.

### **When CTs Also Teach**

Rochester's CTs are convinced that continuing to teach while participating in PAR makes them better able to advise and assess their colleagues. While CTs in most other districts deliberately avoid working in schools where they have taught, Rochester's CTs frequently shuttle between the roles of classroom teacher and CT within the same school. They work with their one or two assigned teachers during common prep times, before or after school, or when a designated substitute covers their class. Lead Teachers may be activated and released from teaching duties at various times during the school year in order to meet a need to mentor teachers hired mid-year or to accommodate a spike in requests by experienced teachers for professional support. Because most CTs' commitments are part-time, there is no limit on how many years they can serve. However, they must reapply for the role every two years.



*Michele Hancock,  
Chief, Human  
Capital*

The most obvious advantage of having CTs who continue to teach is that they don't get rusty. They not only know good teaching, but are practicing it every day. They are fully informed about the current curriculum and school-based practices, such as electronic attendance or testing procedures. One CT noted that changes in policy and practice happen so frequently in the district that, after being out of the classroom for only two years, a CT might not be able to provide accurate and timely advice.

Most Rochester CTs prefer school-based assignments and Costanza works hard to make those possible. First, CTs say it's easier to meet frequently with their assigned teacher, who often is just down the hall or teaching in the same department, thus accommodating quick check-ins and timely responses to pressing questions in addition to regularly scheduled meetings. Also, school-based CTs can help new teachers understand the particular culture of their school and the specific expectations of its principal. One explained, "You know what is expected by administration" and "you know

the population you're working with" so that the teacher cannot blame the child or the parent, "because you're right there with them and you know what they're up against." Another CT said that, if she didn't know "how things actually run here," her advice would be "just like shooting in the air."

However, when a CT who is teaching full-time works with a new teacher who is struggling, the demands for extra time can be great. One explained, "In one instance, I had an intern who truly was in trouble while I still had my own class. . . . I had no lunch, no breaks. Every free minute that I had, I was trying to support my intern in his classroom. As it turned out, unfortunately, it didn't work out for him. He realized that this was neither the district, nor the place for him. That became tricky." The fact that the Rochester PAR program focuses almost exclusively on new teachers may make it easier to maintain school-based assistance and review. A CT would likely experience more discomfort if he were reviewing the performance of a veteran peer who had taught for years in a nearby classroom.

When more of the CT's time is needed, Costanza must arrange to have that teacher released part-time from classroom responsibilities. This is not so difficult to do when the CT is a secondary school teacher, whose assignments can readily be sub-divided. However, for elementary teachers in self-contained classes, Costanza must arrange for job-sharing, which is harder to do and more controversial since it may disrupt students' instruction. However, Costanza says that she can better allay the concerns of parents and principals by arranging a job-share between two CTs because both are known to be highly skilled. Meanwhile, the CTs can feel confident that their job-share partner will be a master teacher.

### **The Resources Are There**

Rochester's PAR program depends not only on the creative and tireless work of its full-time director, but also on a large budget that makes an extensive program possible. Costanza acknowledges that she can only meet new and experienced teachers' needs because she has "an excellent budget"—a combination of local, state, and federal funds. The district continues to meet its obligation to provide all new teachers with support, both because the state requires that every teacher have one year of mentoring before receiving a permanent license and because the teachers contract specifies that "All new teachers must have a mentor." However, Costanza sees the justification for the budget in the district's high retention rates for new teachers: "It's a no-brainer."

## *PAR in San Juan: State Funding Made it Possible*

### **A Big Idea Finds State Funding and Support**

For over a decade, PAR was only a big idea in the minds of San Juan's union leaders, Tom Alves and Steve Duditch. Their counterparts in the national Teachers Union Reform Network (TURN) had long ago convinced them of PAR's success in districts such as Toledo, Rochester, and Cincinnati. Even within their own state, leaders in Poway had established a model program. Through the 1990s, Alves and Duditch visited PAR programs across the country, bringing information back to their members and enthusiastically discussing the program with district officials. They saw that PAR made it possible for teachers and principals to improve their schools and they believed that PAR would help ensure better teaching and learning in San Juan.

San Juan Unified School District	
Number of students:	48,325
Number of teachers:	2,267
Year program began:	2000
Program Type:	Intervention, Voluntary
Length of CT term:	3 years
Title of CT Role:	Consulting Teacher
Name of PAR Panel:	PAR Panel
Composition of Panel:	3 administrators, 4 teachers



*Steve Duditch,  
SJTA President*

Yet they had little success in moving the big idea to reality. Despite having a strong, collaborative labor-management relationship in the district, which provided the foundation for other joint initiatives, district officials were not ready to take on the challenge of PAR. Principals were wary of losing authority under PAR. Even some teachers union members resisted vocally, opposing PAR's fundamental principle—that teachers should evaluate teachers.

Then in 1999, the California State Legislature passed a law providing financial incentives for local districts to create PAR programs. Initially, districts could use state funding to mentor novice teachers if they also provided support for veteran teachers. The new funding opened the way for PAR in San Juan, making it both affordable and legitimate. San Juan's union leaders thought that they needed to launch a PAR program relatively quickly, capitalizing on the opportunity that the law provided. A progressive superintendent also saw the opening created by the law. Meanwhile, endorsements by the California Federation of Teachers and the California Teachers Association reinforced the local union leaders' case for adopting PAR in San Juan.

Despite initial opposition, the local union's executive board and members eventually came around. Duditch, who worked hard to win their support, said: "We had to go to our membership and show them that we aren't here to try to punish people. We're here to try to help and really create a pathway for success and a pathway for exiting this profession." Even so, ratifying the agreement was a formidable challenge. Teachers eventually were convinced that having the best teachers in the classroom was, as Alves explained, a reflection of their own self-worth: "Our people were very proud that we took a stand, because all of us want the best person in teaching." He acknowledged, though, that it was state action that made PAR possible: "It was divided. . . . It became easier when the law was passed. . . . It isn't about what's best, though to some degree it is—it's about timing!"



*Tom Alves, SJTA  
Executive Director*

### **The State Also Imposes Constraints**

PAR programs in virtually all other districts focus first on new teachers and expand to include veteran teachers once PAR for novices is up and running. However, California already had a state-funded program for new teachers, the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (BTSA), which for 20 years had provided induction support and assessment in a standards-based program. Union leaders wanted PAR to encompass both new and veteran teachers, but the legislation did not make this possible. Therefore, with contract language stating that a "new teacher PAR [program] will be considered," San Juan introduced a PAR program serving only experienced teachers. Yet in practice PAR works in conjunction with the district's BTSA program under the same governing body, the PAR Panel. As one union leader explained, the goal of BTSA is to "create capacity," while the goal of PAR is to "ensure quality teaching."

Union leaders believed that a strong PAR program would depend on having full-time release positions for Consulting Teachers (CTs), but that would be hard to do with only a small PAR program for veterans. However, by combining services for the two programs, they increased their options. Therefore, a typical CT's caseload includes 12 BTSA novices and 1 PAR veteran, who has been identified as having serious problems and requiring more of the CT's time and attention. With a team of CTs to serve both programs, the district can better match the subjects and grade levels of participating teachers and CTs.

### **Principals and PAR**

Initially, San Juan principals—like their counterparts in other PAR districts—resisted PAR because they thought it would deprive them of the authority and flexibility they would need as instructional leaders. In fact, the San Juan principals' role in PAR is key, since only they can refer an experienced teacher to the program. Whereas most other districts include an interim stage of investigation, during which a CT observes a teacher who has been referred to PAR and files a report with the PAR Panel, a San Juan teacher is immediately referred to the Panel if the principal's evaluation includes two or more unsatisfactory ratings on five relevant standards. A union official who attends the Panel meetings ensures that due process has been met in the evaluation process. If the principals have followed the process correctly, the veteran teacher enters the PAR program and the CT becomes responsible for subsequent support and evaluation.

After seven years of experience with PAR, some San Juan principals embrace it, while others steer clear of it. The former believe that the program expands their capacity to improve teaching performance and, if that fails, provides a path for the teacher to leave the district. One principal said that after a year, principals realized that the CTs had more time and expertise to offer than a principal, who, as one said, "does not have the time and is not a peer and often isn't an expert in any way. . . . These people were getting far more attention and support than they could ever have gotten before." Other principals avoid PAR for various reasons. Some think that they should not turn over evaluation and dismissal responsibilities to teachers. Others think that the process of evaluation required for a referral is too time-consuming. Still others believe that referring a teacher to PAR introduces intense pressure and unnecessarily high stakes. They prefer to work to improve a teacher's performance on their own, thus protecting the teacher from PAR's sanctions. Such views and responses by principals may contribute to the small size of the

veteran PAR program, for if all principals in San Juan were to systematically evaluate all teachers and refer those who were failing to PAR, the demands for CTs might well exceed the district's current capacity. Expanding the program would ultimately depend on increased state funding, which is unlikely today.

### **Depending on State Funding**

California funding made PAR possible in San Juan, but it also makes the district dependent on the targeted funds that the state provides. PAR has become part of the district fabric in San Juan and many there believe that it will be protected from cuts as long as district administrators continue to value it. As Duditch said, "PAR stands by itself....like an island by itself." Because PAR is included in the union contract, it cannot be discontinued suddenly. However, California, like many other states, is coping with large losses of revenue and school districts will face significant cuts in state aid. There is the possibility that funding for PAR might be lost in the process, especially if the district must choose between jobs and PAR.



## PAR in Syracuse: A Start-up Story



*Daniel Lowengard,  
Superintendent*

PAR is new to Syracuse, but the program was many years in the making. Planning started in 1999 and the district approved a PAR Novice Program during bargaining in 2003. But it was not until 2005 that implementation

began. Even then, the program encountered challenges and setbacks. Dan Lowengard, who arrived as a new superintendent at the time, recalled implementation as “a bumpy road” Other districts contemplating PAR can learn a great deal from Syracuse’s early experience with PAR—how they addressed the principals’ opposition, how they might have avoided it, how they coped with limited resources, and how they surmounted initial problems of implementing PAR in the schools.

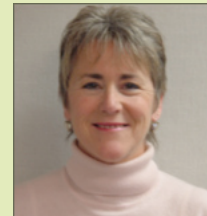
Syracuse City School District	
Number of students:	22,123
Number of teachers:	1,856
Year program began:	2005
Program Type:	Novice, Voluntary
Length of CT term:	3 years
Title of CT Role:	Consulting Teacher
Name of PAR Panel:	PAR Panel
Composition of Panel:	5 teachers, 4 administrators

### Background

Kate McKenna, president of the Syracuse Teachers Association (STA), was the prime mover of PAR. Today, teachers and administrators agree that her leadership and determination were critical to getting the program off the ground and anticipating what it would take to sustain it. Like many of her counterparts in other districts, she first heard about the program at meetings of the Teachers Union Reform Network (TURN), a nationwide affiliation of progressive union leaders. Testimonies by presidents from Toledo, Rochester, and Poway, CA inspired McKenna to introduce PAR in Syracuse. However, she understood that the district could not simply install the program. She and others would have to prepare the way for PAR.

Syracuse administrators and union leaders had worked collaboratively on reforms in the 1980s, but a productive partnership ended abruptly in 1991 with the appointment of a new superintendent who took a traditional stance toward the union. In 1999, New York State mandated that the district review their teacher evaluation system and required that the union be involved. In response, a joint labor-management committee developed the district’s instructional evaluation standards, which eventually served as the foundation for PAR. Some proponents saw in PAR the opportunity to restore the collaborative labor-management relationship of a decade before.

By 2000, the union and administration had found common ground in PAR and shared a commitment to achieving its mission. Still, they sometimes clashed on other issues, usually financial ones. McKenna recalled: “So even when we had twelve hundred people out picketing the streets, we were still doing this work. . . behind all of that.” Meanwhile, union leaders worked hard to build support for PAR within their organization. Many of their members were convinced that having teachers evaluate teachers would violate a basic tenet of unionism, rather than



*Kate McKenna,  
Former STA  
President*

advance professionalism. However, by 2003 when PAR was negotiated, there was sufficient support among members to ratify the contract.

### **A Challenge to the Principal's Authority?**

In September 2005, just as the program was about to be launched, the principals union (The Syracuse Association of Administrators and Supervisors) filed an unexpected grievance, putting the program on hold. Under the new Novice Program, the CT, rather than the principal, would evaluate new teachers. Although this fact was never hidden during the planning process and three principals had participated on the joint planning committee throughout, the change was not widely known or understood. When some principals objected to the change, their union filed a grievance alleging that PAR infringed on the principal's exclusive right to evaluate new teachers. The teachers union answered with a counter-grievance, disputing the principals' claim that their contract gave them the sole right to evaluate teachers.

Before the matter went to arbitration, it was resolved with a three-way Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by management, the teachers union, and the administrators union. This one-year MOU affirmed principals' management rights while allowing the work of the PAR CTs to proceed.

The principals union then raised another objection. Their organization had not been consulted about appointments to the PAR Panel. Three administrators, who had participated in planning PAR, were given seats on the first PAR Panel. To resolve the issue, those administrators stepped aside and the superintendent appointed three new members, all recommended by the principals union. Resolving the grievance and the assignment of Panel members delayed the start of PAR from September to December.

In retrospect, several principals think that the principals' opposition was less about their formal rights and responsibilities and more about the process by which the program was developed. One said that the issue of the principal's authority might never have been a stumbling block if the process had been more inclusive from the start: "It wasn't such a big deal for many of us." However, it was a big deal for leaders of the principals union, who complained that their organization had been excluded from the process and that their members' authority was being undermined by PAR.

### **The Difficulties of Implementation**

Implementing PAR is never a simple process and Syracuse's experience was no exception. Making PAR work day to day raised new challenges that required ongoing attention and adjustment. Over time, as the program worked more smoothly, PAR gradually won acceptance.

### **Communication Problems**

Even though the principals' grievance was formally settled, doubts lingered for many principals about whether CTs could or should evaluate teachers. During the first year, principals challenged two of the CTs' recommendations to the Panel and the Superintendent ruled in favor of the administrators. Other principals expressed dissatisfaction with the process of PAR. Panel members thought that much of this discontent was due to a lack of communication between CTs and the principals. As a result, the second annual MOU called for several new steps. Consulting teachers suggested leaving a note for principals when they arrived at their schools so that their presence would be known. Also, the district required that a three-way meeting, including the CT, principal, and novice teacher, be held at the school in September to ensure that everyone would be on the same page throughout the process. These simple mechanisms seemed to significantly improve communication between CTs and principals.

Principals who initially opposed the program began to accept PAR once they saw it in action and recognized its benefits. Surveys reflected their growing approval. Principals began to call the Panel's administrative co-chair in the central office to request CTs for their teachers. Some principals conceded that CTs could provide much more consistent and comprehensive support for new teachers than they ever could. As one explained, "From my point of view, they are achieving their goals. As a principal of a large school—we have a thousand kids here—I wouldn't have the time to devote to a new teacher as well as they do. So...I have had tremendous results from the program." In spring 2008, McKenna observed: "Most principals have come to accept most of the consultants most

of the time. I think that is the best we can hope for at this point in time.”

### ***Limited Resources***

During the first two years, Syracuse couldn't afford to include all new teachers in its Novice Program. Initial plans called for nine CTs, but funds allowed for only three the first year and six the second, each with a caseload of 12 teachers. Since the program couldn't serve all new teachers, the Panel gave priority to those who entered through alternative routes, those who held only the first level of state certification, those in subject areas where teachers were in short supply (e.g., math, science, technology and music), and those who arrived from other districts with little teaching experience. When budget cuts led the district to eliminate 67 teaching positions in 2007, the number of CTs remained at six.

Having only three or six CTs for the entire district made it impossible to match the subject and school level of each novice with an appropriate CT. The experience of another PAR district suggested that achieving a school-level match was not essential. However, some Syracuse principals thought it was. They argued that when the match was off—for example, when an elementary CT worked with a new high school teacher—the teacher and the school both were shortchanged. Over time, a greater effort was made to improve the matches.

Also, the district did not have office space and equipment to house the CTs at the Teacher Center, where most professional development took place. Intent on implementing the program, McKenna and the STA remodeled space within the union office—not McKenna's first choice, since she knew it meant that people might see PAR as a union initiative rather than a joint labor-management one. Although the arrangement relieved the district's financial burden, some said it also undermined the credibility of the program, reinforcing a perception that the CTs were “puppets of the union,” as one CT said. Therefore, leaders on both sides were eager to move the program out of the STA offices as soon as possible.

### ***Competing Interests of New and Old Programs***

Before it was adopted some teachers opposed PAR because it was a peer review process. However, once it was implemented, objections arose from the district's mentoring program about the CTs' roles, pay, and special status. Before PAR, the district had paid a small stipend to veteran teachers who continued to teach full-time while mentoring new teachers. When PAR was introduced and CTs began to work with first-year teachers, mentors were reassigned to assist those new teachers as they progressed to their second and third years. The district created a position for a mentor facilitator to bridge the work of PAR's CTs and the work of the mentors. However, the mentor facilitator did not fully support PAR and the transition was not a smooth one. Some objected because PAR combined support and assessment in one role, while they believed that new teachers would fare better in an arrangement of unconditional support. Beyond that philosophical difference, there also were undercurrents of dissatisfaction because PAR CTs were released from teaching full-time, received higher pay and were thought by many to hold higher status. As one administrator said, “[The mentors] think, some of them, it's an elite program for those consulting teachers.”

By the third year of PAR, it was not yet clear how these two programs and their participants would coexist or complement one another's work. Both provided coaching and support, but the mentor's role remained non-evaluative and entirely confidential while CTs made recommendations about contract renewals.

### ***Looking Ahead***

Having gotten PAR off the ground in Syracuse, McKenna and Superintendent Dan Lowengard saw the program as the beginning of something much bigger. They believed that PAR could change the culture of teaching. Lowengard said, “Clearly, until we create an atmosphere where teachers are in a culture of change, in a culture of support, we're not going to get the kind of instruction that we want.” McKenna believed that PAR would strengthen the professional culture of the district as teachers became “active players” in evaluation: “This is the compact that we've entered.”

At the end of school in June 2008, McKenna retired and moved out of state. Before leaving, she did all that she could to “shore up” the PAR program, “its visibility, and its importance as a way to strengthen our profession.” The parties signed a four-year Memorandum of Understanding, which spelled out the specifics of the program. The district also approved a voluntary, non-evaluative program for veteran teachers. Lowengard said he was confident that, after McKenna’s retirement, PAR “will stand on its own.” Teacher retention was up substantially and support for the program was growing. Lowengard said, “Now it’s really gotten to a good place and all of the fears have been really put aside and we’re venturing into the new territory of looking at veteran teachers for PAR.” Optimistically, McKenna explained, “It is clear that we all really have the same goal. We really do.”



*Jaime Alicea, Deputy Superintendent and  
Anne Marie Voutsinas, STA President: PAR  
Panel Co-chairs*

## PAR in Toledo: Continuity through Change

### Where It All Began

Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) is the brainchild of Dal Lawrence, former president of the Toledo Federation of Teachers (TFT). His proposal, first bargained in 1973, was radical, not only because it would have teachers reviewing the work of their peers, but also because it came from a union leader. Lawrence was convinced that teaching would become a profession only when teachers, themselves, set standards for their work and decided who met those standards and deserved to teach. Initially, he set out to change the work and status of teachers in the Toledo Public Schools (TPS). Now, more than a quarter century later, his vision and the program he developed with Toledo's administrators continue to inspire change in districts across the nation.

Toledo Public Schools	
Number of students:	30,423
Number of teachers:	1,852
Year program began:	1981
Program Type:	Novice, Intervention, Voluntary
Length of CT term:	3 years
Title of CT Role:	Intern Consultant
Name of Panel:	Intern Board of Review
Composition of Panel:	5 teachers, 4 administrators



*Dal Lawrence, Former  
TFT President*

Lawrence's proposal for PAR, which included only novice teachers, did not receive immediate acceptance. In fact, he took it to the bargaining table in three different rounds of negotiation before it was accepted. At the start, Toledo's principals opposed the plan, believing that losing the right to evaluate teachers would undermine their authority. A former principal recalled his own reservations: "It was like the union now is taking over part of the administrator's responsibility and authority."

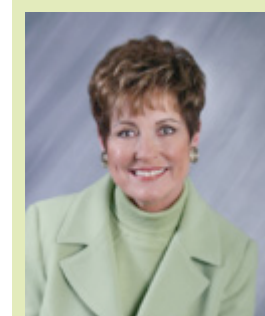
Ironically, Toledo finally adopted PAR in the midst of conflict rather than calm. After contentious negotiations led the teachers to strike in 1978, the district hired a new superintendent and School Board negotiator. In the bargaining that followed, Lawrence's PAR proposal was back on the table, but this time it drew the interest of management's new negotiator, a lawyer familiar with peer review in his own profession. In response to the union's PAR proposal, which included only novice teachers, the district's negotiator countered with a proposal to expand PAR to include tenured teachers who were failing. Thus, the parties agreed that PAR in Toledo would not only regulate entry to teaching through its novice component, but would review the ranks of tenured teachers through an Intervention component. Even today, it is this Intervention component that evokes the most surprise and interest among those who learn about PAR.

### The Program

The basic structure of Toledo's PAR program, which was instituted in 1981, remains essentially unchanged today. It has served as the template for programs in districts across the country. The program is administered by a PAR Panel—called the Intern Board of Review in Toledo—composed of four administrators and five teachers. Unlike most other districts, teachers have a majority on the Panel, although in practice it doesn't seem to matter since the group doesn't split by role when it votes. The TFT President—today Fran Lawrence, Dal's wife—and the TPS Chief

of Staff serve as the panel's co-chairs, who hold joint responsibility for managing the program. PAR in Toledo includes both novice teachers, who participate in PAR as an induction program, and experienced teachers who have been referred to Intervention because they are struggling or have been judged to be unsatisfactory. Consulting Teachers (CTs), called Intern Consultants in Toledo, each provide intensive assistance to a caseload of teachers in the program. After several months of mentoring and continuing evaluation, the CTs advise the PAR Panel about whether the teachers they assist should be renewed or dismissed. In turn, the PAR Panel decides each case and recommends re-employment or dismissal to the Superintendent.

Every new teacher is assigned to work with a CT, typically someone who teaches the same subject and grade level. Toledo's CTs have sole responsibility for evaluating teachers during their first year in the district. Based on the CTs' assessments and recommendations to the PAR Panel, 8%-10% of new teachers choose to resign or do not receive renewal contracts. After the first year, principals conduct the evaluations and can decide to dismiss teachers before they receive permanent contracts or tenure. Experienced teachers with serious performance problems are referred to the Intervention component of PAR by principals and/or building committees. The number of teachers assigned to Intervention is small, usually no more than two to three per year. However, dismissal rates of both novice teachers and tenured teachers exceed those in the period before PAR, when administrators were solely responsible for evaluation.



*Fran Lawrence, TFT  
President*

### **A Stable Program in a Challenging Context**

Since its inception, PAR in Toledo has encountered several important challenges. Like many districts, the TPS labor-management relationship has periodically veered between collaboration and conflict. The original agreement allowed either party to cancel PAR at any time and, in 1995-96, the union withdrew from the program for a year in response to a contract dispute over an unrelated issue. The following year, both sides committed to reinstating the program and it has continued without interruption ever since.

The district also has experienced severe budget problems as a result of enrollment declines and a shrinking industrial economy. At the same time, suburban districts and charter schools compete for TPS students. With the loss of students come reductions in state aid, making it hard to fund the program's rather significant cost from a shrinking budget.

In addition, individuals have filed challenges. The union has been sued in federal court three times on charges that they have failed to fairly represent a teacher; each time the union won its case. In the late 1990's, an African-American teacher who was recommended for dismissal by the PAR Panel appealed the decision. Although the teacher ultimately retained his job, the case highlighted racial tensions among teachers in relation to PAR. To address these concerns, the PAR Panel hired an external researcher to investigate whether there was evidence of racial bias in the program. She found no evidence of discrimination, although the issue continues to be of concern among those responsible for the program.



*CTs Gloria Wise and Sharon Clark*

Today the Toledo Plan differs from its initial 1981 structure in only two ways. First, it includes a voluntary component—called School Consultation—for veteran teachers who decide to seek assistance on their own. Second, a seat on the PAR Panel, once reserved for a central office administrator, now is assigned to a principal. Previously, no principals had been on the Panel. Neither change has substantially altered the program. PAR's established structures have proven to be effective and sturdy. The PAR Panel has earned the respect of administrators and teachers as a careful and deliberate body that takes its responsibility seriously. Although trust



and collaboration may waver in other aspects of labor-management relations, the PAR panel is truly a joint endeavor, committed to improving the quality of teaching in Toledo. The role of CT, which is one of the only specialized roles that the district offers teachers, also has won respect and gained stability over time, due both to the competitive selection process and the consistent quality of the CTs' exceptionally hard work.

Like most urban school districts, Toledo has had a series of superintendents since PAR was established. Some have seen value in PAR and been committed to it from the start, while others have taken it for granted or withheld their support. Repeated turnover at the top of the district continues to threaten the program's stability. Recently, the Superintendent who, along with TFT leaders, accepted a national award for PAR in 2001, left to head another Ohio district, taking 10 central office administrators with him and making it necessary to rebuild understanding of and commitment to PAR. John Foley, the current superintendent who recalls the program from when he was a teacher, endorses PAR.

Throughout periods of administrative turnover, there has been continuity in union leadership. Dal Lawrence served as TFT president for thirty years (1967-1997) and Fran Lawrence has been president for the last eleven (1997-2008). Thus there has been a consistent vision and commitment to PAR, sustaining the program through difficult times. As Fran Lawrence explained, "The union has had a vision over the last forty years, the professionalization of teaching, and [PAR] is the fundamental, integral part of it."



## About the Authors



*Susan Moore Johnson*

**Susan Moore Johnson** is the Carl H. Pforzheimer, Jr. Professor of Teaching and Learning at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education, where she directs the Project on the Next Generation of Teachers. Johnson studies and teaches about teacher policy, organizational change, and administrative practice. A former high school teacher and administrator, she has a continuing research interest in the work of teachers and the reform of schools. She has studied the leadership of superintendents, the effects of collective bargaining on schools, the use of incentive pay plans for teachers, and the school as a context for adult work. Johnson served as academic dean of the Graduate School of Education from 1993 to 1999 and is a member of the National Academy of Education.



*Sarah E. Fiarman*

**Sarah E. Fiarman** is a former National Board Certified Teacher and current elementary school principal in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She enjoys helping educators build powerful learning communities through collaboratively examining data, observing instruction, and participating in shared decision-making. She is completing her doctoral degree in Administration, Planning, and Social Policy at the Harvard Graduate School of Education where she studies teacher leadership as a Research Assistant with the Project on the Next Generation of Teachers. She also facilitates Instructional Rounds Networks with superintendents and school leaders. She holds an A.B. from Stanford and Ed.M.s from Antioch University and the Harvard Graduate School of Education.



*Mindy Sick Munger*

**Mindy Sick Munger** is an advanced doctoral student in Administration Planning and Social Policy at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. A former middle school math teacher, Munger also served as Education Policy Advisor to Governor Jim Edgar of Illinois from 1994-1997. Munger studies teacher policy, teachers unions, and instructional leadership by teachers and principals. Currently, she is a research assistant with the Project on the Next Generation of Teachers. She is a graduate of Harvard (AB, 1994) and the Harvard Graduate School of Education (Ed.M., 2001).



*John P. Papay*

**John P. Papay** is an advanced doctoral student in the Quantitative Policy Analysis in Education concentration at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a research assistant with the Project on the Next Generation of Teachers. Before entering graduate school, he taught high school history. Papay holds a B.A. in History from Haverford College and an Ed.M. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. His research interests include teacher policy, the economics of education, teacher labor markets, and teachers unions.



*Emily Kalejs Qazilbash*

**Emily Kalejs Qazilbash** is completing her doctoral degree in Administration, Planning, and Social Policy at the Harvard Graduate School of Education where she is a research assistant with the Project on the Next Generation of Teachers. Her research interests include teachers unions, urban school reform, and teacher policy. A former teacher in Boston and Baltimore, Qazilbash has also directed professional development programs for both new and experienced teachers in the Boston Public Schools. She holds a B.A. in Political and Social Thought from the University of Virginia and an Ed. M. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.



*Lindsay Wheeler*

**Lindsay Wheeler**, project assistant, is a master's candidate in the Education Policy and Management Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She currently works for Boston Public Schools in the Office of Professional Development, supporting teacher leaders and researching teacher development. Before entering graduate school, Lindsay taught 5th grade in Phoenix, AZ and worked as a Curriculum Specialist for Teach For America. She holds a B.A. from the College of William and Mary.

## *Study Methods*

To gather information for this User's Guide, we interviewed key stakeholders in seven school districts that had established teacher Peer Assistance and Review. We focused on districts whose PAR programs went beyond mentoring and where teachers reviewed the performance of their peers, sometimes leading to dismissal. We chose districts to ensure geographic balance and to include programs with a long history as well as others that are relatively new. Our final sample included the following seven districts:

- Cincinnati, OH
- Minneapolis, MN
- Montgomery County, MD
- Rochester, NY
- San Juan, CA
- Syracuse, NY
- Toledo, OH

Between December 2007 and April 2008, two researchers conducted site visits of 2 to 3 days in each district. Over the course of each visit, we interviewed approximately 25 individuals, including key union and district officials, members of the PAR Panel, current and former Consulting Teachers, and principals. We made a concerted effort to interview both advocates and opponents of PAR. Overall, we interviewed 155 individuals across the seven districts.

We supplemented these interviews with relevant documents, including both the teachers and principals union contracts, teacher evaluation guides, selection criteria for Consulting Teachers, and any available PAR program reports. District and union officials also reviewed our materials for accuracy.

We are grateful to the teachers, administrators, and union leaders who opened their doors and went out of their way to provide us with information and candid views about their PAR program. We're indebted to Lindsay Wheeler for outstanding research assistance and to Jen Godfrey for her excellent web design. This project was generously funded by grants from Katharine and Al Merck and from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. However, the conclusions and analysis present here are solely those of the authors.

## *Data & Resources*

Although PAR looks similar from district to district, there are important differences that are worth noting. Here, we have compiled additional information about the programs we studied and several resources for those planning local programs.

## Research and References

### Books, articles and reports

American Federation of Teachers and National Education Association. (1998). Peer assistance & peer review: An AFT/NEA handbook. *Shaping the profession that shapes the future: An AFT/NEA conference on teacher quality*. Washington, D.C.: Author.

Anderson, L. W. & Pellicer, L. O. (2001). *Teacher peer assistance and review: A practical guide for teachers and administrators*. Thousand Oakes, CA: Corwin Press.

Bloom, G. & Goldstein, J. (Eds.). (2000). *The peer assistance and review reader*. Santa Cruz: University of California at Santa Cruz.

Gallagher, J.J., Lanier, P., & Kerchner, C.T. (1993). Toledo and Poway: Practicing peer review. In Kerchner, C.T. & Koppich, J.E. (Eds.), *A union of professionals: Labor relations and educational reform*. New York: Teachers College Press, 158-176.

Goldstein, J. (2004). Making sense of distributed leadership: The case of peer assistance and review. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 26(2), 173-197.

Goldstein, J. (2006). Combining supervision and evaluation and living to tell about it: Mentee trust and the fear of peer review. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*, 18(4).

Goldstein, J. & Noguera, P. (2006). A thoughtful approach to teacher evaluation. *Educational Leadership*, 63(6), 31-37.

Goldstein, J. (2007). Easy to dance to: Solving the problems of teacher evaluation with peer assistance and review. *American Journal of Education*, 113, 479-508.

Kaboolian, L., & Sutherland, P. (2005). *Evaluation of Toledo Public School district peer assistance and review plan*. Cambridge, MA: John F. Kennedy School of Government. Retrieved March 10, 2009, from <http://tpsinfo.com/ToledoPlan/ToledoPlanReport.pdf>.

King, B. (1993). *Cincinnati: Betting on an unfinished season*. In Kerchner, C.T. & Koppich, J.E. (Eds.), *A union of professionals: Labor relations and educational reform*. New York: Teachers College Press, 61-78.

Koppich, J.E. (2004). *Toward improving teacher quality: An evaluation of peer assistance and review in Montgomery County Public Schools*. Report prepared for the Montgomery County Public Schools.

Koppich, J., Asher, C. & Kerchner, C. (2001). *Developing careers, building a profession: The Rochester Career in Teaching Plan*. New York: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

Koppich, J.E. (1993). Rochester: The rocky road to reform. In C.T. Kerchner & J.E. Koppich (Eds.), *A union of professionals: Labor relations and educational reform*. New York: Teachers College Press, 136-157.

National Education Association (1998). *An NEA discussion guide for local affiliates: Facilitating the dialogue on peer assistance and peer review*. Washington, D.C.: Author.

van Lier, P. (2008). *Learning from Ohio's Best Teachers: A homegrown model to improve our schools*. A report from Policy Matters Ohio.

---

## Websites

### Montgomery County, MD:

MCEA: <http://mcea.nea.org/WhoWeAre/WhoWeAre.html>

[http://mcea.nea.org/culture\\_of\\_respect.pdf](http://mcea.nea.org/culture_of_respect.pdf) -- labor management relations philosophy

MCPS: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/>

### Toledo, OH:

Toledo Federation of Teachers: <http://www.tft250.org/>

"The Toledo Plan:" [http://www.tft250.org/the\\_toledo\\_plan.htm](http://www.tft250.org/the_toledo_plan.htm)

Toledo Public Schools: <http://www.tps.org/>

### Rochester, NY:

Rochester Teachers Association: <http://www.rochesterteachers.com/>

Rochester Public Schools: <http://www.rcsdk12.org/>

### San Juan, CA:

San Juan Teachers Association: <http://www.sjta.org>

San Juan Unified School District: <http://www.sanjuan.edu/>

### Cincinnati, OH:

Cincinnati Federation of Teachers: <http://www.cft-aft.org/>

Cincinnati Public Schools: <http://www.cps-k12.org/>

### Syracuse, NY:

Syracuse Teachers Association: <http://www.syracuseteachers.org/>

Syracuse Public Schools: <http://www.schoolsk-12.com/New-York/Syracuse/index.html>

### Minneapolis, MN:

Minneapolis Federation of Teachers: <http://www.mft59.org/>

Minneapolis Public Schools: <http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us/>

The Tom Mooney Institute: <http://www.mooneyinstitute.org/>

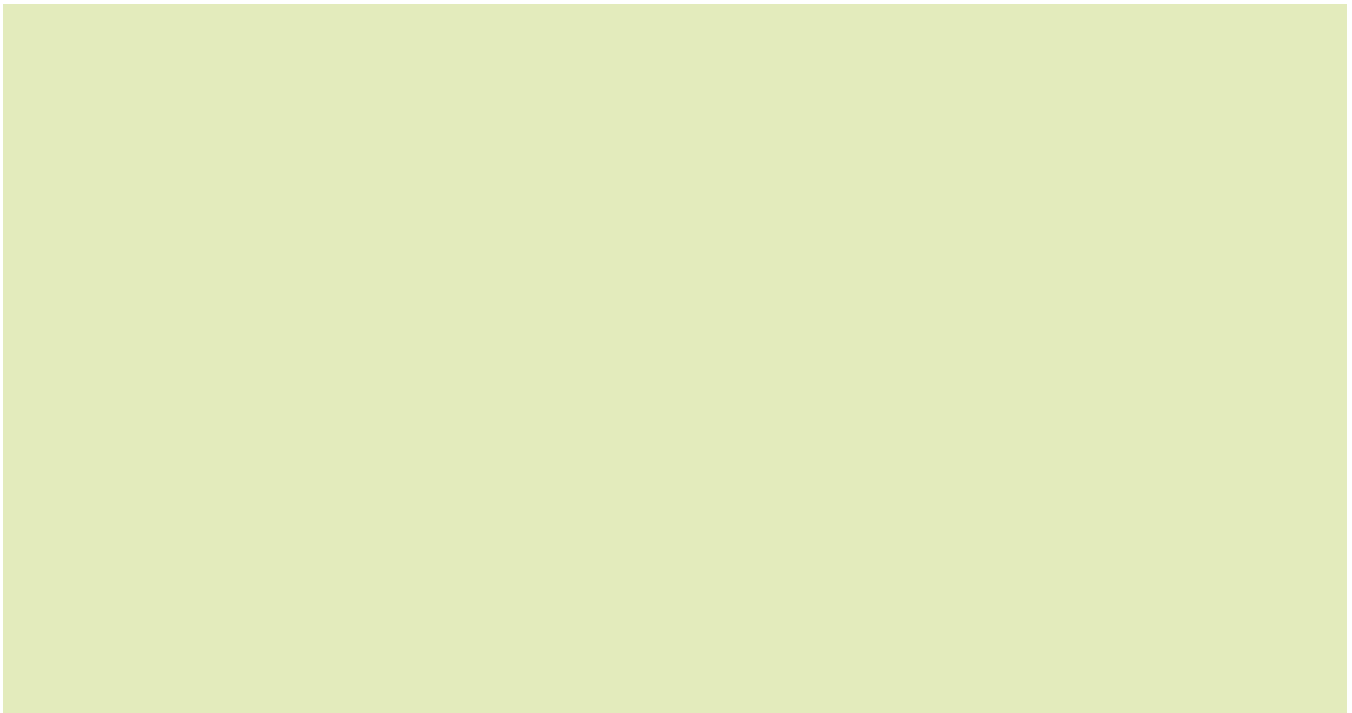
Teachers Union Reform Network (TURN) website: <http://www.turnexchange.net>

## *Conference Papers*

These documents are available for download at:

[http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~ngt/par/resources/conference\\_papers.html](http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~ngt/par/resources/conference_papers.html)

- ***Shared Responsibility for Teacher Quality: How Do Principals Respond to Peer Assistance and Review?***
- ***Beyond Dollars and Cents: The Costs and Benefits of Teacher Peer Assistance and Review***
- ***Peer Assistance and Review: A Cross-Site Study of Labor-Management Collaboration Required for Program Success***
- ***Teachers Leading Teachers: The Experiences of Peer Assistance and Review Consulting Teachers***





# District and Program Information

## Overview

	Toledo	Cincinnati	Montgomery County	Rochester	San Juan	Minneapolis	Syracuse
<b>DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS</b>							
Number of schools*	58	79	199	60	80	144	33
Number of teachers*	1,852	2,357	9,371	3,600	2,267	3,250	1,856
Number of students*	30,423	36,872	139,398	34,096	48,325	38,538	22,123
Enrollment trends	Declining	Stable	Growing	Declining	Declining	Declining	Declining
<b>Student demographics</b>							
- African-American (%)**	46%	71%	23%	66%	8%	42%	53%
- Hispanic (%)**	8%	2%	20%	20%	15%	15%	10%
- Asian-American(%)**	1%	1%	15%	2%	7%	11%	3%
- White (%)**	41%	23%	42%	12%	No	28%	33%
- Free/Reduced Price Lunch (%)**	67%	66%	22%	72%	30%	64%	73%
<b>Per Pupil Spending (Current)*</b>	\$10,190	\$11,718	\$12,004	\$13,634	\$7,611	\$11,823	\$13,839
<b>National Union Affiliate (NEA/AFT)</b>	AFT	AFT	NEA	AFT	NEA	NEA/AFT	AFT





- Writing sample	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
- Classroom observations	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

**CT SUPPORT**

<b>Who supervises the CTs?</b>	PAR Panel	PAR Pair	PAR Pair	PAR Panel	PAR Panel	PAR Panel	PAR Panel	PAR Panel
--------------------------------	-----------	----------	----------	-----------	-----------	-----------	-----------	-----------

**CT BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

<b>What additional compensation do CTs receive?</b>	\$6,150	\$6,500	\$5,000 + 20 paid summer days	5-10% of base pay per intern	\$4,894	\$5,000 professional account***	10% of base pay
---	---------	---------	-------------------------------	------------------------------	---------	---------------------------------	-----------------

**CT options the year after leaving the role:**

- Return to classroom	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
- Enter non-teaching role in school	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	No
- Enter administration	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No

**Do CTs have right of return to their original school?**

**Do CTs have right of return to their original teaching assignment?**

Do CTs have right of return to their original school?	Yes	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	Yes
Do CTs have right of return to their original teaching assignment?	Yes	Same or similar	No	N/A	No	No	No

## PAR Panel

Toledo	Cincinnati	Montgomery County	Rochester	San Juan	Minneapolis	Syracuse
--------	------------	-------------------	-----------	----------	-------------	----------

### OVERVIEW

**What is the name of the district's PAR Panel?**

**Composition of the Panel**

- Administrators

- Teachers

**Are Panel members paid a stipend?**

**Who chairs the Panel?**

**Do PAR Pairs (one teacher and one administrator on the Panel) supervise CTs?**

**How often does the Panel meet?**

Intern Board of Review	4	5	8	6	3	4
Peer Review Panel	5	5	8	6	4	5
PAR Panel	PAR Panel	Career in Teaching Panel	PAR Panel	PAR Panel	PAR Review Committee	PAR Panel
PAR Panel	PAR Panel	PAR Panel	PAR Panel	PAR Panel	PAR Review Committee	PAR Panel
Union Pres. & District Chief of Staff (rotates)	Union Pres. & District Chief of Staff (rotates)	Director of HR & Union VP (rotates)	Union VP & Principals union VP	Union Pres. & a Director of schools	Lead Mentor & Employees Relations Rep. (rotates)	Union Pres. & Deputy Superintendent (rotates)
No	No	\$5,000 for non-central office staff	\$1,000	\$2,765	No	\$2,000
Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
No	No	No	No	No	No	No
4 times per year and as needed	Monthly	Every two weeks	At least monthly	No	Monthly	4 times a year and as needed

**What are the voting requirements for PAR decisions on employment?**

5 of 9

Majority

Majority

Majority

Majority

Majority

Two-thirds

## Novice Program

	Toledo	Cincinnati	Montgomery County	Rochester	San Juan	Minneapolis	Syracuse
--	--------	------------	-------------------	-----------	----------	-------------	----------

### OVERVIEW

**Is there a novice component?**

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

No

Yes

Yes

**Who is included in the program?**

- First-year teachers

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

N/A

Yes

Yes

- Experienced teachers new to the district

Yes

Yes

No

Yes

N/A

Yes

Yes

**Do principals evaluate novice teachers?**

No

No

Yes

Yes

N/A

Yes

No

**Can a teacher appeal the PAR Panel's recommendation?**

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

N/A

Yes

No

## Intervention Program

	Toledo	Cincinnati	Montgomery County	Rochester	San Juan	Minneapolis	Syracuse
--	--------	------------	-------------------	-----------	----------	-------------	----------

### OVERVIEW

Is there an Intervention component?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Is there a time limit on Intervention? If yes, what is it?	No	No	2 years	3 semesters	N/A	9 months	N/A
Is there a voluntary program?	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

### REFERRALS AND INVESTIGATION

**Who can refer a teacher for Intervention?**

- Principal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
- Other teachers	Yes, building committee	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	N/A

**Does an unsatisfactory evaluation automatically trigger a referral?**

- Principal	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	N/A
-------------	----	-----	-----	----	-----	----	-----

**Does investigation include:**

- Unannounced class observations?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	N/A
- Consultations with others in school?	Yes	Yes	No	No	N/A	Yes	N/A



## INTERVENTION AND DISMISSALS

	Toledo	Cincinnati	Montgomery County	Rochester	San Juan	Minneapolis	Syracuse
Do principals continue to evaluate teachers on Intervention?	No	No	Yes	Optional	Yes	Yes	N/A
Can the teacher appeal decisions?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A

## Managing the Program Day-to-Day

### OVERVIEW

Is there a program director?	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Does the program have a Lead CT?	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Are Lead CTs paid a stipend?	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

\* From NCES CCD and district sources

\*\* From School Data Direct.org

\*\*\*In Minneapolis, CTs get \$5,000 in a professional account that can be used for such things as conferences and books.

# PAR Outcome Data

## PAR Outcomes for Teachers in the Novice Program

### Cincinnati

Year	Total Novices in PAR	Result after 1st Year of PAR (N)			
		Non-Renewed		2nd Year of PAR	
1987-88	116	9	(7.8%)	9	(7.8%)
1988-89	155	6	(3.9%)	13	(8.4%)
1989-90	144	5	(3.5%)	8	(5.6%)
1990-91	177	7	(4.0%)	19	(10.7%)
1991-92	172	5	(2.9%)	20	(11.6%)
1992-93	210	5	(2.4%)	14	(6.7%)
1993-94	170	2	(1.2%)	13	(7.6%)
1994-95	215	1	(0.5%)	15	(7.0%)
1995-96	95	1	(1.1%)	5	(5.3%)
1996-97	142	3	(2.1%)	4	(2.8%)
1997-98	209	6	(2.9%)	15	(7.2%)
1998-99	188	12	(6.4%)	8	(4.3%)
1999-00	99	3	(3.0%)	8	(8.1%)
2000-01	54	4	(7.4%)	6	(11.1%)
2001-02	116	5	(4.3%)	2	(1.7%)
2002-03	176	1	(0.6%)	N/A	
2003-04	219	4	(1.8%)	N/A	
2004-05	67	1	(1.5%)	N/A	
2005-06	18	0	(0.0%)	N/A	
2006-07	37	0	(0.0%)	N/A	
2007-08	40	0	(0.0%)	N/A	
<b>TOTAL (21 Years)</b>	<b>2819</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>(2.8%)</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>(5.6%)</b>

### Minneapolis

Year	Total
1997 to 2002	250 to 500 per year
2002 to 2005	125 per year
2005 to 2008	85 to 194 per year
<b>TOTAL (11 Years)</b>	

## Montgomery County

Year	Total Novices in PAR	Result after 1st Year of PAR (N)			
		Non-Renewed	2nd Year of PAR	Resigned	
2000-01	151	7 (4.6%)	25 (16.6%)	N/A	
2001-02	393	3 (0.8%)	20 (5.1%)	N/A	
2002-03	655	28 (4.3%)	43 (6.6%)	N/A	
2003-04	497	2 (0.4%)	13 (2.6%)	24 (4.8%)	
2004-05	510	4 (0.8%)	16 (3.1%)	17 (3.3%)	
2005-06	607	13 (2.1%)	26 (4.3%)	28 (4.6%)	
2006-07	535	18 (3.4%)	24 (4.5%)	N/A	
2007-08	446	16 (3.6%)	32 (7.2%)	N/A	
<b>TOTAL (8 Years)</b>	<b>3794</b>	<b>91 (2.4%)</b>	<b>199 (5.2%)</b>	<b>69 1.8%</b>	

## Rochester

Year	Total Novices in PAR	Result after 1st Year of PAR (N)	
		Left District	
1987 to 2001	2,229	283 (12.7%)	
2001-02	582	74 (12.7%)	
2002-03	253	38 (15.0%)	
2003-04	331	44 (13.3%)	
2004-05	235	22 (9.4%)	
2005-06	342	37 (10.8%)	
2006-07	426	30 (7.0%)	
<b>TOTAL (20 Years)</b>	<b>4,398</b>	<b>528 (12.0%)</b>	

## Syracuse

Year	Total Novices in PAR	Result after 1st Year of PAR (N)
		Non-Renewed
2005-06	36	3
2006-07	71	4
2007-08	62	6
<b>TOTAL (2 Years)</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>13</b>

## Toledo

Year	Total Novices in PAR	Result after 1st Year of PAR (N)			
		Non-Renewed		Resigned	
1981-82	19	3	(15.8%)	0	(0.0%)
1982-83	49	1	(2.0%)	0	(0.0%)
1983-84	71	2	(2.8%)	3	(4.2%)
1984-85	83	3	(3.6%)	1	(1.2%)
1985-86	92	2	(2.2%)	3	(3.3%)
1986-87	163	2	(1.2%)	4	(2.5%)
1987-88	202	7	(3.5%)	4	(2.0%)
1988-89	151	7	(4.6%)	4	(2.6%)
1989-90	141	5	(3.5%)	5	(3.5%)
1990-91	170	8	(4.7%)	9	(5.3%)
1991-92	109	9	(8.3%)	4	(3.7%)
1992-93	249	8	(3.2%)	17	(6.8%)
1993-94	170	8	(4.7%)	10	(5.9%)
1994-95	160	8	(5.0%)	8	(5.0%)
1995-96	N/A (Program Suspended)				
1996-97	175	9	(5.1%)	8	(4.6%)
1997-98	196	6	(3.1%)	15	(7.7%)
1998-99	400	12	(3.0%)	20	(5.0%)
1999-00	285	15	(5.3%)	16	(5.6%)
2000-01	140	4	(2.9%)	8	(5.7%)
2001-02	312	6	(1.9%)	11	(3.5%)
2002-03	297	12	(4.0%)	4	(1.3%)
2003-04	85	2	(2.4%)	4	(4.7%)
2004-05	N/A	8		N/A	
2005-06	N/A	5		N/A	
2006-07	N/A	9		N/A	
2007-08	N/A	9		N/A	
<b>TOTAL (27 Years)</b>	<b>3719</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>(4.6%)</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>(4.2%)</b>

## PAR Outcomes for Teachers in the Intervention Program

### Cincinnati (current teaching staff: 2,357)

Year	Teachers Referred to Intervention	Teachers in Intervention	Dismissed	Result after Intervention (N)		Successful Return to Classroom
				Resigned/ Retired	Add'l Year of Intervention	
1986 to 2002	201	149	83	32	N/A	34
2002-03	N/A	10	4	4	1	1
2003-04	N/A	10	5	2	3	0
2004-05	N/A	11	4	2	1	4
2005-06	N/A	5	2	1	1	1
2006-07	N/A	12	3	4	0	5
2007-08	N/A	5	0	1	0	0
<b>TOTAL (22 Years)</b>	201	202	101	46	6	45

### Minneapolis (current teaching staff: 2,250)

Year	Teachers Referred to Intervention	Teachers in Intervention	Left District	Result after Intervention (N)	
				Add'l Year of Intervention	Successful Return to Classroom
1997 to 2003	N/A	350	N/A	N/A	201
2004 to 2008	183	N/A	68	45	70
<b>TOTAL (3 Years)</b>					

### Montgomery County (current teaching staff: 9,371)

Year	Teachers in Intervention	Dismissed	Result after Intervention (N)		Successful Return to Classroom
			Resigned/ Retired	Add'l Year of Intervention	
2000-01	32	3	1	9	19
2001-02	45	6	9	7	22
2002-03	18	4	2	2	8
2003-04	20	4	4	3	7
2004-05	23	4	7	4	6
2005-06	44	10	5	19	8
2006-07	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2007-08	9	7	0	2	0
<b>TOTAL (8 Years)</b>	191	38	28	46	70

**Rochester (current teaching staff: 2,861)**

Year	Teachers Referred to Intervention	Teachers in Intervention	Result after Intervention (N)		
			Dismissed	Resigned/ Retired	Successful Return to Classroom
1987 to 2001	70	34	N/A	3	33
2001 to present	13	4	1	1	2
<b>TOTAL (20 Years)</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>34</b>

**San Juan (current teaching staff: 2,267)**

Year	Teachers Referred to Intervention	Teachers in Intervention	Result after Intervention (N)		
			Dismissed	Resigned/ Retired	Successful Return to Classroom
2000 to 2005	16	16	3	3	10
2005 to 2008	12	10	1	3	4
<b>TOTAL (8 Years)</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>

**Toledo (current teaching staff: 1,852)**

Year	Teachers Referred to Intervention	Teachers in Intervention	Result after Intervention (N)		Successful Return to Classroom
			Dismissed or Resigned	Add'l Year of Intervention	
2003 to 2008	35	30	16	10	4
<b>TOTAL (5 Years)</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>