

# BTSA

## BEGINNING TEACHER SUPPORT AND ASSESSMENT

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### BTSA Kicks Off the New Year

Another year of training, support, assessment, and reflection has begun for the approximately 300 teachers in BTSA. With the help of their site support providers (SSP's) and the coaching events organized by the BTSA program staff, 190 first year teachers have begun to examine their teaching practice and look for ways to improve student achievement. At the same time 110 second year teachers have started to look more closely at how they will assess learning, plan instruction, and engage their students this year. With an eye on the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP) and an ear to the feedback provided by their support providers,



beginning teachers reflect on how to teach effectively and promote learning. All BTSA teachers will begin by taking a look at the students they serve — the students in their classrooms, their school, the district and the community. By learning more

about these students, they will be able to better serve their needs by preparing lessons that match their interests, needs, and skill levels. Administrators may find some questions coming their way about the school's vital statistics, API score, focus for the year, and vision. This would be a good time to address these aspects of the school and its mission with groups of teachers. We're off to a great start toward better teaching and higher student achievement.

### Early Emphasis on Learning Environment



BTSA begins each year with an emphasis on establishing an effective learning environment for students. This stresses what we all know — that more learning occurs when there is consistent application of

behavioral standards and expectations, a caring environment based on mutual respect, and procedures and routines to help the classroom run smoothly and efficiently saving valuable time for learning. With this in mind, the first BTSA observation always focuses on the classroom environment. Reflecting on

more available time on task, and ways to uphold behavioral expectations in a positive yet assertive fashion. The BTSA program begins each year by focusing on that aspect of teaching most important to administrators and most important to a successful start to the new year: how to establish an effective learning environment.



**SSP's Cynthia Przybyla and Tom Parker discuss learning environments with beginning teacher AK Smith at recent Kick Off Day.**

- California Standards For the Teaching Profession**  
**Creating/Maintaining Effective Environments**
- ⇒ Organize the environment
  - ⇒ Implement routines
  - ⇒ Maintain behavioral standards
  - ⇒ Use time effectively
  - ⇒ Promote respect
  - ⇒ Promote social development

the data gathered during this observation, the BT and SSP converse about possible alternatives for arranging the physical environment, ways to manage daily tasks and responsibilities efficiently, ways to speed the procedures carried out in the classroom to generate

*Next Issue: The Engagement Standard*

## BTSA Builds Leadership Capacity for Schools

BTSA offers schools and school districts not only well-supported and better prepared new teachers but also advanced training and enhanced leadership skills for the site support providers (SSP’s) who serve them. BTSA helps schools develop a cadre of teacher-leaders who learn through training and experience how to communicate and support other teachers, how to assist in training activities, and how to assess teaching relative to the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP). Every new support provider is given two days of training that include an introduction to the California teaching standards, how to assess these standards in the classroom, and how to communicate their findings to the teachers they serve. Knowledge of the CSTP gives them the foundation they need to help the new teachers reflect on their practice. Practice in documenting what they observe in the classroom helps them gather the data that the new teachers need to gain a clear and objective perspective of their teaching. And, skills in reflective conversation help the



Nancy Barbosa addresses the same support providers she helped train in the CSTP, assessment, and reflective conversation.

support providers engage the new teacher in a meaningful conversation, one that deepens their thinking about what makes good teaching. Good teaching in turn leads to higher student achievement. This powerful combination of knowledge, skills and the ability to communicate makes a good support provider a good leader. Administrators can take advantage of this leadership capability by tapping into this expertise and giving recognition to those who are serving the most needy new staff members.

And, at the same time that we are making our new teachers more effective, we are making our best teachers even better. We hear repeatedly from our site support providers that they are taking a closer look at their own teaching as they help beginning teachers reflect on theirs.

**BTSA not only builds teaching capacity in the new teachers we serve, but we also build leadership capacity in the veterans we train. This helps create the culture of change and improvement that school administrators desire.**



## GradeAlike Organization Begins



Ask beginning teachers what they like best about BTSA and many of them will come up with the same response – *GradeAlike*. At the same time that new teachers are receiving support in their global desire to improve their effectiveness as teachers, they are also eager to learn about specific activities they can use in the classroom, activities specific to their grade level or subject. Here’s where Grade Alike serves their needs. Teachers who participate, attend six evening sessions where they learn from their peers and colleagues the nuts and bolts of

serving their particular student population. Sessions are organized around K-6 grade levels and 7-12 subjects. One session is dedicated to EL students and one is held at a bookstore where teachers learn about educational resources available locally. Through Grade Alike BTSA is able to support our new teachers’ need to not only look closely at their overall teaching but also have creative activities for their classroom.