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## Part II. Building and Maintaining the Strengths of the Current Teacher Workforce

*Teaching and California's Future* is committed to ensuring that all California teachers receive high-quality support and learning opportunities throughout their careers. A related goal is that all teachers work in safe and clean schools that are conducive to learning, have access to adequate materials, and have the guidance and support of a capable leader. If students are expected to learn to high standards, teachers must have ongoing opportunities to improve their professional practice and must be able to work in conditions that support that practice.

In this part of the report, we turn our attention to the degree to which these goals are being met in the state. We address two basic questions. Are teachers receiving effective induction support during their first years in the profession? Do teachers have access to high-quality professional development opportunities to improve their teaching? In addressing both questions, we examine the impact of workplace conditions on teachers' professional lives.

**California policy-makers have done a great deal to support teacher learning.** Virtually all new teachers receive some kind of induction support during their first years in the profession. The state continues to expand the nation's leading induction program, the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (BTSA), which serves more than 20,000 teachers annually. Over the past 2 years, policy-makers have strengthened the professional development system. In 2000, the Governor and the legislature developed the professional development institutes and expanded the Subject Matter Projects—both efforts to ensure access to high-quality professional development throughout the state. In 2001, AB 466 was passed to expand on these efforts and attempt to reach all teachers in the state by providing districts with incentives to invest more heavily in professional development for their teachers.

**BTSA has demonstrated some promising results.** Retention rates among BTSA participants are reportedly high. BTSA participants are far more likely to receive intensive and sustained support and are more likely to report benefits from that support than beginning teachers who do not participate in BTSA. Still, fewer than half of all BTSA participants report receiving the kinds of support and levels of intensity most likely to make significant contributions to their teaching.

**Although there are numerous initiatives around the state to provide school-based, ongoing, content-rich professional development, the majority of teachers report little improvement in their learning opportunities.** Fewer than one-quarter of teachers surveyed report that their professional development contributed "a lot" to their knowledge and skills in any way. Isolated workshops remain the most common learning opportunities; teachers report that few opportunities are sustained, with ample follow-up.

**Finally, the most striking finding is that both induction and professional development initiatives have little chance of succeeding in the hardest-to-staff schools, which serve the state's neediest children.** In these schools, the proliferation of multiple programs, poor working conditions, and the scarcity of accomplished teachers undermine efforts to help teachers learn. The large number of underprepared

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teachers in these schools undertake their preparation, induction, and professional development simultaneously while teaching full-time.