He knew three things about the Mississippi Delta: it had given birth to the blues, allowed segregation to fester, and had been—still was—the most southern place on earth. the native new yorker would learn something else that would define his time in the region called "the Delta, Jones is keen to ensure his recommendations remain rooted in the experiences of frontline teachers. he's just undertaken a new project to study what happens when a state takes an “observation system thoughtfully developed in a research context and suddenly says to principals, "You need to do this."

Over a three-year period, Jones will follow principals in Los Angeles as they implement an updated version of the Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument, an observation system currently used in around half of all US states. The study team will watch, survey, and interview principals—and test their abilities as raters. "I think a lot of people are looking to LA, to see what happens when you put principals through this training and what happens to these observation systems when they get implemented in a high-stakes context,” says Jones. “LA is serving as the bellwether for what happens across the country.”

How to Retain Special Ed Teachers

1. Involve the principal. “There is increasing evidence,” says Jones, “that for beginning teachers, the quality of one’s relationship with the principal is a key factor in making plans to stay in teaching.”

2. Tailor the induction. Give new special education teachers a separate and customized induction. Be clear about your institution’s curricular expectations of special education teachers.

3. Press the issue. In a 2011 study, Jones found that special education teachers benefited when administrators and principals took a public lead in promoting inclusive and productive relationships between general and special education teachers.

4. Share responsibility. Writing in Exceptional Children, Jones and his colleagues concluded that relationships between special and general education faculty could be improved by giving teachers more opportunities to work together and also by encouraging them to share responsibility for students.