



Portland Public Schools New Teacher Survey Spring 2006

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PPS - Summary

- Most (80%) new teachers report that the support they receive from their mentors is very useful and 70% feel their mentor is a very good match.
- Support from colleagues is also very highly valued by new teachers. Sixty percent rated colleague helpfulness as excellent and, for those on a team, 72% said the team was very useful.
 - When asked what has helped them the most this year in their growth and work as a teacher, 64% indicated that support and collaboration from colleagues were among the most helpful.
 - It would appear that some new teachers are experiencing a “culture of mentoring” in their buildings and are receiving support both officially through the mentoring program as well as unofficially from the veteran teachers working around them.
 - Continuing to grow and encourage such a culture could strengthen the new teacher/veteran teacher connections even further.
 - It may even be possible to extend such a culture to benefit veteran teachers as well by encouraging all teachers to find ways to learn from each other.



PPS - Summary

- New teachers highly value the opportunity to observe other teachers, have regularly scheduled collaboration about instruction and have common planning time.
 - Not everyone has access to those supports within their buildings, however.
- Although the PEA clearly plays an important role in supporting new teachers, the specific support received by teachers is not recognized as coming from the PEA itself in some cases (for example, the role of the Building Steering Committee (BSC) in assisting with the mentor program).
- New hires with provisional certification feel more prepared for their job as new teachers than those with professional or conditional certification.
 - However, meeting the needs of diverse learners, selecting and adapting appropriate curriculum materials and integrating technology into teaching are three areas that could use additional emphasis in teacher preparation programs, even among those programs offering provisional certification.



PPS - Summary

- The numbers of new teachers hired in the Portland Public School District varies from year to year, as do the types of teachers, grade levels, specialties, etc. With those differences come variations in previous experience (career changers, pre-service training) as well as variations in placement (special subjects such as SPED or ELL, non-classroom hires like literacy and guidance, etc.) For that reason, comparisons from year to year (trends) cannot be accurately made.
- The survey results do, however, provide useful information regarding perceptions of the mentor program as well as insight into what new teachers need to succeed in their first years of teaching.



Methodology

- In May 2006, 1st & 2nd year teachers at PPS were surveyed online
- N=32 1st Year, N=23 2nd Year
- Response rate was 100% (Thank you, Dale and Priscilla Doucette for the great follow-up!)



New Teacher Profile

(1st and 2nd Year)

Before joining the faculty at PPS:

- 40% of new teachers completed a Masters degree and an additional 39% completed some Masters coursework.
- 64% have Provisional Certification, 16% Professional, 18% Conditional.
- More than half (60%) had another career prior to becoming a teacher.
- Two thirds (67%) did their student teaching for 16 weeks or more.
- Almost half (46%) did at least some of their teacher preparation at USM.



New Teacher Profile

(1st and 2nd Year)

Working at Portland Public Schools:

- 29% teach Elementary School, 40% teach Middle School, 31% teach High School.
- 71% are full-time classroom teachers.
- Half (45%, N=25) teach ELL, SPED or “Other” subjects such as vocational, speech and language, guidance, etc.
- Half (49%) were offered their job at PPS less than one month before school started or after school started.
- 84% are certified to teach all the subjects they are currently teaching.

New Teacher Profile

(1st and 2nd Year)

Working at Portland Public Schools (cont.):

- Among non-ELL and non-SPED teachers, most new teachers (89%) have special needs students in their classes.
- In addition to being a new teacher, 44% are taking formal, university credit courses.
 - 71% of these are taking courses to satisfy degree requirements.
 - 71% of these are taking courses to satisfy licensing requirements.
 - 50% (N=12) are taking the courses to satisfy both degree and licensing requirements.
- Almost all (95%) have participated in formal, structured PD activities this school year.
- Half (52%) are members of a teaching team.
- 56% are members of the PEA.



New Teacher Profile

(1st and 2nd Year)

New Teachers' Plans for future:

- 82% plan to continue working in PPS next year, 13% are unsure (as of May 2006) and 6% (N=3) will not return.
- The primary reasons teachers will continue is:
 1. Enjoyment of the subject matter they teach
 2. Teaching is a fulfilling and challenging career
 3. The students in this community
- When asked whether or not they would become teachers if they had to do it all over again, knowing what they know now, 56% said “Definitely”, 28% said “Probably” and 17% said “Might or Might Not”.



Pre-Service Preparation

- Close to 90% of the new teachers felt that they were at least somewhat prepared by their teacher preparation experience for their first years of teaching.
 - 44% felt they were very prepared
 - 44% felt they were somewhat prepared
- Similarity of approach to teaching and learning between teacher preparation program and place currently teaching:
 - 17% very similar
 - 46% fairly similar.

Pre-Service Preparation

Percent Indicating being “Very Prepared” as a <u>new</u> teacher to:	Provisional Certification (N=35)	Not Provisional Certification (N=12)
Teach assigned subject matter	56%	38%
Use variety of teaching methods	54%	33%
Handle range of class management issues	46%	38%
Integrate technology into teaching	37%	25%
Select and adapt appropriate curriculum materials	31%	25%
Meet needs of diverse learners	29%*	20%*

* Among non-ELL and non-SPED teachers



Pre-Service Preparation

- Those teachers with provisional certification indicated that they felt more prepared as a new teacher in all areas than teachers without provisional certification (those that had either professional or conditional certification).
- Most new teachers have the responsibility to teach special needs students (89%), but among non-ELL and non-SPED teachers, few (29% of provisionally certified and 20% of professional/conditionally certified) feel “Very Prepared” to teach diverse learners.
- Selecting and adapting curriculum materials and integrating technology into instruction are also areas where new teachers feel the need for better preparation. Only 37% or fewer feel “Very Prepared” to meet those challenges.

Overview of Support

- New teachers report receiving a great deal of support, especially from mentors and teaching teams.
- Percent of new teachers indicating support received was “Very Useful”:

	Total N=55	1 st Yr. N=32	2 nd Yr. N=23
Mentor	78%	78%	77%
Bldg. Admin.	54%	52%	57%
Team (n=28)	72%	71%	75%
PEA (n=31)	20%	24%	15%



Overview of Support

- 59% of new teachers reported that the helpfulness of other teachers in their school was “Excellent.” An additional 36% indicated the support was “Good.”
- Support from colleagues and mentors were listed most often in answer to the question, “What has helped you the most during this year in your growth and work as a teacher? Please explain.”
 - 64% of new teachers answering the question indicated that collaboration with and support from colleagues were among the most helpful supports they received.
 - 28% mentioned support received from their mentors.*

*Questions in the survey focused on mentors specifically which may have influenced the number of teachers who mentioned their mentor as helping them the most in the open-ended question. They may have felt they had already told us how important their mentor was in previous questions.



Support - Mentors

- New teachers had many positive things to say about their mentors:
 - 78% felt their mentor had been “Very Useful” overall in supporting their work.
 - 69% feel their mentor was a “Very Good” match.
- Mentors teach:
 - 91% in the same building
 - 73% same level/grade of students
 - 75% similar subject

Support - Mentors

- Two thirds (67%) met with their mentors once a week or more frequently on average.
- 24% met with their mentor every couple of weeks and 9% met once a month or less frequently.
- Percent indicating doing the following activities with their mentor once a month or more frequently:

<input type="checkbox"/> Discussions about teaching	87%
<input type="checkbox"/> Providing insights into politics	84%
<input type="checkbox"/> Assistance with materials/equipment	68%
<input type="checkbox"/> Instructional Planning	62%
<input type="checkbox"/> Observations of teaching	55%
<input type="checkbox"/> Analysis of student work	50%
- 94% are at least somewhat confident that they could get help to resolve a conflict they were experiencing with their mentor if they needed to.



Support - Administrative

- New Teachers value the support received from their administration:
 - 54% indicated the support from their administrator was “Very Useful” and an additional 39% indicated it was “Somewhat Useful.”
- 82% of new teachers reported that they were observed 3+ times by their administrator.
 - 84% had a pre-observation conference each time they were observed.
 - 77% had a post-observation conference each time they were observed.
- 46% had 3+ substantive conversations with their administrator over the course of the school year.



Support - PEA

- The majority (73%) of new teachers in the PEA (n=31) feel the support they receive is useful:
 - 20% of new PEA teachers indicated the support they received was “Very Useful.”
 - 53% indicated it was “Somewhat Useful.”

Support - PEA

Specific Union Support Received:	N=31 (PEA members)	%
Work Conditions	8	26
Administrative/paperwork	6	19
Instructional Strategies	5	16
Professional Development	5	16
Discipline	4	13
Curriculum/materials	3	10
Planning	2	6
Other	5	16

Support – School Work Environment

- % Rating Aspect of Their Work Environment “Excellent” or “Good”:

	Total N=55	1 st Yr. N=32	2 nd Yr. N=23
Parent/Community Relationships	78	68	91
Management of School	76	81	70
Instructional Leadership	70	67	74
Shared Responsibility for ALL Student Success	68	63	74
Adequacy of Resources	60	63	57



Support – In-Building

- The most highly valued In-Building supports are:
 - Being able to observe other teachers (100% Very or Somewhat Useful)
 - Having regularly scheduled collaboration with other teachers about instruction (97%)
 - Building orientation (95%)
 - Common planning time (94%)
- These supports were valued above reduced workload, additional help in the classroom and money to buy supplies.
- Not everyone has access to the supports, however:
 - 27% were not able to observe other teachers, 36% did not have regularly scheduled collaboration time, 24% did not have a building orientation, 42% did not have common planning time.



Support – Summary

- For the majority of new teachers, mentors are very important to their success and most mentors appear to be working hard to support the new teacher assigned to them. Colleagues are also very supportive in many cases.
- In response to the question, “What has helped you the most during this year in your growth and work as a teacher?”, there were many responses mentioning mentors and colleagues:
 - “The mentor and peer teachers are supportive and informative.”
 - “The collaborative atmosphere in my teaching placement has helped me gain the confidence and skills I need to teach.”
 - “Collaborating with other teachers and professionals in the school.”
 - “The support of my colleagues.”
 - “Planning time and the opportunity to work and have discussions with colleagues.”
 - “The administration has made me feel supported and welcomed.”
 - “ My mentor relationship – sharing experiences, analyzing student work, observations, reflection.”



Summary – New Teachers are being Supported in Many Ways

- New teachers value their mentors highly and credit them with enabling them to survive, grow and learn over the course of the year(s).
- They also report having benefited greatly from their work on a team (for those assigned to one) as well as the support they receive from their colleagues.



Other Observations

- Teacher preparation programs:
 - Only 20%-37% of new PPS teachers report being very prepared to integrate technology into instruction, select appropriate curriculum and meet the needs of diverse learners.
 - It would appear that a greater emphasis on those topics in teacher prep programs may be quite beneficial.
 - Encouraging veteran teachers to share their expertise in these areas with new teachers could benefit new teachers as well.



Other Observations

- Some “other” teachers (those without own classroom, part time, teaching across multiple grades, etc.) do not have access to many of the supports that “regular” teachers have like common planning time.
- Some teachers with previous teaching experience commented that the current, two-year mentor program is more than they need. It might be possible to support new-to-district teachers with a less rigorous mentor relationship.