

**THE EXPERIENCES, PERCEPTIONS, AND
NEEDS OF NEW TEACHERS:
A WINDOW ONTO DISTRICT CAPACITY FOR
HIGH QUALITY INDUCTION**

**Year Two Report for the New Teacher Alliance of
the Center for Strengthening the Teaching
Profession**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The New Teacher Alliance is a major, multi-year initiative of Washington's Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession (CSTP). It aims to build capacity within participating districts and ESDs, and eventually across Washington state, to provide high quality supports that lead to effective induction of new teachers. The NTA was launched in 2005 with an 18-month period of planning and resource development. This period culminated in a proposal from CSTP to the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation and the Gates Foundation for multi-year funding support for the two large districts, five small districts, and two ESDs that submitted plans. The participating institutions receive grants annually for three years, starting in 2006-07. CSTP leaders facilitate the local work by convening team members twice a year for structured work sessions, distributing resources and facilitating teams in sharing resources with each other, and monitoring the nature and progress of the grantees' work through planning documents and progress reports.

Inverness Research serves by contract with CSTP as the evaluator for the New Teacher Alliance (NTA). Our first annual report (August 2007) assessed the status of capacity for quality new teacher support within the participating districts and ESDs as of spring 2007. Academic year 2007-08 marks the second year of program grants. In this second annual report, we examine the experiences, perceptions, and needs of new teachers as a window onto the districts' and ESDs' growing capacity to provide induction supports. Our purpose is to inform the funders of the NTA program, NTA participants, and CSTP in their collective effort to strengthen the teaching profession by strengthening supports and conditions for new teachers.

II. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK AND FOCUS

Inverness Research is an independent national educational research group based in California.¹ Our mission is to help projects assess the quality and efficacy of their efforts, and to help funders better understand the design of their initiatives and the value of their investments.

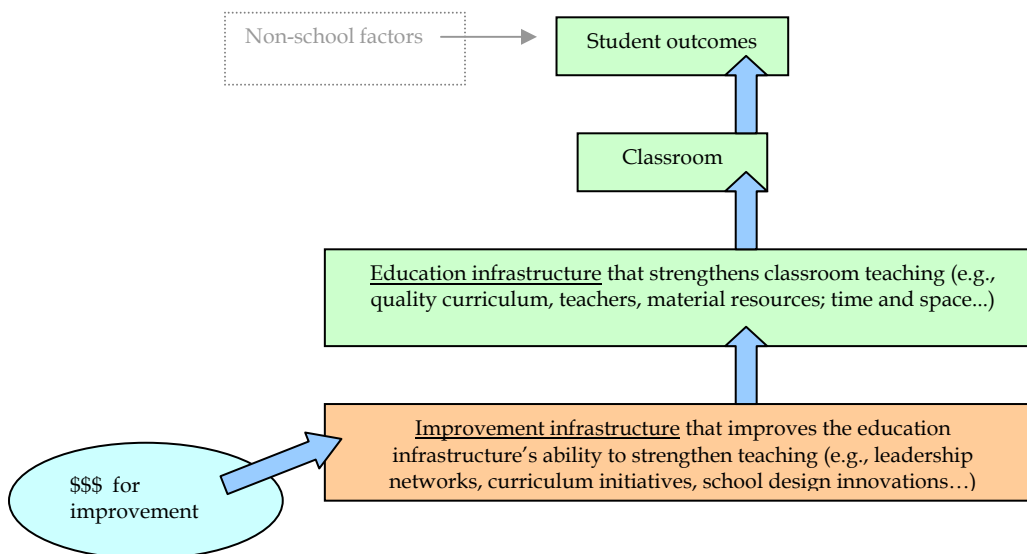
¹ Inverness Research evaluated the Washington Initiative for National Board Certification of Teachers and is currently the evaluator for CSTP as a Center. Inverness Research has evaluated teacher induction programs for the National Writing Project, the Peninsula New Teacher Program in San Mateo County, California, and the San Francisco Exploratorium's Beginning Teacher Program. Dr. Laura Stokes, lead evaluator for the NTA study project, is co-author of a chapter in *Mentors in the Making: Developing New Leaders for New Teachers*, published by Teachers College Press (2006). For more information, see www.inverness-research.org.

Our conception of the NTA as an investment in improvement infrastructure

Inverness Research sees the New Teacher Alliance as an investment in the improvement of districts' and schools' abilities to improve their support of new teachers.

We hold a vision of *improvement infrastructure* for education as being one of several layers of support necessary to optimal student learning. Student achievement requires high quality instruction. High quality instruction requires a sound educational infrastructure of support, e.g., high quality teachers, curriculum, teaching resources, assessments, equipment, time and space for learning. The strengthening of those elements of the educational infrastructure requires investments in infrastructure for improvement. Such investments, well upstream from the classroom, are devoted to the continual improvement of the educational infrastructure's ability to support and to strengthen teaching and learning.

Figure 1.
Investment in improvement infrastructure



The NTA is not designed merely to infuse funding into the education infrastructure for direct services. Rather, it is designed to enable NTA sites to build those internal capacities necessary to provide higher quality support to new teachers, and further, to build the capacities that enable *ongoing* improvement. That is, the NTA is designed as an improvement infrastructure, helping the districts *get better at getting themselves better* at supporting new teachers. The CSTP leaders' effort to create induction standards and exemplary cases, provide tools for the sharing of resources and practices, convene teams for coordinated work sessions, monitor the teams' progress, and use independent evaluation data as formative feedback. All of these are geared to help sites build their capacity for improved services and ongoing improvement efforts.

The evaluation focus

Our evaluation work focuses on the growth of district and ESD capacities that are needed to improve supports for new teachers. The paragraph below is taken from the framework that served as our instrument for measuring the status of capacities in 2006-07, the first year of funding following the planning year. It explains the concept of capacity and the relationship of capacities to programs and outcomes.

*What do we mean by **capacity**? We mean the many kinds of assets that ESDs, districts and schools build up and can draw upon to do the work necessary to achieving desired outcomes. It may be easiest to think of capacity as one of several related layers. The top layer might be the intended **outcomes**, i.e., new teachers who feel well supported, who become increasingly effective in the classroom, who identify themselves as professionals, who choose to stay in teaching, and so on. For those intended outcomes to occur, there is another layer: the **program components and activities** that produce those outcomes, i.e., high quality mentoring, other relevant professional supports, favorable hiring and placement practices, and so on. Adhering to **standards** in the construction of program components increases the probability that those program components will produce the desired outcomes. For the program components to be built – and built at a level of quality that achieves the standards – a third layer is required: the **capacities** needed to produce the programs and structures of support. In other words, capacities of many kinds are needed to design, build, operate, and continually improve the programs that ultimately produce the desired outcomes.*

This conception continued to guide our evaluation work in 2007-08, Year Two. This year, however, rather than repeating the measure of capacity in the same way, we administered a survey to all new teachers in the participating districts and ESDs. Results of the survey open a different window onto the question of districts’/ESDs’ growth in capacity to support new teachers. First, teachers’ experiences, perceptions, and needs as new teachers yield insight into the existence and quality of targeted induction activities, including their congruence with CSTP induction standards. Thus, the findings enable us to examine the extent to which the NTA “theory of action” – as reflected in its standards and its expectation for and work with districts – matches the needs and experiences of new teachers, as the teachers see them. Teachers’ perspectives also yield insight into the broader capacities – for example, inclusive professional culture, sound instructional programs, access to quality professional development – that provide a more or less supportive context for new teachers and for the special programs dedicated just to them. Beyond helping us evaluate CSTP, though, we believe the survey potentially has broader research value for Washington because it sheds light on new teachers’ perceptions and experiences.²

In addition to the survey, we observed the May 7-8 meeting of the NTA at Suncadia, where we also interviewed district and ESD team members and participating principals. Our purpose was to document evidence of capacity growth, as well as promising practices, challenges, and

² See Appendix A for a discussion of the survey content and methods of analysis. We were able to compare the responses of teachers in NTA districts with teachers across Washington for some items that are included in the state’s TAP survey. This enables us to paint a broader teachers’-eye-view of induction supports.

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unaddressed issues; and further, to document the role of CSTP meetings such as this in enhancing districts' and ESDs' development of greater capacity to support new teachers.

In summary, within the overall focus on capacity-building, the evaluation work done in Year Two uses results of a teacher survey and observation of NTA-sponsored work-in-action to address these two questions:

- What are the experiences, perceptions, and needs of new teachers in Washington?
- What evidence is there that the NTA program is enabling districts and ESDs to build the capacities they need to strengthen the supports that new teachers receive?

This report

The report has both evaluation and research purposes. For the research purpose, we aim to present the results of the survey in detail so that readers can make their own meaning of the data and use the results for their own purposes. For the evaluation purpose, we offer our independent perspective on the implications these results have in relation to the funders' investment in the CSTP strategy for strengthening new teacher supports.

Section III presents summary findings and our discussion of implications. Section IV presents detailed findings from the survey (both the statistical results and compilation of comments on open-ended questions). We supplement these findings with excerpts from the memorandum we prepared for NTA leaders and teams following the Suncadia meeting.

There are two appendices:

- A. The design and analytic methods used for the survey
- B. The survey questions

III. SUMMARY FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This section begins with a broad summary of findings from the 2008 new teacher survey, supplemented by observations from the Suncadia meeting. The section ends with a discussion of implications for the CSTP NTA project. In the implications section, we draw primarily from this year's study but we also have in mind findings and lessons learned from our study in 2007. For all of it, we hold a capacity-building perspective, sensitive that 2008 marked the second of three years of funding.

Summary findings

- 1. Getting new teachers off to a good start.** NTA-funded districts are strengthening their ability to help teachers get off to a good start in their first year. Improvements in this area are centered on hiring, orientation, and mentor assignment, areas specified in the CSTP standards. A need remains for growth in capacity to orient and launch teachers effectively into teaching their specific subject area/grade level teaching assignments.

Investment of NTA funds in districts appears to be paying important dividends in terms of their growing capacity to support new teachers. There are recent improvements in hiring new teachers earlier, orienting them better to the programs of support they will encounter as new teachers and to their school's general educational philosophy, assigning mentors, and introducing new teachers earlier to their mentors. District teams are demonstrably more aware of the need to improve early orientation and are making changes in that area. These improvements relate to the first three CSTP induction standards.

At the same time, fewer than half of new teachers say they are well-oriented to their specific teaching assignment and curriculum. NTA participation has not yet enabled districts to build up this capacity to the extent that new teachers report it.

- 2. The value and limitations of mentoring.** Mentors are helpful to most new teachers, especially in the areas of classroom management, answering questions that come up, and general emotional/moral support in a trusting relationship. There appear to be some structural weaknesses in both large and small districts' mentor models that limit mentors' capacity to address new teachers' needs related to teaching their specific grade level/subject area teaching assignments.

Formal mentoring is the centerpiece of district models for new teacher support, and new teachers find their mentors helpful in several significant ways. Yet there are limits to the impact that mentors have on some important areas of need and, from the new teachers' perspectives, limits to their value as a means of support. For example, both the centralized release model of the larger districts and the inherently limited number of high quality mentors available in small schools appear to constrain the extent that mentors with similar teaching assignments (subject areas and grade levels) can work in close proximity to new teachers. These apparently structural limitations are likely one cause of teachers' reports that they feel under-supported in the specifics of their curriculum and instruction. In open-ended questions on the survey, a good number of teachers said that mentoring was valuable and that they would have liked more or better mentoring.

- 3. The striking need for multiple informal and formal supports beyond mentoring.** New teachers need multiple forms of support other than mentoring. Informal support from colleagues is most helpful, followed closely by formal professional development (coaching and other), for helping new teachers teach their assigned curriculum, learn instructional strategies, address state content standards, assess student learning, and learn to reach diverse students.

One of the most striking findings from this year's study, appearing as a theme across several survey questions, is that teachers need multiple forms of support, especially for the many issues related to the specifics of curriculum and instruction. We do *not* infer from this finding and the previous one that the mentoring models are not functional, though they can certainly be improved. Rather, we infer that new teachers have many kinds of needs and they benefit from many kinds of supports. Mentoring is a necessary but not sufficient mode of support.

Informal support from colleagues, which stands out as the most valuable overall kind of support for about two-thirds of all teachers, comes in the form of helpful individual colleagues and an inclusive professional culture where the full staff involves new teachers in collaborative work and provides them with the resources and answers they need. While the majority of new teachers say they gain much from these supports, more than 50% still say they want more opportunities to get help with the myriad "nuts and bolts" of teaching they encounter their first year, to observe their colleagues teaching, and to analyze student work with their colleagues. Responses to open-ended questions reinforced these needs. Comments also emphasized teachers' need to have ready access and good orientation to well-designed and well-resourced curriculum and teaching materials.

The fourth CSTP standard focuses on professional development, and the results of this survey bear out its importance. Professional development is very helpful to teachers in their first year and even more helpful to teachers beyond their first year, when mentoring is less available. Formal professional development includes content coaching as well as other forms. In our more qualitative study in 2007 and as indicated in teachers' survey ratings and open-ended comments in 2008, subject-specific coaching—especially when it is done with "mentor-like" sensitivity to new teachers' needs—appears to be highly valuable. In the Suncadia meeting, we heard that some districts are "cross-training" mentors and coaches so that they each share more of the others' expertise and strategies.

A limitation of district-sponsored content coaching and some other forms of professional development is that they are more often available to teachers of reading and math, and sometimes science, and more often available in elementary than secondary. In open-ended responses, a good number of teachers referred to off-site professional development or content courses as valuable resources; this reinforces a theme in last year's interviews, especially with secondary teachers.

4. Career plans. Thirty percent of the teachers we surveyed told us they might leave the profession. This is 10% more than the teachers who responded to the state's TAP survey in 2006. The factors that influence their decision most strongly are the overall culture of their school and the amount and nature of informal help they receive from colleagues. On the other hand, most teachers who want to stay envision themselves one day as serving in teacher leadership roles. Many fewer believe they want to become administrators.

On open-ended questions about career plans, some teachers named low pay, lack of public respect for their profession, or personal/family reasons for leaving. However, the majority

named some aspect of work context and culture as having positive or negative effects on their feelings of satisfaction and motivation to stay.

The fact that a majority of teachers aspire to teacher leadership, rather than administrative roles, suggests that investments in their career development as practitioners will be an important factor in their long-term plans. Beyond the benefit of greater retention, the building of more teacher leadership is a boon to the whole profession and to the education system.

Implications

Findings from the new teacher survey reinforce a “truism” that often gets lost in discussions of teaching and of supporting new teachers: teaching is an inherently extremely complex, difficult, and ever-changing endeavor. Teachers new to the endeavor require a wide variety of high quality supports to develop their confidence, knowledge, and skills. There is no single factor—even a great mentor—that can provide new teachers with all the supports they need. Rather, it takes effective mentoring *and* considerable additional organizational capacity at the district and school levels to provide, and continue to strengthen, the many contextual and programmatic supports that contribute to new teachers’ knowledge, skills, confidence, and satisfaction.

We see three broad implications arising from these findings and in light of lessons learned from last year:

1. The importance of building capacity for new teacher support by strengthening professional culture and instructional program context

This survey reinforces the importance of informal supports, professional development, and overall culture in helping new teachers teach the content and grade level to which they are assigned and in motivating them to stay in the profession. The capacities most central to these kinds of supports are:

- the presence of a high quality, well-supported, and well-resourced curriculum in every subject and grade level;
- the presence of a vital, learning-centered, collaborative professional community in every school; and
- by inference, the district and school-level leadership that can sustain ongoing improvement efforts in these areas.

These areas of capacity are more difficult to build than the discrete components of new-teacher support programs that have already shown improvement with the NTA grants, such as better orientation programs, more mentoring, and even earlier hiring. These broader capacities grow from the core, steady work of school improvement and from the formation of trusting, respectful professional relationships across the spectrum of education roles. Ongoing improvement efforts not only yield higher quality program elements specific to new teachers (such as generating more human capital for mentoring), but also benefit new teachers by creating a stronger foundational context for their work.

2. The need to continue refining models for mentoring

Because of the NTA, districts have put effort into building mentor programs, resulting in greater access to mentors. We hear from the mentors themselves and team leaders that the Mentor Academy continues to provide high quality training; the fact that most new teachers find their mentors warm, trusting, and helpful supports this. The results of this survey do not challenge the basic assumption that mentors are vitally important to new teachers. However, the results of this survey reinforce the idea that close proximity and close match in teaching assignment do matter to mentors' efficacy, especially with respect to new teachers' many needs related to the specifics of their assigned curriculum and grade level. This sentiment was echoed at the Suncadia meeting, particularly in the presentation from the panel that included the Wenatchee group. It is not clear to us why the respondents to the state's TAP survey were significantly more likely than teachers in NTA districts to have mentors in closer proximity and with a better subject area/grade level match. But we think it is important to re-examine the mentoring models in use in the NTA to improve their efficacy.

3. A suggestion to expand the role and capacities of ESDs or, alternatively, to explore a different regional structure to enhance new teacher supports for small districts

Implications for ESDs stem both from the survey results and from interviews with and observations of ESD role in the NTA project over three years' time (including the planning year). For the survey, we interviewed teachers in ESD 105 and 113 districts who had enrolled in a TAP class sponsored by the ESD. We found that the TAP classes have improved substantially during the NTA-funded period, compared to earlier. We also found that some of the same district-based improvements that we observed in the NTA-funded small districts are occurring in the ESD districts, such as earlier hiring, somewhat better orientation, and improvements in some areas of school culture. It is likely that ESD district leaders have benefited from their participation in NTA-sponsored Think Tanks featuring the CSTP standards or from mentor roundtables and Academy trainings. Thus, we can observe that the NTA investment is yielding some regional benefits.

At the same time, however, we think the investment in a regional strategy is not yet moving toward full potential. TAP classes do not maximize the role of a regional infrastructure that helps build greater capacity to support new teachers. In the two years of NTA funding, we have seen little development within the ESDs toward a regional support strategy beyond the TAP class, although we note that some new explorations occurred in late spring of 2008. A need persists for some regional strategy or structure to serve a networking function, coordinating and supporting work among those in small districts in these areas, helping to build up assets in these areas and distribute them to small districts and schools. We note, for example, that small districts have human capital constraints that limit the availability of high quality mentors, especially at the secondary level where there are fewer shared teaching assignments and greater need for pedagogical content knowledge. We also know there are other capacities that need to grow, including school leadership and collaborative professional culture. We thus believe that a regional support model is worth testing.

We suggest one of two new directions:

- Seek funding to invest more deliberately in ESDs to develop an “out of the box” role for them. By investing more deliberately, we mean involving one or two additional ESDs and working strategically with a larger group of them to design a new regional concept. This is as opposed to the current approach, which involves two ESDs in the regular NTA program. Currently, the ESDs tend to question some of the relevance of what they are participating in or are asked to do because they do not have the same policy, structural, cultural, or instructional options and opportunities as districts and schools.

Or

- Seek or re-allocate funding to invent a new regional strategy that can enhance capacities of small districts and schools. It may be that the ESD is not the optimal regional entity. We note that CSTP is host to some 1800 NBCTs distributed around the state, a tremendous human capital asset in terms of knowledge, skill, and leadership for teaching and the improvement of teaching. Perhaps there is an opportunity for the development of regional NBCT-led professional networks for new teacher support, sponsored by leaders within CSTP.

We do not presume to know which choice is better, and probably there are other options to explore. What we can observe is that the direct investment in the ESDs, to date, seems to be yielding less than it could in terms of a regional capacity-building strategy.

IV. DETAILED FINDINGS

This section presents statistical findings and analyses for all survey questions as well as tabulations of the content of teachers’ responses to open-ended questions.³ Where relevant, this section also includes excerpts from the formative feedback memo that we provided to the NTA leadership and team members immediately following the May 2008 Suncadia meeting. The memo was prepared for the internal NTA audience for self-review and planning purposes; however, excerpts from it shed light on capacity development issues, challenges, and promising practices related to areas of the survey.

A note about references to respondent subgroups

We conducted several analyses of the survey responses to compare subgroups so that we could produce finer-grained insights into teachers’ experiences and the role of the NTA.⁴ The following is a glossary of sub-groups that we discuss in this section:

The overall NTA respondent group: These are all of the teachers who responded to our survey. The population we surveyed included new teachers hired between 2003 and 2007 in the seven

³ A copy of the entire file of open-ended responses, which runs 97 pages, has been provided to the CSTP NTA leadership for their information and use.

⁴ See Appendix A for a full discussion of the survey design, response rates, and analyses.

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districts directly funded by the NTA *and* teachers in other districts that have enrolled new teachers in TAP classes offered by the NTA-funded ESDs, 105 and 113. The overall NTA respondent group thus reflects new teacher experiences that extend from the present back to three years before NTA funding reached the districts.

The more recently hired NTA group: This is a subset of teachers in the overall NTA respondent group who were hired in 2006 or 2007, that is, teachers who were new during the first and second years of NTA funding. Teachers hired earlier refers to the subset of the NTA group that was hired between 2003 and 2005, that is, before NTA funds reached the districts and ESDs.

NTA teachers in small districts refers to those respondents in Cle Elum, Mary M. Knight, Raymond, Rochester, and Toppenish, the five small districts directly receiving NTA funds. NTA teachers in large districts refers to respondents in Spokane and Highline, the two large districts receiving funds. Teachers in ESD districts refer to teachers in districts whose TAP classes were run by ESD 105 or 113, the NTA-funded ESDs. Although administrators in the ESD districts did not receive NTA funds directly, many have participated in NTA-sponsored Think Tanks about new teacher issues or have sent mentors to the Mentor Academy or mentor round-tables, which are OSPI activities conducted in partnership with CSTP and in congruence with CSTP standards for new teacher programs. Within these three subgroups (small, large, ESD), we sometimes compare the more recently hired teachers with those hired earlier.

State TAP teachers refers to respondents to the state's 2006 TAP survey, which is a non-NTA-related population that we use as a comparison group for some questions that our survey had in common with the TAP survey. The state TAP respondents are teachers hired in 2006; the comparison group we used is the more recently hired NTA group.

Characteristics of respondents

The overall NTA respondent group represents a broad array of subject areas, with "clusters" in the following areas: 31% are teaching elementary education, 13% are in math/computer science, 10% are in special education, 9% are in English lit/language arts, and 9% are in science. The state TAP teachers are very similar except that a greater percentage (15%) teaches in special education.

Fifty-nine percent of the overall NTA respondent group were teaching in K-5 in 2008, evenly split between primary and upper elementary; 22% are teaching grades 6-8, and 32% are teaching grades 9-12.⁵ Nearly four in five are female.

Among the overall NTA respondent group, 85% are white and 8% are Hispanic. The more recently hired NTA subgroup is slightly more ethnically diverse: 84% white compared to 87% white for the teachers hired 3-5 years ago. The recently hired NTA group is also more diverse than the state's 2006 TAP teachers, who were 90% white. There are more new teachers of color in the five small districts (20%) than in the two large ones (11%) overall, and the diversity of new teachers in the small districts has increased among recent hires to 26% teachers of color.

⁵ The % is greater than 100% because teachers could check if they were teaching in more than one grade span.

The experience of being hired

The first of five CSTP standards for new teacher induction is hiring. In our interviews with new teachers in 2006 and 2007⁶ what we heard verified that the timing of hiring, the match that is made between an applicant and the community he/she will be teaching in, and the availability of information and materials that will help the new teacher be prepared on Day 1 are all very important to new teachers' experiences of efficacy and satisfaction. Our survey asked about these, as well as about the adequacy of early preparation for teaching, as well as who is involved in the hiring.

Pre-service preparation. Out of the full NTA respondent group, 59% reported that they felt adequately prepared by their pre-service program.⁷ For respondents hired into the small districts, though, fewer than half, 46%, felt well prepared overall, and among the most recent teachers hired into small districts, only 40% felt well prepared.⁸

Timing of hiring. Overall, 84% of respondents in the NTA districts were hired sometime before they began teaching. For the more recent group hired in 2006 or 2007, before-school hiring has grown to 87%; this is slightly better than the rate for state TAP teachers, 82%, but the difference is not statistically significant. The recently hired NTA group is more likely to have been hired in the spring before school starts, 23%, compared to an early hire for teachers hired in previous years, 12%; this is a statistically significant improvement for the NTA group. This improvement is also reflected in teachers' perceptions of readiness: When asked whether they were hired early enough to be prepared to meet students on Day 1, 63% of the overall NTA group agreed. However, those hired in the most recent two years are significantly more satisfied with the timing of their hiring: 69% agreed that they were hired early enough to be ready on Day 1, *vs.* 52% of those hired in 2003-05.

Who hires new teachers. Across all NTA respondents, 90% of teachers were hired by teams that included administrators and/or teachers from the schools where they would teach; this has not changed in the most recent two years. The only significant sub-group difference is between the two large districts: while 95% of teachers in Spokane were hired by teams that included administrators or teachers from the school where they would teach, 77% of teachers in Highline had this experience.

Making a good match. When asked if they thought that care was taken in hiring to make a good match between the teacher and the community, three of four teachers in the overall NTA group (76%) said yes. Teachers hired more recently were significantly more likely to agree, 79% *vs.* 70% teachers hired in 2003-05, showing improvement for the NTA-funded group.

⁶ We interviewed several dozen new teachers in all districts and both ESDs in the spring of 2006 while piloting our framework for measuring district capacity and also in the spring of 2007 while studying capacity.

⁷ "Agree" and "strongly agree" combined. We combine these for this type of question format, unless otherwise specified.

⁸ Differences are statistically significant unless we report otherwise.

Excerpt from the feedback memo to participants in the May 2008 Suncadia meeting

***Sign of capacity growth.** We heard more discussion this year than in the past about the importance of careful hiring as a contributor to new teacher success. We learned that several districts are strengthening hiring practices, for example, trying to hire earlier and thinking more deliberately about the best match of job opening and candidate.*

***Areas of lower capacity that we, as evaluators, believe need more attention.** The fact that new teachers receive some of the most challenging assignments (splits, multiple preps, multiple classrooms or even schools) is still an issue. We hear that teams have little power to change the nature of the assignment; instead, some principals and mentors take steps to limit “extras” such as coaching, committees, advisories. These compensating strategies seem promising, though we are not sure how widespread they are. But we still wonder whether there are any steps that participating districts or the NTA more broadly can take to call the question of new teacher assignments. Who needs to come to the table to discuss this?*

Orientation

A majority of NTA respondents overall, 61%, reported that they received adequate information about their school or district program for new teachers and about expectations for their participation. Significantly more of the new teachers hired within the past two years reported this (67%) than teachers who were hired before 2006 (48%). A majority of teachers overall, 55%, also said that they were oriented to their school’s educational philosophy related to expectations for students and effective teaching. There was no change in this for more recently hired teachers.

Less than half the NTA teachers overall, however, said that they were well oriented to their specific teaching assignments (42%) or were introduced early to curriculum materials (42%). There is no change in these orientation elements for more recently hired teachers.

Excerpt from the feedback memo to participants in the May 2008 Suncadia meeting

***Sign of capacity growth.** We heard a great deal about your development of new strategies, as well as your investment of more time and other resources, in getting new teachers started well from the beginning, for example, better planning for new teacher orientation, more orientation days, more substantive content for those days, getting new teachers familiar with the community and vice versa, helping new teachers set up their classrooms for day 1, dedicating coaches to new teacher support in the first few weeks of school. A special point we heard many times was about the value of getting teachers a paycheck for those August days; several of you said that this takes quite a bit of groundwork with the business office but is well worth it. We heard that those teams that are not yet implementing a high quality orientation are working to strengthen theirs.*

Professional community and culture

Knowing that workplace culture and professional community vary from school to school, and that they matter to new teachers and to the supports available to them, we asked teachers about a number of these characteristics.

We asked teachers about the proximity of colleagues with teaching responsibilities – subjects, grade levels – similar to theirs. We learned that three out of four new NTA respondents overall (74%) have a teacher at their school who has a teaching assignment similar to theirs. About the same percentage (78%) have another teacher in their district who has a similar teaching assignment. Thus, about 20-25% new teachers do not have a nearby colleague with a similar teaching assignment. Not surprisingly, teachers in small districts are least likely to have a nearby colleague with a similar assignment: 33% of such teachers do not have such a colleague at their school, *vs.* 24% of new teachers in large districts. Moreover, 38% of teachers in small districts do not have such a colleague anywhere in their district, *vs.* 17% of teachers in large districts.

We asked teachers to rate their level of agreement with a number of statements that describe aspects of school culture: some that reflect the general context and some that relate specifically to helpfulness toward new teachers. In the table below, we show results for the proportions of teachers that either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements. The table also shows the difference in perceptions of teachers who were hired more recently *vs.* teachers who were hired earlier. The results show that roughly two-thirds to three-fourths of teachers agree that their schools have most of these positive cultural characteristics. Also, several facets of their cultures have significantly improved for the more recently hired teachers. These improvements appear similarly in the ratings of teachers across the small districts, large districts, and districts within ESD 105 and 113.

Table 1.
New teachers' perceptions of school culture

	Teachers hired in 2006 or 2007	Teachers hired in 2003, 2004, or 2005
General cultural context		
There was focused attention on student learning and evidence of student growth.	80*	66
Teachers at my grade level shared a view of good teaching.	76*	64
There was a continuous effort to improve, a lack of complacency.	72*	63
I received support at the school for caring about students' overall well-being, and not just their academic performance.	72	67
There was a positive climate at my school related to student learning and the potential of all students.	69	65
There were positive relations between the school and community.	68*	63
Teachers at my school were expected to share materials and work together and were supported in doing it.	66*	52
The principal was involved in a positive way in teacher support and teacher growth.	65	60
There was a positive relationship between teachers and administrators.	64	57
There was mutual respect between the teacher association leadership and the administration.	62	56
When I needed more materials, I was able to get them quickly.	52	52
There was encouragement and support for cross-grade and cross-discipline dialogue.	51	50
Cultural elements related to new teachers		
Informal supports (e.g., good relationships, offers of help when needed) were available to me as a new teacher.	83*	74
There were people in my school who were willing and able to help me learn how to teach my subject matter to my students	80*	71
Administrators at my school cared about and supported new teachers.	77*	63
Teachers at my school cared about and valued new teachers.	70*	58
It was clear to me how I would be evaluated as a first year teacher.	63*	45

**Mean ratings were statistically significantly higher for the more recently hired teachers than those hired earlier. Results shown combine 4's and 5's on a 5-point scale, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree.*

Observation from the May 2008 Suncadia meeting

Sign of capacity growth. We heard that you are making stronger efforts to improve communication among all concerned – the team, the mentors, the new teachers, principals, other teachers – to develop greater shared understanding and vision about the supports new teachers need, about this program's standards and objectives, and about the need for shared responsibility. We heard you recognize that improved communication lays important groundwork for sustainability beyond the grant because it broadens both commitment and the knowledge base. There are some places where communication is not yet strong, but people are aware of the need to work on it.

Important new lessons that are beginning to influence planning. "It's all about relationships": Principal/new teacher, principal/mentor, mentor/new teacher, new teacher/other teachers. A great deal of discussion reinforced this basic idea. Important corollaries to this general lesson are:

- Principal and mentor roles need to be deliberately and explicitly defined and communicated. This clarity enables ongoing communication and behavior that is in new teacher's interest. Honoring new teacher-mentor confidentiality is key, as is distinguishing between the principal's evaluative role and helping/supporting role. There are some principals who also want the new teacher/coach interaction to be confidential so it favors new teacher growth.
- It is the experienced people who have to be responsible for initiating and nurturing the relationships with the new teachers – the new teachers can't be expected to be responsible for this. It is especially important for principals to proactively initiate and define positive relationship with new teachers and continue to nurture them. The same is also true of mentors, of course: they need to make the effort to build trusting relationships. New teachers need to hear principals and other teachers say that they are valued and important in helping the school help kids.

The overall broad role of principals and mentors is to create a supportive, respectful professional culture and to sustain it through modeling – through walking the talk. Principals (and mentors) also are seen as models of the educational philosophy of the school. One very practical context for this role is the collaborative teams that new teachers are part of – whether they are called PLCs, grade level teams, or inquiry/R&D groups. You all are aware that these groups can be important contexts for new teacher support and development. We think that the extent to which these groups actually serve that purpose, though, depends on how the more experienced teachers create a culture in those groups such that they foster high quality, inclusive professional discussions of teaching and learning.

Sustainability requires broad ownership. Commitment from building and district administration, as well as from the teachers' association, is vital to creating an ever healthier climate for teacher growth. Developing that ownership takes concerted, strategic effort and needs to be done now while you have the resources.

Challenges and obstacles that, as yet, have no solutions. Many of you are concerned about being able to spread and embed values, vision, and evidence of effectiveness of new teacher support enough by next year to make it something schools and districts want to own and sustain. Getting principal involvement is really hard; principals are always too busy and vary in their priorities. The principals at the meeting represent those who are aware of the importance of their role with new teachers and who have insight into the nature of the role. The challenge is to spread both awareness and workable strategies.

Experiences available to new teachers

We asked teachers whether they received any of several specific modes of support and whether they had enough of that experience. The table below displays the results for the whole NTA group. Roughly two-thirds received advice from their principal, attended support sessions with other new teachers, had time to plan and debrief with teachers, and were observed. Only about half had important collegial experiences of analyzing student work with other teachers, observing other teachers, and getting help figuring out the “nuts and bolts” at their school. Substantial proportions of teachers, often close to half or more, wanted more of this kind of experience.

Table 2.
Availability of modes of new teacher support

	Experiences I had in my 1 st year	Experiences I wanted more of
Monitoring and advice from my principal	68%	37%
Support sessions with other new teachers	66%	40%
Opportunities to plan and debrief with other teachers	63%	49%
Time to plan and debrief instruction with my assigned mentor or another teacher of my choice	63%	44%
Observations of my teaching by my assigned mentor or another teacher of my choice	63%	39%
Opportunities to analyze student work with other teachers	53%	57%
Opportunities to observe other teachers	50%	66%
Help figuring out the “nuts and bolts” at my school (paperwork, communicating with parents)	47%	65%
Opportunities to meet with university faculty from my pre-service program	21%	54%
Opportunities to work on my TAP professional growth plan with other teachers from my school	17%	51%

For more recently hired teachers, there are significant increases (typically 5-10%) in support sessions for new teachers, opportunities to plan and debrief with other teachers, opportunities to be observed, time to plan and debrief instruction, and monitoring from the principal. These recent increases are similar across small districts, large districts and ESD districts. There is no difference for the more recently hired group in their opportunities to analyze student work or observe other teachers.

Mentoring

By mentoring, we refer to formally established relationships between new teachers and veteran teachers designated as mentors. Both the state’s TAP program and the CSTP New Teacher Alliance expect formal mentoring to play a major role in new teacher induction. In this section we discuss the availability and proximity of mentors, the frequency with which they meet and observe one another’s classrooms, and new teachers’ perceptions of the value of the mentoring

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they received. Where we were able to ask questions in common with the state TAP survey, we compare those results to those of the recently hired NTA group.

Availability. The great majority, 84%, of NTA survey respondents overall had mentors their first year. For NTA teachers hired in 2003-2005, 69% had mentors; in the last two years, 93% of NTA new teachers have had them, a significant improvement. There are no differences in the availability of mentors to teachers in NTA districts compared to respondents to the state TAP survey.

Across all 5 years reflected in the full NTA respondent group, fewer 1st year teachers have had mentors in small districts: 71% in small districts, *vs.* 87% in large districts and 91% in ESD districts⁹. However, as more new teachers have had mentors in each type of organization in the last two years of NTA funding (86% in small districts, 93% in large, and 100% in the ESD districts), those differences are no longer statistically significant. All types of organizations have provided more mentoring recently, and small districts have come close to catching up with the large districts.

Proximity and match. We asked the new teachers whether their mentor was at their school, taught at their grade level, or taught their subject area. All of these address the question of proximity and match. We learned that new teachers in the NTA group are significantly *less* likely than respondents to the state's TAP survey to have a mentor in close proximity with matching teaching responsibilities.

Table 3.
Comparison of mentor proximity and match in State vs. NTA

	State	NTA*
Mentor in the same school	60%	36%
Mentor at the same grade level	61%	21%
Mentor in the same subject area	59%	20%

**This comparison includes teachers in NTA schools who were hired in 2007 and 2008*

Within the full NTA group, there is dramatic variation in mentor proximity and match, based on the different models used in small and large districts. Both large districts have full-release mentoring models, where a small cadre of mentors serves large caseloads of new teachers across all the district's schools. In the small districts, mentors are typically full-time teachers who receive a stipend for their extra service. Results shown in the table below suggest that the full-release model inherently works against both close proximity and close match among mentors and new teachers. The table also shows that the small district model provides very close proximity, but that staff size limits close match to some 30-40% of new teachers.

⁹ Interpretation note: The fact that respondents in the ESD districts are most likely to have mentors could be linked to the ESD role in providing TAP classes for these districts. Districts with TAP funds (which they use to pay the ESD for the class) are strongly expected to have mentors. We only surveyed new teachers who had participated in a TAP class at the ESD; thus, there is likely a respondent bias in favor of these respondents having mentors.

Table 4.
Comparison of mentor match and proximity in small vs. large districts

	Large districts*	Small districts*
Mentor located at the same school	8%	92%
Mentor teaching at the same grade level	6%	47%
Mentor teaching the same subject area	9%	35%
Mentor released from teaching	94%	12%

*Figures are for all respondents hired between 2003 and 2007. Figures for the more recently hired teachers show a slight trend (not statistically significant) toward less proximity and match in large districts and less match (for grade level only) for small districts.

Excerpt from the feedback memo to participants in the May 2008 Suncadia meeting

***Important new lessons that are beginning to influence planning.** If the formally appointed mentor is not in the new teachers' building, new teachers need someone else to be their main resource/buddy on a day-to-day "right now" basis. Proximity is vitally important. This "aha" is relevant to all new hires as well as people who move around the district, not just brand new teachers.*

***Challenges and obstacles that, as yet, have no solutions.** Especially in small districts, where the mentoring work is on top of teaching, there are not enough mentors who are both qualified and interested.*

***Areas of lower capacity that we, as evaluators, believe need more attention.** While there is some attention to making better matches between new teachers and mentors, we think there is still a significant need to address the question of how to strengthen subject-specific support for new teachers, especially when they do not have colleagues in their own buildings or districts who have the relevant knowledge base. We wonder whether districts – or, perhaps more importantly, ESDs – can create subject-specific networks and plug new teachers into them. Or are there local councils of professional organizations that could sponsor a new teacher group? Or are there university-based teacher networks in any areas? The ESD consultant model for subject-specific work in schools does not seem optimally designed for new teacher support.*

Timing and frequency of meetings with mentors. Overall, half of NTA new teachers met their mentors before the beginning of the school year. There has been significant improvement for most recently hired new teachers during NTA funding: 56% were connected with their mentor before the beginning of school, *vs.* 36% for teachers hired earlier. Those not meeting their mentor until the 2nd month of school have dropped from 20% for new teachers hired earlier to 15% for more recent ones. District size matters significantly to early mentor availability: for the more recently hired new teachers, large districts make connections with mentors earlier (65% meet before the start of school) than do the small districts (39%) or the ESD districts (45%).

We asked new teachers how often they met with their mentors, how often they were observed teaching by their mentors, and how often they observed their mentors teach. NTA teachers meet significantly less frequently with their mentors than teachers who responded to the state TAP survey: 42% of state TAP teachers met with their mentors daily or weekly *vs.* 24% of NTA

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teachers. Within the NTA group, new teachers in ESD districts meet with mentors most frequently (75% meet twice a month or more), small districts next most frequently (48% meet twice a month or more), and large districts least frequently (35% meet twice a month or more). About one in five new NTA teachers meets with their mentor less than once a month. The frequency of mentor meetings has not changed over the last five years for NTA teachers.

Classroom observations. Compared to state TAP teachers, teachers in the NTA group are significantly more likely to be observed by their mentors: 38% of NTA teachers were observed 5 or more times *vs.* 25% of TAP teachers. State TAP teachers were also less likely to have observed their mentors teach: 36% of TAP teachers never observed their mentor *vs.* 25% of the NTA group.

Within the full NTA group, the typical 1st year teacher is observed 3-4 times by the mentor, and observed the mentor 1-2 times. New teachers are observed substantially more often in the large districts, which is likely a function of the full-release model. New teachers in the ESD districts were significantly more likely to have observed their mentors teach. There are no differences for recently hired new teachers than earlier ones.

Excerpt from the feedback memo to participants in the May 2008 Suncadia meeting

Promising practices evolving in NTA districts. Observing others teach is highly valuable for new teachers. The stumbling block is that, for good reason, they do not want to leave their classrooms. One promising idea is to have them start small by observing someone in the building – their mentor or someone else. New teachers often get the most out of observing someone teach or a professional development workshop if the mentor accompanies them and debriefs with them. It is difficult to manage logistically but so valuable it is worth trying to make happen. Videotaping of new teachers can be highly valuable for self-reflection. The key is that mentors and new teachers need to learn to use video in very trustful, safe, constructive ways, which starts with giving the new teachers a lot of control over the taping and the viewing.

Overall helpfulness. We asked NTA teachers to rate the overall helpfulness of their mentors on a scale of 1 (not helpful) to 5 (extremely helpful). Overall, 57% of respondents rated their mentors' helpfulness as "a lot" or "extremely" (4 or 5); 25% said their mentors were "somewhat" helpful; and 18% said they were of little or no help.¹⁰ Later in this report, we compare the helpfulness of mentors *vs.* other sources of support for specific issues that new teachers face.

We also asked NTA respondents to respond to the open-ended question: "What was the most helpful thing you did with your mentor?" There were 212 teachers who answered this question. We conducted content analyses and tabulated the results. Responses were separated into 251 items that fit the content categories below. Seventeen percent of respondents (36 out of 212) named more than one of the above items.

¹⁰ The state TAP survey did not ask this question.

Table 5.
Tabulation of open-ended responses about helpful work with mentor

Response categories:	# of responses
Moral support, encouragement, affirmation	42
Helped solve problems and answer any questions	40
Helped with classroom management/student engagement	33
Mentor observed NT/provided feedback	27
Helped plan teaching/prepare lessons	18
Connected NT to other teachers to meet or observe	18
Guided through nuts and bolts-conferencing, grades, admin	16
Found resources/materials	11
Helped with curriculum, standards, EALRS	11
Not much	11
Other	10
Helped with specific teaching and reading/writing strategies	8
NT observed mentor	6

Availability of supports besides mentoring

Informal mentors. As was asked on the state TAP survey, we asked NTA respondents whether there was a person other than their assigned mentor who was especially helpful. We found that 93% of new teachers in the NTA group had help from such an informal mentor, compared to 70% for the state TAP group.

Most frequently for the NTA group, the informal mentor was in their same school and with a similar assignment (46%) or in the same school with a different assignment (12%), a result that reinforces the value of proximity and match in teacher-to-teacher supports. Of the 25 teachers who named the other person in the open-ended response space, six said “teaching partner.” Very few teachers—5% or less—marked principal, department chair, or district curriculum specialist as their informal mentor; however, of the 25 people who named an “other” person in the open-ended space, ten identified their content coach. More than 10% of the NTA group marked that they had too many especially helpful supports to name just one other person; this has increased substantially in the recent two years, from 5% for teachers hired before 2007 to 18% of teachers hired in 2007 or 2008.

TAP classes. One in six of the NTA respondents reported that they took a TAP class from ESD 105 or ESD 113.¹¹ We asked them to rate the overall value of the class on a scale of 1 (not valuable) to 5 (of great value). There have been significant improvements in the value of these classes over time: for the more recently hired NTA teachers, 47% said the class was of

¹¹ Predictably, nearly all of these were teachers who were invited to take the survey because they had enrolled in TAP classes at either ESD 105 or 113.

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considerable or great value *vs.* 28% of teachers hired earlier. Also, only 14% of recently hired teachers said the class was of little or no value *vs.* 36% of teachers who took the classes in 2003-2005.

Teachers union. The union provides two-thirds of 1st year teachers in the overall NTA group with information about their contract, provides a significant minority (38%) with a sense that they are valued and honored by the profession, and explains rehiring rights to one in five teachers. One in ten teachers feel they get protection from the union from unwanted extracurricular responsibilities. These supports have not changed for the more recently hired new teachers.

Barriers to finding sufficient support

We asked the NTA group to tell us whether lack of available colleagues, lack of time, lack of substitute teachers, scheduling, travel distances, lack of information, negative relationships, or their own hesitation to seek help were barriers to their finding sufficient support. For two-thirds or more of the respondents, these factors were either not a barrier at all or were a minor barrier. Only between 6 and 15% of teachers described any of these as a substantial barrier.

The value of supports from different sources

General value. We asked the NTA group to rate the overall value of several general types of support for increasing their efficacy as teachers. Results are displayed in the table below. Informal supports from colleagues stand out as being of great value for nearly two-thirds of teachers. As suggested earlier, these colleagues tend to be in the new teachers' schools and to have similar assignments. Other supports, including from their mentors and from professional development, tend to be of moderate or great value to well more than half the teachers.

Table 6.
General value of different sources of support*

	Not at all valuable	Slightly valuable	Moderately valuable	Greatly valuable
Informal support from other teachers	2%	13%	22%	64%
Other professional development	8%	19%	38%	36%
Formal mentoring	19%	19%	28%	34%
Support from other new teachers	21%	21%	25%	32%
Support from my principal	15%	28%	27%	30%
Professional development specifically for new teachers	19%	28%	30%	23%

* The shaded areas show the rating made by the largest % of teachers for that support.

Excerpt from the feedback memo to participants in the May 2008 Suncadia meeting

***Sign of capacity growth.** We heard some discussions about mentors who are working together – and sometimes with principals and others – to facilitate regular meetings for new teachers that address specific topics, are organized and well led, and can qualify for clock hours. This is a sign that more deliberate planning is going into professional development specifically for new teachers.*

***Promising practices evolving in NTA districts.** New teachers can grow as a group through facilitated activities such as book study or regular opportunities to share teaching ideas, especially if they have a say in the topics to be shared or the book. Providing resources for DVD-based or on-line professional development – such as what Spokane developed for classroom management – seems to have promise as a supplement to face-to-face mentoring.*

Comparative value of different sources of support for specific issues that new teachers face. We grouped sources of support into four broad categories, ranging from formal and structured to informal and contextual. We then asked the NTA teachers to check all sources that were valuable for specific kinds of help and learning that are important to new teachers.

The table below shows several findings that have important implications for the design of supports for new teachers. First, some teachers find two, and sometimes more, sources of support for many of the needs that they have. Second, as suggested above, mentoring is just one among many sources of support, and it is often not the most important source.

Importantly, while mentoring can be an important support for learning classroom management, mentoring tends to be weaker than both formal professional development and informal supports for the many issues related to efficacy in teaching – teaching the curriculum, subject matter knowledge, instructional strategies, addressing standards, assessment, and reaching diverse students. Further, mentoring is weaker than both school culture and informal supports in influencing teachers' decision to stay in the profession.

Table 7.
Comparative value of different sources of support*

	Mentor	Formal professional development	Informal support	My school Culture
Preparation in setting up and planning for my first day of teaching	30%	17%	71%	30%
My effectiveness at managing a classroom	56%	39%	62%	32%
My ability to teach my assigned instructional program and materials	36%	52%	63%	24%
My knowledge of how to teach my specific subject area	27%	59%	57%	19%
My knowledge of general instructional strategies	43%	62%	53%	22%
My effectiveness in teaching students with different abilities and backgrounds	31%	53%	54%	37%
My ability to assess student learning in multiple ways	36%	58%	51%	25%
My ability to incorporate GLEs into my curriculum and teaching	32%	56%	50%	23%
My work on my TAP professional growth plan	66%	26%	26%	11%
My decision to stay in teaching	39%	17%	68%	45%

**Respondents were asked to check all sources of support that were valuable for each need. Shaded areas show where 50% or more of teachers said that a type of resource was valuable for the need on the left.*

These results – taken together with findings related to mentor proximity, match, and amount of interaction – imply that over-reliance on formal mentoring as the centerpiece of an induction model could result in under-attention to building capacities for the many other forms of support that teachers need. These findings reinforce the need, expressed in the NTA program standards, to provide teachers with high quality formal professional development as well as mentoring. These findings also reinforce the idea that districts that want to strengthen induction must build up broad areas of organizational capacity, including well-supported instructional programs, as well as professional communities that produce informal supports for new teachers.

Teachers’ comments about important sources of support. We asked NTA teachers to respond to an open-ended question to make sure we gathered their full perspectives: “What were the most important experiences and supports during your first year?” There were 247 teachers who answered this question. Through content analysis, we grouped responses into 404 items that fit the categories below. A tabulation of how many supports each respondent identified:

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- 55% of respondents (135 out of 247) named one of the items below.
- 32% of respondents (81 out of 247) named two of the items below.
- 9% of respondents (22 out of 247) named three of the items below.
- 3% of respondents (8 out of 247) named four of the items below.
- 1% of respondents (2 out of 247) named five of the items below.

Table 8.
Tabulation of open-ended responses about kinds of informal support

Response categories:	# of responses
Informal support from fellow staff/ building relationships/ positive school culture	135
Mentorship program and assigned mentors	74
Meeting, planning, collaborating with colleagues	35
School Principal /Dept. Chair /Administration	35
Professional development programs / previous schooling	23
Literacy, math, and science coaches	22
Support from other new teachers / new teacher meetings	22
College colleagues / support from teachers in other schools	13
Observing other classrooms	12
On the job learning in the classroom, school, and district	9
Family and friends	8
District Specialist support	5
Personal satisfaction, focus, fortitude	4
Previous experience in same school or district	3
Parental support and communication	2
Other	2

New teachers' suggestions for improvement of support. We asked respondents to answer this open-ended question: "What would have made your first year substantially better?" There were 241 respondents who answered this question. We conducted content analyses and grouped responses into 297 items that fit the content categories below. Seventeen percent (17%) of respondents (42 out of 241) named more than one of the items below. In terms of general tone of response, 8% of respondents (19 out of 241) expressed satisfaction with their first year of teaching, and 12% of respondents (30 out of 241) expressed dissatisfaction with their first year.

Table 9.
Tabulation of open-ended responses to question about what would make their first year better

Response categories:	# of responses
More or better mentoring	35
More helpful/ positive/ "in sync" culture, goals, and overall support (school or team)	25
More developed curriculum, adequate materials, received in a timely manner	24
More PD or coaching for what I was assigned to teach	23
Better orientation/ information about school and district expectations and events	22
Earlier hiring	22
Better relationship/ communication with principal and administration	21
Nothing, my first year went well	19
More time to meet and plan with other teachers/ fewer time-intensive obligations	16
Being able to observe other teachers	15
More help with classroom management/ students	14
Other	11
Fewer preps/ less challenging assignment	10
More prep time; fewer meetings	9
More help with nuts and bolts (grades, parents, paperwork)	8
More access to teachers who teach what I teach	6
Opportunities to be with other new teachers	6
Assignment stability	6
More freedom from structured curriculum/ assessment	5

Excerpt from the feedback memo to participants in the May 2008 Suncadia meeting

***Sign of capacity growth.** We heard that people who are responsible for new teacher support are making more effort to learn about what new teachers say and experience, and are in more frequent contact with new teachers – that is, are making fewer assumptions and asking more questions. One outcome is greater awareness that brand new teachers vary in their needs and in their ways of seeking and using support. Furthermore, we are hearing that enrollment patterns are such that some “new teachers” may be somewhat experienced teachers that are moving around and thus are new to their assignment or building. Even if they are not first-year teachers, they need mentoring of some kinds in order to have a positive experience of “newness” – to feel efficacious as teachers and included as colleagues. All of this adds up to the realization that multiple forms of support need to be available.*

We heard greater recognition that new teachers need steady support for classroom management, teaching, and learning; in addition, they need “just-in-time” support for handling the more routine things that come up (grading, parent conferences, location of resources, and so on). In a similar vein, we heard acknowledgement that new teachers often need more than one experienced teacher helping them; most need different sources of knowledge and expertise. We heard a minor concern that new teachers can feel overwhelmed with too much intervention from too many different people. We could see that teams are using these ideas to try out strategies and models.

Promising practices for strengthening programs. We heard that Mentoring Matters is great training for principals and coaches as well as mentors; what they learn relates directly to their relationships with new teachers and also helps them in their broader role as educational leaders. Also, sometimes it is helpful if mentors attend professional development related to what coaches are working on with new teachers so that mentors can more specifically support content teaching. From our perspective, it seems that these kinds of “cross-training” can be a good way to broaden involvement and spread knowledge across all the people who, ideally, interact with new teachers.

Availability and value of supports after the first year of teaching

Since our respondent group included teachers who are beyond their first year, we were able to ask about induction supports that continue beyond year 1. The CSTP induction standards, while emphasizing principles for first-year support, state that multi-year professional growth opportunities are part of effective induction.

Availability. We asked teachers who are in their second year of teaching or later, to tell us what forms of support they received after their first year. Just four in ten teachers said they have had formal professional development designed especially for new teachers after their first year, though 90% said they have had other professional development. Nearly half, 45%, have had a formal mentor. Teachers in the ESD districts are significantly *less* likely to have had a formal mentor after their year 1: about 20% of these teachers have a mentor after year 1 *vs.* about half of teachers in the NTA-funded districts. The availability of mentoring beyond the first year has not increased significantly for more recently hired teachers in the funded districts.

We also asked teachers whether the supports they received after the first year were appropriate for their stage of development. A large majority rated as appropriate or very appropriate informal support from other teachers (88%) and other professional development (84%). Teachers also gave fairly high appropriateness ratings to support from their principal (74%) and from other new teachers (68%). Slightly over half said that formal mentoring, professional development specifically for new teachers, and assistance in working on their ProCert has been appropriate or very appropriate.

Value of supports. We asked teachers to rate the overall value of the supports they received in their second year or later. Below we compare these ratings to teachers’ ratings of these same kinds of supports in their first year. Informal support from other teachers continues to be of great value to two-thirds of all teachers into their second year and beyond. Professional development and principal support become more valuable after the first year, while mentoring, new-teacher-specific professional development, and support from other new teachers became slightly less valuable.

Table 10.
General value of different sources of support in the second year of teaching and beyond

	After first year		During first year	
	Not at all valuable	Greatly valuable	Not at all valuable	Greatly valuable
Informal support from other teachers	1%	67%	2%	64%
Other professional development	8%	48%	8%	36%
Support from my principal	9%	37%	15%	30%
Support from other new teachers	23%	25%	21%	32%
Professional development specifically for new teachers	40%	20%	19%	23%
Formal mentoring	43%	23%	19%	34%
Assistance with working on my professional certification (ProCert)	52%	17%	Not asked	

We asked teachers in their second year and beyond to report on the extent to which their mentor, formal professional development, informal support, and school culture was valuable to their development in several specific areas. Fewer than one in five teachers said their formal mentor was valuable for any curriculum/instruction-related issues; however, half the teachers said their mentor was helpful for their work on the ProCert. (*Recall from Table 10 above, however, that half of new teachers report that working on their ProCert is not a valuable contributor to their general development as teachers.*) Predictably, informal support first, and formal professional development second, were most helpful on teaching-related issues: between half and two-thirds of teachers said these sources helped them with teaching the curriculum, instructional strategies, content knowledge, addressing GLEs, assessment, and serving diverse students. Informal support stood out as the primary source of support for classroom management for nearly three-fourths of the group. Informal support, followed by school culture, was most valuable for teachers' decision to stay in the profession. Half of the teachers also said that their school culture was valuable in helping them teach diverse students.

Teachers also had an open-ended opportunity to comment on the question, "What are the most important supports you have had since your first year?" We did a content analysis and tabulated responses. There were 131 respondents who answered this question. Responses were separated into 191 items that fit into 14 content categories shown in the table below.

- 62% of respondents (81 out of 131) named one of the items below.
- 31% of respondents (41 out of 131) named two of the items below.
- 6% of respondents (8 out of 131) named three of the items below.
- 1% of respondents (1 out of 131) named four of the items below.

Eight teachers voiced responses that expressed overt dissatisfaction with their experience.

Table 11.
Tabulation of open-ended responses to important supports after the first year

Response content categories:	# of responses:
Informal support from fellow staff / building relationships / positive school culture	47
Meeting, planning, collaborating with colleagues	37
Professional development programs / previous schooling	37
Mentorship program and assigned mentors	19
Nothing, things have gotten worse	14
Literacy, math, and science coaches	8
School Principal /Dept. Chair / Administration	6
College colleagues / support from teachers in other schools	5
Learning, getting help with classroom management techniques	4
Observing other classrooms	4
Support from other new teachers / new teacher meetings	4
District Specialist support	2
On the job learning in the classroom and district	2
National Board Certification	2

Teachers' suggestions for better support. We asked teachers to respond to the open-ended question, "What would have supported you better after your first year?" There were 101 respondents who answered this question. Through content analyses we grouped responses into 120 items that fit the categories below; 14% of respondents (14 out of 101) named more than one item. Five percent of respondents expressed satisfaction with their overall teaching experience after the first year; 15% were very unsatisfied.

Table 12.
Tabulation of responses to what would have supported them better after their first year

Response categories:	# of responses
Better, continued, or more specific mentoring	21
Time to meet/work with other teachers	18
Better relationship/communication with principal/admin	14
More/better professional development	13
Nothing, not certain	11
More positive culture and overall support	10
Observing other teachers	7
Other	7
Help with Pro Cert	6
Better curriculum/resources/materials/funding	4
Ongoing coaching	3
Fewer meetings and extraneous activities	2
Help with classroom management/behavior issues	2
Network with other new teachers	2

Teacher mobility and career plans

Mobility. We asked teachers how long they had been teaching at their current schools and, if they had taught at a different school in the past, whether it was in the same district. We learned that there has been considerable mobility in this respondent pool. While 21% of second-year teachers said they have already changed schools, fully 57% of the teachers in the 3rd – 5th year of their career said they are in a different school from where they started. Teachers who moved tended *not* to be moving within their districts. This pattern is more pronounced for the most recent new teachers. Of those in their 1st or 2nd year who have changed schools, 85% came from a different district in Washington. Of the 3rd-5th year teachers who have changed schools, 65% came from a different district in WA and 33% came from another state. Teachers in large districts are significantly more likely to have come from a different state. Only one 1st-2nd year teacher and one 3rd-5th grade teacher has moved within their original district.

The great majority of both groups—81% of the overall NTA group and 76% of the state TAP group—expect to teach at the same school next year. Less than 10% expect to teach at another school in Washington. In small districts, those who are changing schools are more likely also to switch districts than those in large districts, but are likely to stay in Washington.

Staying in the profession. About half the teachers say it is “very unlikely” they will leave teaching and another 20% are “somewhat unlikely” to leave. This leaves about 30% who are somewhat or very likely to leave. Of the teachers who took the state TAP survey, just 20% said they are likely to leave, a statistically significant difference from the NTA group.

In the NTA group, the proportion of those tending toward leaving *vs.* not leaving is about the same across the full set of respondents. However, those hired more recently show slightly more certainty about not leaving: 52% say they are *very unlikely* to leave *vs.* 42% for teachers hired earlier; and 11% of the more recent ones are *very likely* to leave *vs.* 17% of others. Teachers in small districts expressed more certainty about staying in teaching than those in large districts: 59% in small districts are very likely to stay *vs.* 42% in large districts.

Reasons for leaving. As reported earlier, survey results suggest that informal support from colleagues, followed by school culture, were most important to teachers’ decisions to stay in teaching. We also asked teachers to respond to this open-ended question: “If you are likely to leave the teaching profession in the next five years, what are the main reasons?” There were 110 respondents who answered this question. Using content analyses, we grouped responses into 148 items that fit the categories below. Thirty percent of respondents named more than one reason.

Table 13.
Tabulation of responses about reasons for leaving the profession

Response categories:	# of responses
Stress/ poor working conditions/ frustration with students/ lack of support	53
Low pay/ lack of funding/ lack of respect for education	30
Family choice and health	24
Other professional interests/ambitions	14
Am content right now / Don't want to leave the profession	8
ProCert and PD requirements	7
Pressure of getting kids to "perform"/ standardized testing	5
Want to teach in my area of interest and teaching philosophy	4
Need for job stability	3

Career development. We asked teachers whether they aspired to education administration or teacher leadership (such as coach, mentor, professional development specialist) at some point in their future. The differences are strikingly in favor of teacher leadership and not in favor of administration. Half of all new teachers say they will probably or definitely aspire to teacher leadership at some point, and another one-third say maybe. About two-thirds say they will probably *not* become administrators, though another 20% say maybe.

New teachers in small districts are more likely to aspire to teacher leadership than those in large districts: 67% of those in small *vs.* 39% in large. New teachers in large districts are slightly less interested in becoming administrators also: 68% probably will not *vs.* 60% in small districts. Plans for teacher leadership among teachers in ESD districts are about the same as for teachers in small districts; teachers in ESD districts are least likely of all to seek administration (52%).

What else new teachers would like CSTP and the state to know

At the end of the survey we asked the open-ended question, "What other information would you like to share about your experience as a new teacher or about new teacher support?" There were 64 respondents who answered this question. Through content analyses we grouped responses into 71 items that fit the categories below. Eight percent of respondents (5 out of 64) named more than one of the items. In terms of general tone, 38% percent expressed positive overall experiences, 51% expressly negative experiences, and 10% were neutral.

Table 14.
Tabulation of responses about any other information about new teacher experience

Response categories:	# of responses
Overall support/ availability of information	31
Mentorship/ new teacher meetings	20
Job stability, contracts, pay	4
Classroom management/ student behavior / curriculum	3
Heavy workloads	3
ProCert and NBCT support	3
Administrators with more relevant knowledge and experience	3
Professional development programs	2
Time to work with other teachers	2

Additional excerpts from the feedback memo to participants in the May 2008 Suncadia meeting

Areas of lower capacity that we, as evaluators, believe need more attention. We do not see much representation of the high school perspective – new teachers, mentors, or principals – in the work of the NTA. The contexts and issues for new teachers at the high school are challenging. We also hear some frustration about high school-level new teachers’ attitudes about mentoring, and further, that it is hard to find high school mentors for new teachers. To us, this is a sign that some of the models or opportunities presented to high school teachers – the new teachers and prospective mentors – may not be a good match for their context. Just as in the classroom, if the students reject the learning opportunity they are offered, one can be upset with the students or one can change the learning opportunity. Perhaps there needs to be a CSTP summit on the high school, some concerted effort to “get outside of the box” in terms of supporting high school teachers. (It may also be that there are some districts whose support for new teachers at the high school level is working, and we just haven’t heard about it. It would still be good to focus on the high school and to share ideas and solutions.)

Important issues that were not addressed at the meeting. The ESDs were not fully represented at the Suncadia meeting so we are not fully informed about their work. We know they are continuing to offer TAP classes for teachers in their regions, and in this way they are providing a service that many small districts do not provide for their teachers. Beyond this, we have also heard about the possibility of developing other ways to build the capacity of small districts to support new teachers. We think it is vital that a focused effort be invested in the development of the ESD role, again trying to think outside the box.

CSTP's role in helping districts build capacity. The Suncadia meeting was designed to foster critical reflection and planning among the participants as well as to provide them with new resources and information. The meeting included:

- Distribution and discussion of resources and materials CSTP leaders have produced for use by NTA teams (e.g., articles and a PowerPoint presentation on the important role of the principal). Teams who had used these talked about the value and helpfulness of these and how they had used them.
- A panel presentation on the nature and importance of effective principal support. Presenters included some people from participating NTA teams as well as another district (Wenatchee) that has built a model program of mentoring and administrative support.
- A district-led demonstration of video-based modules for mentor training and new teacher support. These were distributed to all teams for their use.
- Reflections on new developments and accomplishments in Year 2, which were shared across groups.
- Time for planning Year 3, including strengthening the role of the principal, as well as continuing on their development of better orientation, mentoring programs, and new-teacher-specific professional development.

We conducted focus groups with all participating teams and principals. Among our questions was this: "How helpful, if at all, are the various CSTP NTA-sponsored activities and processes in helping you build greater district capacity to support new teachers? (e.g., progress reports; meetings/work time such as this; site visits; the on-line resource tool...other?)"

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Below are excerpts from the feedback memo that we addressed to NTA participants and leaders following the meeting:

***CSTP's role in fostering capacity-building.** This grant project is designed such that CSTP does more than write checks; it proactively tries to enhance your ability to build the capacities your district needs. These are your views about the value of CSTP resources and activities:*

-CSTP plays a valuable role in convening teams. Meetings enable teams to share ideas and do collective problem solving with other teams – in informal conversations, the protocol-based discussions, and structured presentations (e.g., the principal panel and the Spokane group's sharing of the CDs). Meetings also give team members a chance to leave their daily work context so they can focus, talk, and plan – this is very hard to do otherwise. (We certainly observed all of this in action at the meeting.)

-CSTP provides research-based resources and protocols at these meetings that team members are able to take up and use, for example, Mindy's presentation on principals, as well as books and articles. People in all roles think these resources are helpful in building their own knowledge base, and also in spreading ideas and practices to others.

-Some teams said that the mentor round tables have been really helpful.

-The web-based document-sharing tool has a very low profile so far. People are either not aware of it, don't think to turn to it when they are looking for something, or don't think it's useful.

-Special OSPI note: The Mentor Academy is still getting rave reviews. We heard several people say at this meeting that they had not participated in it before because they didn't think they needed it, but they are now glad that they did.

APPENDIX A. SURVEY DESIGN AND ANALYSES

Content

For the content of the survey items, we drew primarily from the CSTP standards for new teacher induction and from our own evaluation framework and the results of our 2007 study of district capacities to support new teachers. Data for that study included interviews with new teachers, mentors, and administrators responsible for new teacher support, as well as direct observations of NTA-sponsored meetings of district teams and project documents. To permit comparisons of New Teacher Alliance respondents with new teachers in the state's TAP program, we included several questions from Washington's 2006 survey of new teachers.¹²

Respondents

The survey population included new teachers hired between 2003 and 2007 in the seven districts directly funded by the NTA, as well as the districts that have enrolled new teachers in TAP classes offered by the NTA-funded ESDs, 105 and 113. Surveying teachers with up to five years of experience permitted us to analyze the extent to which new teacher contexts, supports, and experiences have improved over time.

Method of administration

Participating districts and ESDs provided names and email addresses of all teachers fitting the definition above who were still teaching in the districts in 2008. We (Inverness Research) sent each teacher an email invitation with information about the survey. We offered an incentive in the form of the chance to be one of 30 teachers drawn randomly to receive a \$100 amazon.com gift certificate. Simultaneously, we contacted the team leaders from each district/ESD and asked them to offer encouragement to those teachers to respond, explaining the importance of the survey. The survey was posted on-line in mid-April. Over the next three weeks, we emailed weekly reminders to the teachers and to the team leaders. At the May 7-8 NTA gathering, we were able to personally inform each team leader of the response rate for their district and asked them to make one more push for responses.

Response rates

The overall response rate was 34%, or 305 responses out of 886 invitations. Of these, 193 or nearly two out of three, were from teachers in their first or second year of teaching. The response rate from the five small NTA-funded districts (Cle Elum, Mary M. Knight, Raymond, Rochester, and Toppenish), collectively, was quite high at 66%. Of the two large districts, Highline's response rate of 36% was higher than Spokane's 27%. Still, because of the size of the populations there, 62% of all 305 responses were from Highline and Spokane. The response rate from teachers in the other ESD 105 districts was quite high, 44%. The great majority of the respondents teach at either Wapato or Grandview, which have had heavy participation in ESD

¹² See Appendix A for the survey questions.

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105 TAP classes. The response rate from ESD 113 was very low at 14%, and there were no responses from 10 of the 17 districts that have enrolled teachers in TAP classes there. Together, responses from the two ESDs comprise 15% of the total number of responses.

Analyses

We analyzed survey results in several ways, enabling us to explore both research questions.

- **Results from the NTA respondent group as a whole—before and after NTA funding.** This simplest analysis may be the most broadly beneficial because it looks beyond the NTA program at new teacher experience and perspective over time.
- **Comparison of NTA teachers with non-NTA teachers in Washington.** Our NTA survey included some questions in common with the state's 2006 TAP survey. For our analyses, we compared the state TAP responses to those of the subset of the NTA group that were hired in 2006 or 2007, that is, those NTA participants who were new teachers during the beginning of NTA-funded programming. This analysis helps us ascertain contributions of the NTA to new teacher support.
- **Within the NTA group, comparison of new teachers hired in 2006 or 2007 (the first years of NTA funding to districts and ESDs) to teachers hired earlier.** This enabled us to ascertain whether more recent new teachers are benefiting from growth in districts' capacity to provide supports.
- **Within the NTA group, comparison of teachers in three organizational contexts: small districts (Cle Elum, Mary M. Knight, Raymond, Rochester, and Toppenish), large districts (Highline and Spokane), and districts participating in ESD 105 and 113 TAP programs.** These analyses enabled us to consider variations in both overall teaching context and new teacher support model.

For all comparisons, we conducted analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine statistical significance of variation. These tests take into account the sub-group *n*'s, of course; still, we use great caution in reporting on sub-analyses where the *n*'s are very small, for example, in reflecting teachers' experiences in ESD 113 districts, where the response rate was exceptionally low.

APPENDIX B. SURVEY QUESTIONS

This is the document file from which the on-line survey was created

CENTER FOR STRENGTHENING THE TEACHING PROFESSION (CSTP) NEW TEACHER ALLIANCE

Inverness Research New Teacher Survey – April 2008

Survey Validation Code: **CSTP New**

This survey is designed for teachers who are currently in the classroom and whose first year of teaching was 2003-04 or later. If you have received this survey in error, please check below, then scroll to the end of the survey and submit it now. Thank you.

This survey was sent to me in error.

YOUR CURRENT TEACHING ASSIGNMENT AND TEACHING HISTORY

In what school district are you teaching? *(Pull down menu)*

Which of the following statements best describes your teaching history? (Do not include student teaching or other teaching experience before you received your teaching degree.)

I am in my first year of teaching. My current school is the only school where I have taught.

I am in my second year of teaching. I have taught both years at my current school.

I am in my second year of teaching. I taught at another school last year.

This is my third, fourth or fifth year teaching. I began my teaching career at my current school.

This is my third, fourth or fifth year teaching. I came to my current school from another teaching assignment.

If this is your 2nd - 5th year of teaching, and you taught at a different school during your first year, where was your first school? *(Pull down menu, with "Different school in my current district" "Outside Washington" as the first two options, then the district list)*

YOUR FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING

Please tell us about your first year of teaching – whether it was at your current school, or at another school. *(For simplicity's sake we have worded questions in the past tense, although we know that this is the first year for some of you.)*

When were you hired?

The spring before I began teaching

The summer before I began teaching

Within two weeks before school started

Fall, after the school year began

Later in the year, winter or spring

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Were administrators and/or teachers from your school part of the team that hired you?

Yes No Don't know

Was there a teacher at your school who had a teaching assignment similar to yours?

Yes No

Was there another teacher in your district who had a teaching assignment similar to yours?

Yes No

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your first year's experience getting started, especially hiring and orientation?

Disagree strongly Disagree Mixed Agree Agree strongly

I believe that my preservice program prepared me adequately to begin my first teaching position. Care was taken in my hiring to make sure there was a good match between me and the community in which I would be teaching.

I was hired early enough so that I would be ready to meet my students on the first day of the year.

I was introduced to and received curriculum materials so I could start teaching on Day One.

I was well oriented to my teaching assignment.

I was well oriented to the school's educational philosophy ("these are our expectations for students," "this is what we believe about effective teaching").

I received information about my district's/school's program for new teachers, and expectations for my participation.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the culture of the school where you taught your first year?

Disagree strongly Disagree Mixed Agree Agree strongly

There was a positive relationship between teachers and administrators.

There were positive relations between the school and community.

When I needed more materials, I was able to get them quickly.

There was a positive climate at my school related to student learning and the potential of all students.

I received support at the school for caring about students' overall well-being, and not just their academic performance.

Teachers at my school were expected to share materials and work together and were supported in doing it.

The principal was involved in a positive way in teacher support and teacher growth.

There was focused attention on student learning and evidence of student growth.

Teachers at my grade level shared a view of good teaching.

There was encouragement and support for cross-grade and cross-discipline dialogue.

There was mutual respect between the teacher association leadership and the administration.

There was a continuous effort to improve, a lack of complacency.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the supports available to you at your school as a first year teacher?

Disagree strongly Disagree Mixed Agree Agree strongly

Teachers at my school cared about and valued new teachers.

Leaders at my school cared about and supported new teachers.

There were people in my school who were willing and able to help me learn how to teach my subject matter to my students

Formal supports (e.g., structured opportunities, assigned mentors or coaches) were available to me as a new teacher.

I took advantage of and benefited from the formal supports that were available.

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Informal supports (e.g., good relationships, offers of help when needed) were available to me as a new teacher.

I took advantage of and benefited from the informal supports that were available.

It was clear to me how I would be evaluated as a first year teacher.

Formal Mentoring During Your First Year of Teaching

Did you have a formally assigned mentor who was specifically assigned to assist you because you were a first year teacher?

Yes

No (skip to the next section, "Other Supports and Barriers during Your First Year")

When were you first connected with your assigned mentor?

Before the start of the school year

During the first week of school

Later in the first month of school

During the second month of school

After the second month of school

On average, how often did you meet with your assigned mentor during your first year of teaching?

Never

Less than once a month

About once a month

About twice a month

Weekly

Daily

How often did your assigned mentor observe you teach during your first year of teaching?

Never

1-2 times

3-4 times

5-6 times

7 or more times

How often did you observe your assigned mentor or other teachers teaching during your first year of teaching?

Never

1-2 times

3-4 times

5-6 times

7 or more times

During your first year of teaching, was your assigned mentor: *(Check all that apply.)*

Located at the same school?

Teaching the same (or very similar) grade level?

Teaching the same (or very similar) subject area(s)?

Released from teaching to mentor all or part of the day?

Overall, how helpful was your assigned mentor?

Not helpful at all Of little help Of some help A lot of help Extremely helpful

New teacher experiences and supports: Year Two NTA report
What was the most helpful thing you did with the mentor?

Other Supports and Barriers During Your First Year

Was there anyone other than a formal mentor who was a particularly helpful resource to you during your first year (e.g., was a source of information, supportive, available and willing to help)?

Yes No

If you answered yes to the above question, who was that informal mentor? (*Check one.*)

- A teacher in my school with the same/similar assignment
- A teacher in my school with a different assignment
- A teacher in another school with the same/similar assignment
- An administrator at my school
- A district curriculum or subject-area specialist/coach
- My department chair
- Other (who?) _____
- Several people were helpful; I cannot identify one person who was particularly helpful

What supports did the union/teaching association representative provide to you during your first year. (*Check all that apply.*)

- Information on my contract
- Information on rehiring rights
- A sense that I was valued and honored by the association
- Protection from unwanted extracurricular responsibilities
- Other (please describe) _____

Did you take a TAP class or workshop offered by ESD 105 or ESD 113?

- Yes, ESD 105
- Yes, ESD 113
- No (skip next two questions)

If you took a TAP class or workshop offered by ESD 105 or ESD 113, what year did you take it?

2003-04 2004-05 2005-06 2006-07 2007-08

Please rate its value in providing you with information helpful in your first year of teaching.

Not valuable at all Of little value Of some value Of considerable value Of great value

To what extent were the following factors barriers to your receiving sufficient support in your first year? (*Check one in each row.*)

- Not a barrier at all
- A minor barrier
- Somewhat of a barrier
- A barrier
- NA – Does not describe my experience

New teacher experiences and supports: Year Two NTA report

No other teacher in my subject area was available to help me.
It was difficult to secure substitute teachers.
My principal provided little support to me as a new teacher.
Support was only available during the school day, which would have meant I had to leave my classroom.
I had to travel some distance to receive support.
I didn't have time to take advantage of support that was available.
I hesitated to ask others for support when it was not openly offered to me.
I did not have a positive relationship with my mentor.
I did not have information about sources of support.

Which of the following experiences did you have in your first year? (Check all that apply.) Which would you have liked to have had – or to have had more of -- in your first year? (Check all that apply.)

Experiences I had in my 1st year Experiences I wanted/wanted more of

Help setting up my classroom
Help figuring out the “nuts and bolts” at my school (paperwork, communicating with parents)
Support sessions with other new teachers
Opportunities to plan and debrief with other teachers
Opportunities to analyze student work with other teachers
Opportunities to observe other teachers
Observations of my teaching by my assigned mentor or another teacher of my choice
Time to plan and debrief instruction with my assigned mentor or another teacher of my choice
Monitoring and advice from my principal
Opportunities to meet with university faculty from my pre-service program
Opportunities to work on my TAP professional growth plan with other teachers from my school

During your first year of teaching, which supports were the most valuable in each of the following areas? (Check all that apply.) If you have not had a mentor, formal professional development, or informal support, indicate so with a check and then skip that column.)

4 columns

Mentor Formal professional development Informal support My school culture

NA/ I did not have this kind of support

Preparation in setting up and planning for my first day of teaching
My decision to stay in teaching
My effectiveness at managing a classroom
My ability to teach my assigned instructional program and materials
My knowledge of how to teach my specific subject area
My knowledge of general instructional strategies
My effectiveness in teaching students with different abilities and backgrounds
My ability to assess student learning in multiple ways
My ability to incorporate GLEs into my curriculum and teaching
My work on my TAP professional growth plan

New teacher experiences and supports: Year Two NTA report

In summary, to what extent did each of the following contribute to increasing your overall effectiveness as a first year teacher?

Not at all
Slightly
A moderate amount
A great amount
Not applicable

Formal mentoring
Informal support from other teachers
Support from my principal
Support from other new teachers
Professional development specifically for new teachers
Other professional development
Other (please describe) _____

What were the most important supports and experiences you had during your first year of teaching?

What would have made your first year substantially better?

SUPPORT AFTER YOUR FIRST YEAR (SKIP THIS SECTION, IF 2007-08 IS YOUR FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING)

Have you received the following types of support since your first year? To what extent has the support that you have received from each source been appropriate for your developmental stage? (Check one for each source of support you have had.)

Headers: Supports I've had since my 1st year Appropriateness for my developmental level
[Yes No] [Not appropriate at all Not appropriate Mixed Appropriate Very appropriate]

Formal mentoring
Informal support from other teachers
Support from my principal
Support from other new teachers
Professional development specifically for new teachers
Assistance with working on my professional certification (ProCert)
Other professional development
Other (please explain) _____

New teacher experiences and supports: Year Two NTA report

During your second year of teaching and beyond, which supports have been the most valuable in each of the following areas? *(Check all that apply.)* (If you have not had a mentor, formal professional development, or informal support, indicate so with a check and then skip that column.)

4 columns [Mentor Formal professional development Informal support My school culture]

NA/ I have not had this kind of support during my second year and beyond

Your decision to stay in teaching

Your effectiveness at managing a classroom

Your ability to teach your assigned instructional program and materials

Your knowledge of how to teach your specific subject area

Your knowledge of general instructional strategies

Your effectiveness in teaching students with different abilities and backgrounds

Your ability to assess student learning in multiple ways

Your ability to incorporate GLEs into your curriculum and teaching

Your work on your Professional Certification preparation (ProCert)

In summary, to what extent have each of the following contributed to increasing your overall effectiveness as a teacher during your second year of teaching and beyond?

Not at all

Slightly

A moderate amount

A great amount

Not applicable

Formal mentoring

Informal support from other teachers

Support from my principal

Support from other new teachers

Professional development specifically for new teachers

Assistance with working on my professional certification (ProCert)

Other professional development

Other (please describe) _____

What are the most important supports and experiences you have had after your first year?

What would have supported your growth better after your first year?

YOUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

How likely is it that you will leave the teaching profession in the next five years?

Very unlikely

Somewhat unlikely

Somewhat likely

Very likely

If you are not likely to stop teaching within the next five years, how long would you expect to stay in the classroom?

- 5-10 years
- 10-20 years
- My entire career

What do you plan to do next year? (Please select only one.)

- Teach at the same school
- Teach in another school in the same district
- Teach in another district in Washington
- Teach in another state
- Leave teaching to work in an education-related field
- Leave teaching to work in another field
- Leave teaching for child-rearing or other personal reasons
- Other (please describe) _____

If you expect to stay in teaching, do you aspire to engage in teacher leadership (e.g., as a coach, mentor, professional development specialist) at some point in your career?

Definitely not Probably not Maybe Probably Definitely

If you expect to stay in teaching, do you aspire to move into administration?

Definitely not Probably not Maybe Probably Definitely

If you are likely to leave the teaching profession in the next five years, what are the main reasons?

--

MORE ABOUT YOU

What is the subject area of your primary teaching assignment? (Please select only one.)

- Pre-kindergarten or kindergarten
- Elementary Education (multiple subjects)
- Mathematics, computer science
- Science (life, earth, physical)
- English literature, language arts
- Reading
- ESL, bilingual education, newcomer education
- Social studies, history, social studies
- World languages (Spanish, French, Japanese, etc.)
- Dance, art, music, drama
- Health, fitness, physical education
- Business, vocation, and technical education
- Special education (early childhood, elementary, secondary, gifted)
- Other (please specify) _____

New teacher experiences and supports: Year Two NTA report

What grade(s) are you teaching? (*Check all that apply.*)

Primary (K-2)
Upper elementary (grades 3-5)
Middle school (grades 6-8)
High school (grades 9-12)

What is your gender?

Female Male

What is your race/ethnicity? (*Check all that apply.*)

African American
Asian-American
Hispanic
Native American
White
Other (please specify) _____

Are you aware that your district is participating in the New Teacher Alliance, sponsored by the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession (CSTP), to improve support for new teachers?

Yes No

What other information would you like to share about your experience as a new teacher or about new teacher support?

Thank you. If you would like to be included in the drawing for the \$100 Amazon.com gift certificates, please provide your name and email address. This information will not be used for any other purpose.

Name:

Email:

Retype email:

Submit