

New Teacher Initiatives Teacher Support and Retention Program: 2004-2005

REIS05-177-04

At a Glance

New Teacher Initiatives' goal is to design and implement high-quality teacher preparation, support, and retention programs. *New Teacher Initiatives* includes: New Teacher Support and Development (NTSD), and Alternative Certification (AC).

Program Additions

The Alternative Certification Department added two certification programs to meet the district's need for bilingual school counselors and librarians. Both programs span two years and include university coursework, job shadowing, and certification training. Campus placement begins in the second year of the internship.

The AC Department developed the Academic English Institute for non-native English-speaking interns. The nine-course institute covered topics designed to improve the interns' delivery of classroom instruction.

New Teacher Support and Development collaborated with the Human Resource Services Department to implement a "fast-track" process for hiring teachers who completed their student teaching with the district. The program sought to entice highly qualified candidates who had exposure to district curricula and procedures before applying to the district.

Mentoring Effectiveness

The ratio of trained, qualified mentors to beginning teachers improved to one mentor for every one new teacher, well exceeding the state-recommended ratio of one mentor for every two new teachers. At several campuses, the number of mentors exceeded the number of new teachers, allowing the campuses to accommodate late new hires.

Beginning teachers expressed general approval of campus mentors, although better matching by subject area and grade level continued to be a major concern for many. Matching by grade level or subject area remained constant over three years, with 60% matching by grade level and 55% by subject area.

Beginning teachers strongly desired more guidance regarding paperwork and procedures. Several teachers advocated written guidelines detailing the frequency and applicability of the forms, while others desired personal guidance from mentors and campus administrators.

Alternative Certification interns were not able to meet with their mentors for the full half-days required by the AC Department. Meetings typically lasted one hour. Interns desired more opportunities to observe experienced teachers in the classroom, and more assistance with lesson planning and classroom management.

DISD AC interns strongly approved of the quality of the training and support provided by their AC specialists. Over 90% of interns felt that the specialists provided sufficient certification training. Interns consistently described specialists as integral to their success in the program.

Campus administrators, mentors, and beginning teachers strongly approved of the quality of intensive assistance provided by instructional coaches. Instructional coaches received 96% positive response from campuses.

Classroom Effectiveness Indices (CEI) of beginning teachers who received intensive mentoring from instructional coaches in 2003-2004 significantly improved from those who received assistance in 2002-2003.

Intensively assisted teachers' CEI scores were statistically no different from beginning teachers overall. In 2002-2003, teachers who received instructional coach assistance scored significantly lower than all other beginning teachers did. Timing of service also changed; 70% of assistance occurred in the fall, compared with only 36% in 2002-2003. Last year, the CEI scores of teachers assisted in the spring semester were statistically lower than those assisted in the fall, suggesting that early assistance helped improve classroom performance.

Effectiveness of DISD Alternative Certification Teacher Interns

Analysis of 2003-2004 CEI data produced no statistically significant difference between DISD AC interns and traditionally certified beginning teachers by subject area, grade level, or overall. These findings contrast with 2002-2003 data, which found significantly lower scores for DISD AC interns overall, and in reading. DISD AC interns who taught science continued to score above the district mean for all teachers.

Principals' satisfaction rating of the customer service provided by the AC Department declined slightly from 2003-2004, from 85% to 82%. Expressed dissatisfaction, however, also declined, from 5% to 3%. Principals strongly approved of the AC specialists' professionalism and treatment of interns.

Principals' satisfaction with DISD AC interns' classroom preparedness increased, from 67% to 71%. Interns' parent communication skills and English language skills rated highest.

Role of the School Environment in Retaining Beginning Teachers

One-to-one interaction with principals significantly influenced beginning teachers' intended retention. Increased interaction significantly increased the likelihood that teachers would remain teaching with the district for an extended period. Significant differences emerged between rare- to- no interaction, and daily interaction with principals.

Beginning teachers' impression of departmental meetings also statistically influenced intended retention. Significant differences arose between teachers who saw meetings as procedural, versus meetings viewed as learning opportunities.

Having a source of advice also statistically affected intended retention. Differences emerged between teachers who cited a trusted source of advice compared with teachers who felt isolated.

Intended tenure significantly increased from last year, especially among those who intended to remain with the district for at least 10 years. Most respondents intended to move into a school administrative position after leaving the classroom.

Retainable attrition* of beginning teachers continued to decline in 2004-2005, as shown in Figure 1. Former student teachers and DISD AC interns had the lowest rates of retainable attrition among beginning teachers.

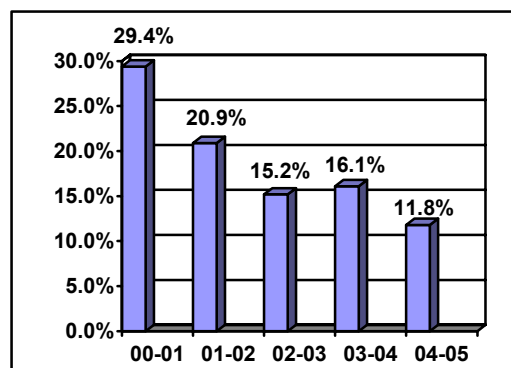


Figure 1. Retainable Attrition of Beginning Teachers, 2000-2005

Retainable attrition tended to decrease, as classroom performance increased. Analysis of 2003-2004 attrition by CEI scores demonstrated that most attrition occurred among teachers who scored below the DISD mean. Conversely, no retainable attrition occurred among beginning teachers who had a CEI score of 70 or higher.

* Not all teachers are retainable. "Retainable" refers to attrition the district influences, such as teachers who leave to teach in another school district.

