

# Professional Preparation and Support Programs: 2005-2006

EA06-177-04

## At a Glance

**P**rofessional Preparation and Support's goal is to design and implement high-quality teacher preparation, support, and retention programs. *Professional Preparation and Support* includes: New Teacher Support and Development (NTSD), and Alternative Certification (AC). The Professional Preparation and Support Department was formerly called New Teacher Initiatives.

### Program Additions

The Alternative Certification Department introduced the Alternative Certification Teacher Academy (ACTA) to provide the district with a pool of highly qualified teacher candidates. Academy participants attended the same training that AC teacher interns experienced. The department held four academies in 2005-2006. Over 90% of ACTA participants were eventually placed in classrooms.

The first cohort of Alternative Certification School Counselor Interns was placed as counselors of record at 14 campuses, 10 of which were elementary. AC counselor interns were typically the only bilingual counselors on staff at these campuses.

New Teacher Support and Development created a week-long series of seminars called *Ready, Set, Prep* for teachers with one-to-three years of teaching experience. The department created the workshops based upon the highest need areas of teacher development and needs expressed by teachers served through the T<sup>3</sup>: Teachers Teaching Teachers Program. A substantial portion of teachers invited to attend were late hires who had missed New Teacher Orientation as beginning teachers.

### Effectiveness of DISD AC Teacher Interns

Analysis of 2004-2005 CEI data produced no statistically significant difference between DISD AC interns and traditionally certified beginning teachers by subject area or overall. These findings are consistent with 2003-2004 data. Table 1 compares CEIs of DISD AC interns and beginning teachers hired in the same school year.

Table 1

Comparison of 2004-2005 Mean CEIs for DISD AC Interns and Traditionally Certified, Beginning Teachers

Certification Type	Over-all	Reading	Math	Science
DISD AC	47.64	48.29	46.66	48.07
Traditional	46.67	47.09	47.21	45.17

### Mentoring Effectiveness

The ratio of trained, qualified mentors to beginning teachers declined to 1:1.42, compared to a one-to-one ratio in 2004-2005. The ratio still exceeded the state-recommended ratio of one mentor for every two new teachers.

Beginning teachers reported decreased satisfaction with their mentors. Higher percentages of teachers reported that no one provided them with assistance in multiple areas, compared with 2004-2005. Experienced "buddy" teachers often assumed mentoring duties where assigned mentors failed to cover. Teachers advocated campuses engage in evaluation of mentors to ensure nurturing, qualified mentors.

Beginning teachers advocated early exposure to what paperwork would be required of them, what forms would likely be of interest to them, and the significance of

the forms outlined. Teachers reported inconsistency in the information they received, and often experienced campus staff unwillingness to assist them in learning about paperwork and procedures.

Campus administrators, mentors, and beginning teachers strongly approved of the quality of intensive assistance provided by T<sup>3</sup>: Teachers Teaching Teachers coaches. T<sup>3</sup> coaches received 99% positive response from campuses.

The T<sup>3</sup> Program served 335 teachers at 112 campuses in 2005-2006. Almost 90% of requests for assistance occurred in the fall. Over 75% of all teachers requested assistance in Learner-Centered Instruction.

Teachers served by T<sup>3</sup> coaches in the fall of 2004 generated slightly higher CEIs than beginning teachers who did not receive services. This is consistent with 2003-2004 CEI data.

### Role of the School Environment in Retaining Beginning Teachers

Three factors emerged as influencing intended tenure: one-to-one visits with the principal, how departmental meetings were viewed, and whether the beginning teacher felt there was someone who would provide him or her with good advice. The importance of support to retention was reinforced over all four years of surveying. While the three support factors individually accounted for small, significant predictors of intended retention, together they accounted for a significant, larger effect over time.

Positive and frequent principal interaction invariably contributed to a new teacher's perception of a supportive campus environment. The more frequently principals interacted with beginning teachers, the more likely these teachers were to report their intentions to remain with the district.

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.

Most teachers intended to teach with the district for a long period. Almost 50% intended to stay for over 10 years. Most teachers surveyed intended to move into a school administrative position after leaving the classroom.

Retainable attrition\* of beginning teachers rose in 2005-2006, as shown in Figure 1. The attrition rate remained below the levels which occurred prior to the implementation of the new teacher support and retention programs in 2002-2003.

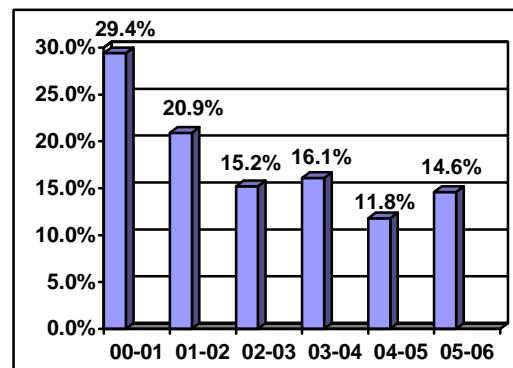


Figure 1. Retainable Attrition of Beginning Teachers, 2000-2006

Former student teachers continued to have lower attrition rates than beginning teachers overall, even longitudinally. Since spring of 2003, the district has retained 87% of student teachers hired. The district has hired 198 student teachers since spring 2003. All of the bilingual student teachers hired by the district who received paid teaching assistantships (TA) during their student teaching have retained with the district. The Student Teacher Program first introduced paid TA positions for bilingual student teachers in fall 2003.

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