



NATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE CENTER  
FOR TEACHER QUALITY

# Lessons Learned? Heeding the Voices of First-Year Teachers in Context

Jane G. Coggshall, Ph.D., Research Associate  
Amy Jackson, Deputy Director  
Paul Kimmelman, Ed.D., Senior Advisor

March 27, 2008

Presented at the Annual Meeting of the  
American Educational Research Association, New York City

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# National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality: Goals

1. Promote successful implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) teacher quality requirements by disseminating critically reviewed research, strategies, practices, and tools.
2. Ensure a highly qualified teacher workforce by developing needs-based solutions.
3. Broaden the understanding and use of successful models and practices relating to teacher quality.
4. Galvanize public and policymaker support to meet NCLB demands related to teacher quality.

# The Survey of First-Year Teachers

- General Sample,  $n = 865$ 
  - Nationally representative sample,  $n = 641$
  - Alternative pathway sample,  $n = 224$ , from Teach for America, The New Teacher Project in Baltimore, and Troops to Teachers
- Characteristics of General Sample (weighted)
  - Median age: 25 (mean = 31, mode = 23)
  - 20% male, 80% female
  - 7% Hispanic or Latino, 5% black or African American, 3% Asian, 84% white, 5% other or mixed race
  - 59% elementary, 20% middle, 14% high school

# From the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality and Public Agenda

- *America's Challenge: Effective Teachers for At-Risk Schools and Students*
  - Chapter 6: "Getting Started: A Survey of New Public School Teachers on Their Training and First Months on the Job"
- *Lessons Learned: New Teachers Talk About Their Jobs, Challenges, and Long-Range Plans*
  - Issue No. 1—*They're Not Little Kids Anymore: The Special Challenges of New Teachers in High Schools and Middle Schools*
  - Issue No. 2—*Working Without a Net: How New Teachers From Three Prominent Alternative Route Programs Describe Their First Year on the Job*
- All can be found at [www.tqsource.org/publications.php](http://www.tqsource.org/publications.php)

# Selected Finding: 1

Almost 25 percent of first-year teachers in high-needs schools believed that they would be a classroom teacher for five or fewer years.

# Finding 1: Variously Committed

- 2006 MetLife Survey of the American Teacher (Markow, Moessner, & Horowitz, 2006):
  - 27 percent of new teachers (<5 years) said they were “very” or “fairly” likely to leave.
- National Center for Education Information (Feistritzer & Shankar, 2005):
  - 40 percent of teachers overall said they do “not expect” to be teaching 5 years from now.

# Finding 1: Variously Committed

- DeAngelis and Presley (2007):
  - In Illinois public schools, 27 percent of new teachers leave teaching within the first 5 years.
- Marvel, Lyter, Peltola, Strizek, and Morton (2007):
  - The Teacher Follow-Up Survey found that 9.7 percent of teachers working in high-needs schools left the profession in 2003-04.
  - Meanwhile, 10.3 percent left their school.

# Finding 1: Promising Directions

- Comprehensive new teacher induction
- High-quality preparation
- Effective school leadership
- Appropriate teacher assignment

## Selected Finding: 2

44 percent of new teachers consider themselves to be “very prepared” for their first year of teaching.

## Finding 2: Variously Prepared

- 2005 MetLife Survey of the American Teacher (Markow & Martin, 2005):
  - Among new teachers (<5 years), 64 percent felt “very prepared” to teach the subject matter and 35 percent felt “very prepared” to work with children of varying abilities.
- Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession (Knapp, Elfers, & Plecki, 2006):
  - 52 percent of new teachers (0 to 4 years) felt “very prepared” to teach the official curriculum.
  - 17 percent felt “very prepared” to ready their students for state assessments.

## Finding 2: Promising Directions

- Tightly couple preparation with induction
- New York Comprehensive Center seminar series

## Selected Finding: 3

73 percent of first-year teachers give their principals an “excellent” or “good” rating for instructional leadership.

# Finding 3: Variously Supported

- Marvel et al. (2007):
  - 37 percent of teachers who were moving to a different school in 2003–04 moved because of dissatisfaction with “support from administrators.”

## Finding 3: Variously Supported

Percentage of Teachers Who Rate Their Principals as "Excellent" or "Good"	Total	Not High-Needs	High-Needs
Providing instructional leadership and guidance	73%	75%	68%
Supporting you in handling discipline problems	76%	79%	72%
Providing adequate resources, such as well-equipped classrooms and textbooks	79%	79%	76%

## Finding 3: Promising Directions

- School administration managers (SAMs) in Jefferson County, Kentucky
- TQ Source Tips & Tools from the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality:
  - *Identifying How Highly Effective Leaders Support Teachers*
  - Available online at [www.tqsource.org/strategies/het/HighlyEffectiveLeaders.pdf](http://www.tqsource.org/strategies/het/HighlyEffectiveLeaders.pdf)

## Selected Finding: 4

One third of first-year teachers say they tend to have the “hardest-to-reach” students in their classrooms.

## Finding 4: Various Assigned

- 11 percent of first-year teachers say they are teaching subjects that do not match their certification or area of expertise.
- Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor (2005)
  - Black seventh graders are more than half as likely (54 percent) as white students to have a first-year teacher in mathematics, and 38 percent more likely to have a first-year teacher in English.

# Finding 4: Promising Directions

- Unpacking the Factors That Contribute to the Distribution of Highly Qualified and Experienced Teachers
  - Collaboration between the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, the Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center, REL Mid-Atlantic, and the Delaware Department of Education

# Concluding Discussion

- New teachers: Committed but mobile.
- New connections: Being prepared versus feeling prepared (versus being prepared).
- New leadership: Support me and help me improve, or I'm gone.
- New focus: On the assignment of new teachers.

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**Jane Coggshall, Ph.D.**

**P:** 202-778-4583 > **F:** 202-223-8939

**E-Mail:** jane.coggshall@learningpt.org

**Amy Jackson**

**P:** 202-223-6690 > **F:** 202-223-8939

**E-Mail:** amy.jackson@learningpt.org

**Paul Kimmelman, Ed.D.**

**P:** 630-649-6530 > **F:** 630-649-6500

**E-Mail:** paul.kimmelman@learningpt.org

1100 17th Street NW, Suite 500

Washington, DC 20036-4632

877-322-8700 > [www.ncctq.org](http://www.ncctq.org)