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# America's Challenge: Effective Teachers for At-Risk Schools and Students

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# CHAPTER 6



*Getting Started: A Survey of New  
Public School Teachers on Their Training  
and First Months on the Job*



## Chapter 6

### Getting Started: A Survey of New Public School Teachers on Their Training and First Months on the Job

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#### Introduction

To learn more about teacher preparation, recruitment, and retention and to shed light on the nature and quality of current teacher education and induction practices, Public Agenda completed a random sample survey of 641 public school teachers during their first year in the classroom in spring 2007. Commissioned by the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (NCCTQ), this nationally representative survey aimed to enhance understanding of the aspirations and experiences of new teachers, including those teaching in at-risk schools. In this chapter, Public Agenda reports on a portion of the findings as they relate to the challenge of providing effective teachers for at-risk schools and students.

NCCTQ and Public Agenda developed the research design for this project working in close consultation, and teams from both organizations cooperated to generate the lines of inquiry. The survey covered a wide variety of topics including the following: the new teachers' motivation for entering the profession; subject areas covered during training; experiences as student teachers; relationships with cooperating teachers; experiences as beginning teachers; degree of support and counsel from colleagues; degree of support from administration; expectations about their future in the profession; and reactions to different ideas about ways to improve teacher quality.

Public Agenda wrote the survey questionnaire and analyzed the results. A brief description of

the survey methodology is included at the end of this chapter, and a more complete description, including notes on questionnaire design, is available on the NCCTQ website ([www.ncctq.org](http://www.ncctq.org)). Public Agenda is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research and engagement organization that has conducted dozens of opinion studies on public education, including surveys of teachers, parents, students, principals, and superintendents. Additional information about Public Agenda and its other work in education can be found online (see [www.publicagenda.org](http://www.publicagenda.org)).

#### The Benefit of Hindsight

NCCTQ and Public Agenda focused the research on first-year teachers because their experiences and insights may be especially revealing for those working to enhance teacher preparation and training. Since the subjects were roughly six months into their first teaching jobs, their preservice preparation was still fresh in their minds. Thus, detailed questions about their coursework and student teaching experiences would elicit crisp recollections. At the same time, the new teachers also had the perspective of assuming the responsibilities of full-time public school teachers. Respondents were able to reflect on their experiences—both preservice and on the job—and comment on the usefulness and applicability of their preparation.

This survey offers a detailed look at the views, judgments, and concerns of new teachers nationwide and also allows the comparison of the experiences of new teachers in somewhat different circumstances. In this report, for example, we compare the views of new teachers in elementary schools versus middle and high schools and those in high-needs schools versus other schools.

## Respondents' Training

The vast majority (96 percent) of the new teachers surveyed entered the profession through college- or university-based schools of education—most had a bachelor's degree in education (70 percent); 11 percent took a fifth year to get a degree in education; and 15 percent had a master's degree in education. The remaining 4 percent reported that they had completed an alternative certification program.

The study also included a special oversample of new teachers entering the profession through three prominent alternative certification programs: (1) Teach for America, (2) Troops to Teachers, and (3) The New Teachers Project. Results from this additional oversample are not included in this initial analysis. Public Agenda and NCCTQ plan to release a comparison of the views of new alternative certification teachers versus those from college- and university-based education programs later this year.

In the following pages, a series of key findings are presented, accompanied by figures detailing the most significant results. In future work, NCCTQ intends to provide context for these important findings from the research literature. The methodology section that follows the report describes the process used to design and field the study. In addition to the full methodology, complete questionnaire results are available online (see [www.publicagenda.org](http://www.publicagenda.org) and [www.ncctq.org](http://www.ncctq.org)).

### Finding 1: Inspired and Confident

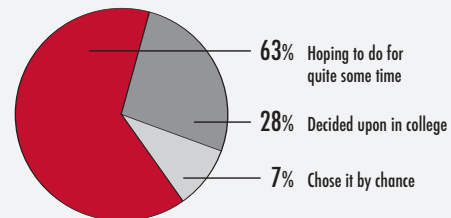
First-year teachers in public schools nationwide say they are dedicated to their profession and excited by their initial experiences. Most say, at least during their first year in the classroom, that they see teaching as a career rather than a short-term endeavor. Most of those surveyed say they planned to be teachers even before they went to college (see Figure 1). Their primary motivations for entering the profession are the joys of communicating subjects they love; the desire to help underprivileged children; and, to

a lesser extent, the inspiration they received from their own teachers. Practical attractions, such as the idea of high job security and summers off, are of much less interest to them (see Figure 2). Most new teachers say they are happy with their new profession and, at this point at least, plan to stay in it for a number of years (see Figure 3). Large majorities are convinced that all students can learn if inspired by good teachers, and they are confident of their own ability to teach. Most say that their students are learning and that, even though they are new teachers, they compare favorably with other teachers in their schools (see Figure 4). When it comes to teaching specific subjects, most new teachers in middle and high schools say they feel confident in their knowledge of their own subject area, and, indeed, most have majored or minored in their subject in college (see Figure 5).

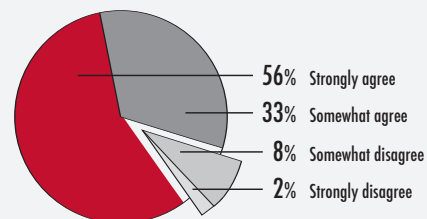
Figure 1

**Most new public school teachers say they have been planning to be teachers for quite some time and that it's exactly what they want to be doing.**

Would you say that you ended up choosing your current profession by chance, was it something you decided upon in college, or was it something you had been hoping to do for quite some time?



Do you agree that teaching is exactly what you wanted—there's nothing you would rather be doing?



Note: In all graphs, results may not total 100% due to rounding.

Figure 2

**Teachers' primary motivations for entering the profession are the satisfactions of teaching subjects they love and helping underprivileged kids.**

How important was each of the following factors to your decision to go into teaching? Would you say that this was one of the most important factors, a major factor, a minor factor, or not a factor at all?

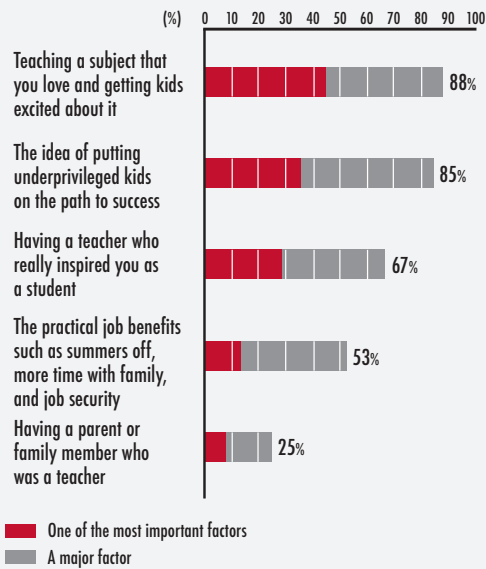
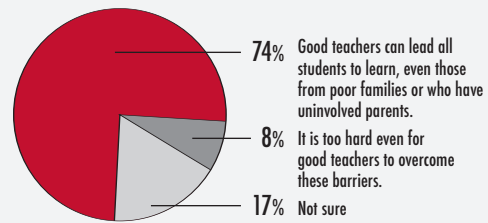


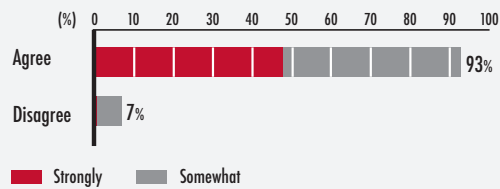
Figure 4

**New teachers are confident in their own abilities.**

Which comes closer to your view?



Do you agree that most days you feel really confident that your students are learning and responding to your teaching?



Which of the following two statements comes closer to your own view?

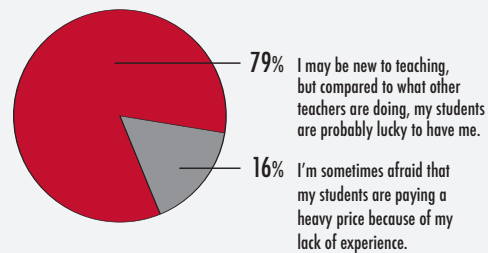
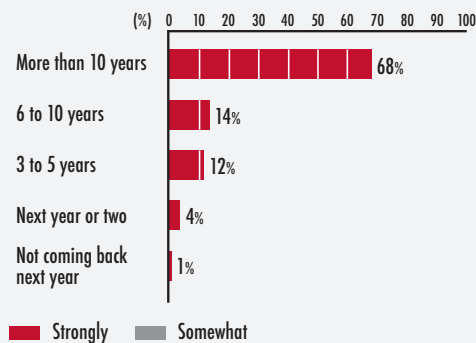


Figure 3

**Most new teachers say they plan to stay in the field for at least a decade.**

What is your best estimate for how many years you think you'll be a classroom teacher?



Do you think of teaching as a lifelong career choice, do you think you'll probably leave the classroom for another job in education, or will you change fields altogether?

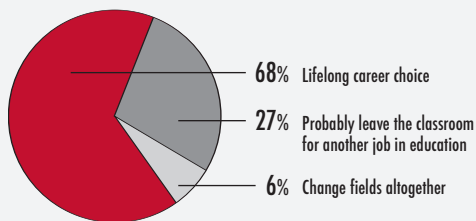
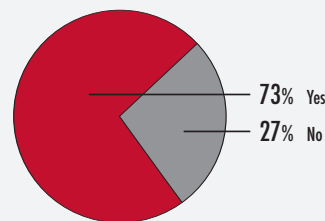


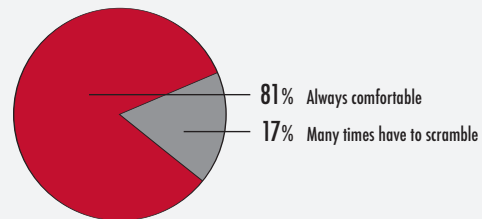
Figure 5

**Most new teachers feel comfortable teaching their subject area.**

In college, did you major or minor in the subject area in which you are teaching or not?



Do you feel that you are almost always comfortable with your knowledge of the subject area you are teaching, or are there too many times when you have to scramble to learn it yourself before you have to teach it?



## Finding 2: But There Are Drawbacks to Teaching, Too

Despite their generally positive orientation, new public school teachers do have concerns. They see teaching as a demanding job and, even in their first years, understand the threat of burnout (see Figure 6). There also are some specific features of teaching that they identify as “major” drawbacks, headed by their concerns about testing and not having enough freedom to be creative in their teaching (see Figure 7). The doubts about testing that emerge here among new teachers are not unexpected and in fact echo findings from other surveys of teachers overall. For example, recent surveys have shown that more than 8 in 10 public school teachers say that there is too much emphasis on testing, and 79 percent say that teachers will end up teaching to the test instead of saying that real learning is taking place (Johnson & Duffett, 2003, p. 13; see also [www.publicagenda.org/specials/wherewearnow/wherewearnow.cfm](http://www.publicagenda.org/specials/wherewearnow/wherewearnow.cfm)).

Unmotivated students and discipline problems fall right behind testing and freedom to be creative in their teaching as frequent areas of concern. (Salary is a more complex issue, which is discussed in the next section.) Other possible drawbacks, such as lack of rewards for superior performance, lack of support from administrators, low prestige, and threats of physical danger, are much less frequently mentioned as major problems.

Figure 6

**Most new teachers see the profession as very demanding with the potential for burnout.**

Do you agree or disagree that teaching is so demanding, it's a wonder that more people don't burn out?

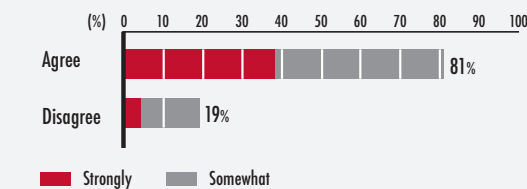
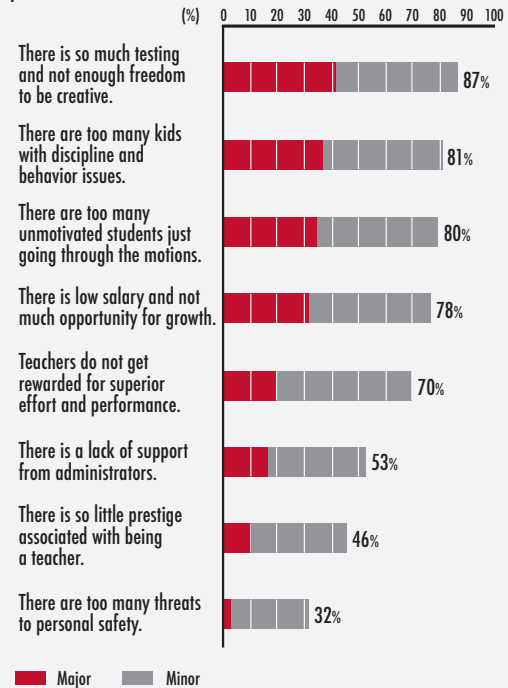


Figure 7

**Too much testing and too little freedom to be creative top the list of major drawbacks.**

Based on your personal experience, please tell us whether each of the following is a major drawback, a minor drawback, or not a drawback for you:



## Finding 3: How Important Is Salary?

There is a broad discussion among policymakers and researchers about the role of teacher pay in recruitment and retention and what forms of teacher pay are most likely to contribute to broader teacher effectiveness. To be sure, new teachers do express some concerns about salary and lack of opportunity for growth, with a majority (77 percent) seeing it as either a major or minor drawback of the profession (see Figure 8). Only one third of new teachers, however, consider salary and lack of opportunities for growth as major drawbacks of their profession, and this concern ranks well below issues such as testing, creative freedom in their teaching, classroom discipline problems, and unmotivated students. In fact, more than two thirds of new teachers say it is possible for a teacher to make a decent living (see Figure 9),

and new teachers overwhelmingly would choose better working conditions over higher salaries (see Figure 10). Again, the findings among first-year teachers reported here echo similar results from new teachers in other survey research. In a study by Farkas, Johnson, and Duffett (2003), a plurality of teachers said that the best way to improve quality of teaching is to improve working conditions as opposed to financially rewarding outstanding teachers or increasing pay for teachers overall. Although pay-for-performance approaches are prominent parts of the national discussion on improving teacher quality and have received wide news coverage (see Dillon, 2007), the approach is not a high priority for the new teachers surveyed. One in five new teachers say that the fact that teachers do not get rewarded for superior effort and performance is a major drawback of the profession, and fewer than one in six thought that tying teachers' salary increases to their principals' and colleagues' assessments (15 percent) or tying teacher rewards and sanctions to their students' performance (13 percent) would be "very effective" ways to improve teacher quality overall (see Figure 11). Again, this echoes findings from other surveys of new teachers. In 2000, only 12 percent of teachers with experience of five years or less said that tying teacher rewards or sanctions to student performance would be a very effective way to improve teacher quality (Farkas, Johnson, & Foleno, 2000, p. 100).

Figure 8

Only one third of new teachers see low salary and little opportunity for growth as a major drawback of the profession.

Do you believe that the low salary and relative lack of opportunity for growth are drawbacks to teaching?

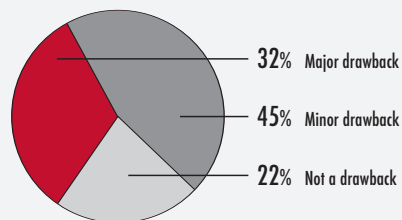


Figure 9

More than two thirds of new teachers believe teachers can make a reasonable living.

Thinking about the profession of teaching, do you think that the nature of the job means teachers are never well paid, or do you think it is very possible for a teacher to make a reasonable living?

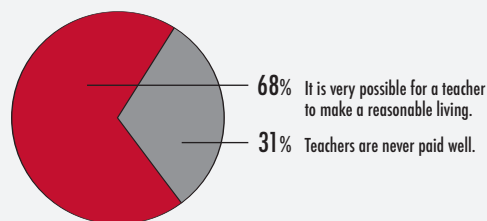


Figure 10

Very large majorities say they would choose schools with better student behavior and parental and administrative support over schools with a significantly higher salary.

Given a choice between two schools in otherwise identical districts, which would you prefer to work in?

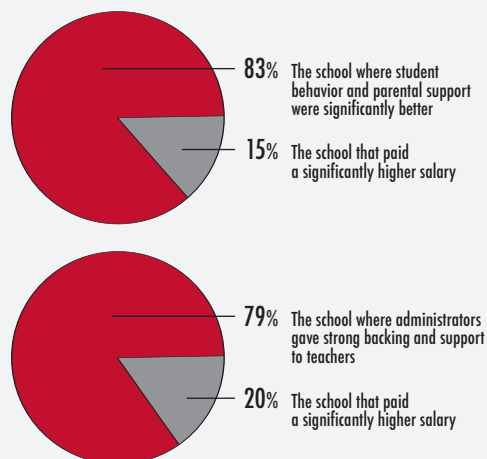
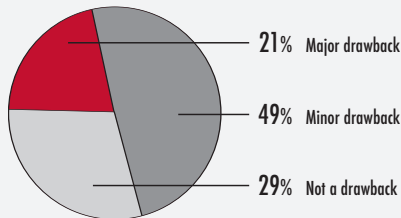


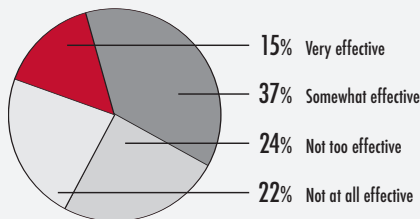
Figure 11

**Very few new teachers see a lack of merit pay as a major drawback to teaching, and even fewer think it would be "very effective" at improving teacher quality.**

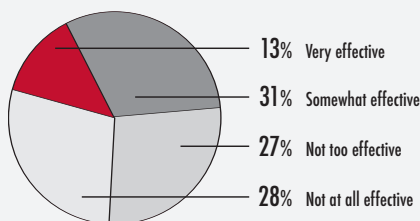
Is it a drawback to teaching that teachers do not get rewarded for superior effort and performance?



Would tying teachers' salary increases to their principals' and colleagues' assessments be effective at improving teacher quality?



Would tying teachers' rewards and sanctions to their students' performance be effective at improving teacher quality?



### Finding 4: Feeling Well Prepared for Teaching but Challenged by Diverse Classrooms

Overall, these new teachers speak positively about their preparation for teaching. For the majority of those interviewed, the most positive part of new teachers' training was their work as student teachers. Most say they received adequate time in student teaching (see Figure 12), and most give high marks to their cooperating teachers. Most report that their cooperating teachers were positive role models who mentored them in useful skills, especially classroom management (see Figure 13). They also value their coursework. According to the survey, courses covered a wide range of subjects from children's emotional and

psychological development and the history and philosophy of education to practical topics such as classroom management (see Figure 14). Most of the material is perceived as helpful, but several possible problem areas emerged.

One potential problem involves the challenges of teaching in an ethnically diverse classroom.

Figure 12

**A strong majority of new teachers say they spent sufficient time working with a teacher in a classroom during training.**

As part of your teacher preparation, how much time did you spend working with an actual public school teacher in a classroom environment?

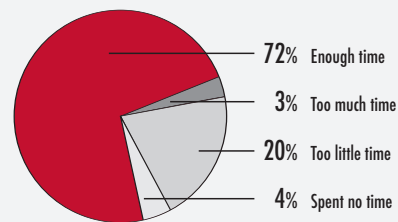
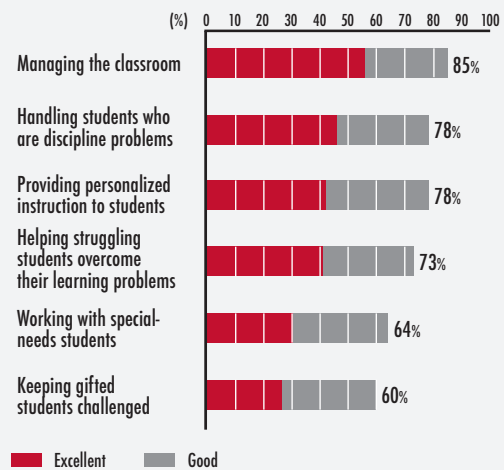


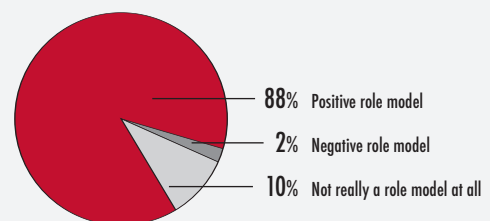
Figure 13

**Cooperating teachers get high marks for teaching useful skills and for being a positive role model.**

How would you describe the mentoring and feedback you received from your cooperating teacher (who you spent the most time with) when it came to each of the following?

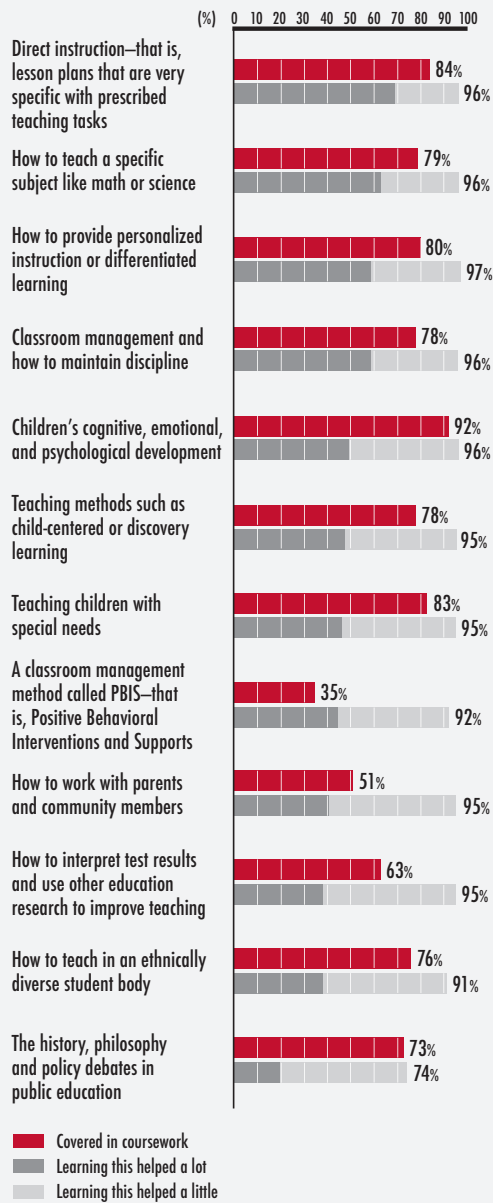


Overall, would you say your cooperating teacher was a...



Although most new teachers say they received training in this area (with 76 percent saying that this was covered in their classroom preparation), far fewer (38 percent) say their training in this area was very effective (see Figure 15). No other area showed as big a gap between prevalence in training and perceived usefulness later.

**Figure 14**  
**New teachers have been exposed to a wide range of subjects in their preservice courses, most of which they consider useful.**

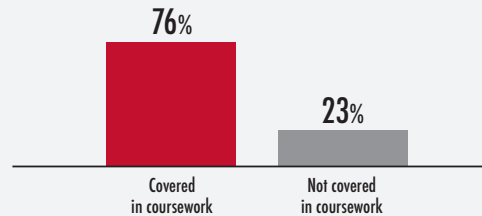


Note: Only respondents who indicated they had covered an item in their coursework were asked whether their training on that subject was helpful in the classroom.

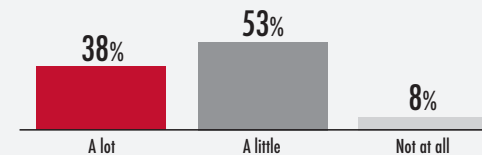
Another potential problem area for new teachers is dealing with parents. As seen above, parental support is a point of concern. Most new teachers say they would choose a school with better student behavior and parental support over a school with a higher salary, so relations with parents are clearly on new teachers' minds; however, slightly more than half say that this topic had been covered in their training. The new teachers also are divided on whether their education focused too much on theory and not enough on practice, with a sizeable minority seeing the training as overly theoretical (see Figure 16).

**Figure 15**  
**Most new teachers do not feel adequately prepared for the challenges of teaching in diverse classrooms, even though their training covered it.**

Did your training cover how to teach in an ethnically diverse student body?



Did your training in how to teach in an ethnically diverse student body help you in the classroom?\*



\* Only respondents who indicated they had covered an item in their coursework were asked whether their training on that subject was helpful in the classroom.

**Figure 16**  
**While half say their training struck the right balance between theory and practical training, nearly as many (45 percent) complain of too much emphasis on theory.**

Do you feel that your teacher training ...

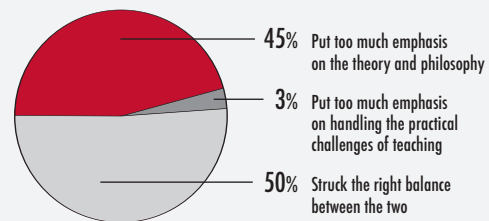
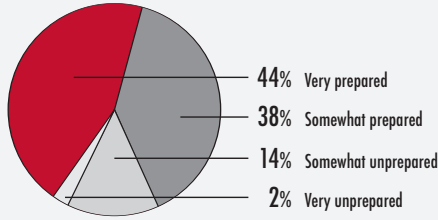


Figure 17

More than 4 in 10 new teachers consider themselves “very prepared” for their first year of teaching.

Overall, looking back, would you say you were prepared or unprepared for this first year of teaching?



Overall, the new teachers seem to believe that their training provided them with a solid foundation, with a plurality (44 percent) saying that they felt “very prepared” for their first year of teaching, and almost as many saying that they were “somewhat prepared” (see Figure 17).

### Finding 5: Getting Started in a Real Classroom

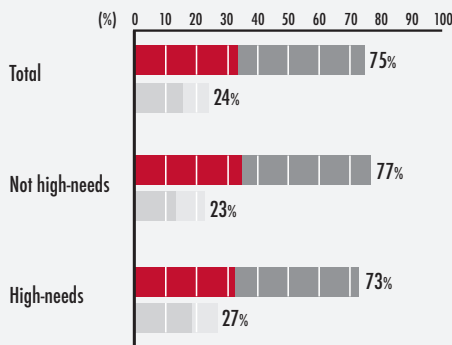
Generally speaking, the new teachers surveyed report good experiences in their first months in the classroom and give high marks to their fellow professionals. Most say colleagues and mentors are helpful in areas such as handling disruptive students, communicating with parents, and developing lesson plans (see Figure 18). Most also give school

Figure 18

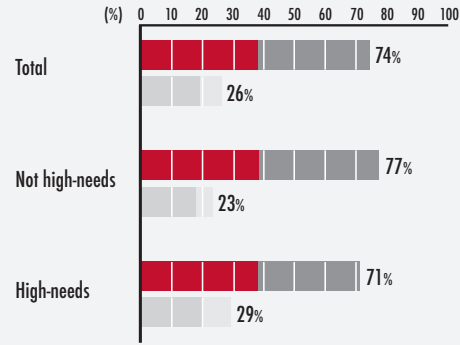
Most new teachers, even those in high-needs schools, report that they get good support from colleagues and mentors.

Now that you are in the classroom, how would you rate the support you feel you are getting from other teachers or mentors in the following areas?

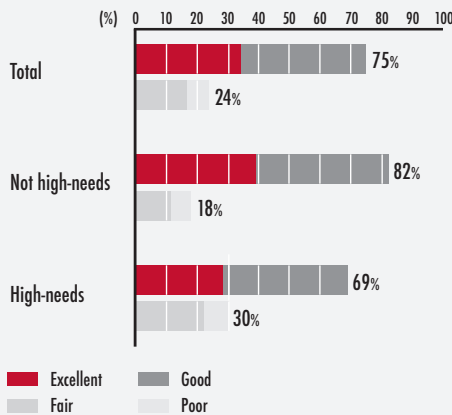
Creating strong lesson plans and teaching techniques:



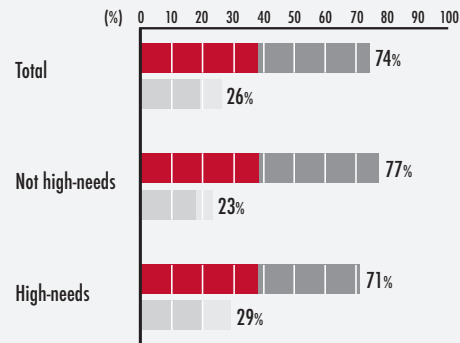
Handling students who are disruptive or unmotivated:



Working and communicating with parents:



Working with special-needs students:



Note the differences between the responses of teachers in high-needs schools versus those who are not are not statistically significant.

administrations good ratings for supporting teachers and providing adequate resources (see Figure 19). In addition, most do not believe that they have been assigned the hardest to reach students while more senior colleagues have classes that were easier and more satisfying to teach (see Figure 20). New teachers, however, in high-needs schools (i.e., those in which teachers report 51 percent or more of enrolled students are eligible for the federal free or reduced-price lunch program) give their school administrators and colleagues less glowing reviews and are

significantly more likely to report that they have been assigned to teach the hardest to reach students.

### Finding 6: New High School Teachers Are Significantly Less Positive About Their Jobs

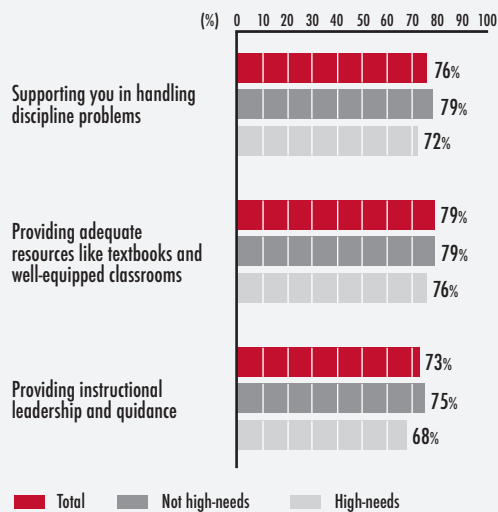
Although most new teachers are upbeat and optimistic about teaching, high school teachers are somewhat less positive on a number of dimensions. New high school teachers are less likely to be satisfied with teaching (see Figure 21), less likely to believe that all students can learn (see Figures 22 and 23), and more critical of their school administrators (see Figure 24). New high school teachers also are more likely to think that their training put too much emphasis on theories of learning as opposed to more practical classroom issues, and they are less likely to say that the training they received on classroom management and discipline has proven to be helpful (see Figures 25 and 26).

Public Agenda studies of teachers overall suggest strong concerns about social problems and discipline at the high school level. Nearly 9 in 10 high school teachers (88 percent) felt that the most pressing problems facing high schools come from “social problems and kids who misbehave” rather than academic issues (Johnson, Arumi, Ott, & Remaley, 2006, p. 4). In another study, fewer than one in five high school teachers (18 percent) reported that their students were civil and respectful to one another (Johnson, Duffet, Farkas, & Collins, 2002, p. 39). More than half (57 percent) also reported that their schools had serious problems with drug and alcohol abuse (p. 42).

Figure 19

Most also give administrators good marks for supporting them on discipline and providing good resources and instructional guidance.

Percent who give the administration at their schools an “excellent” or “good” rating when it comes to the following:



Note: These differences are not statistically significant.

Figure 20

Although most new teachers say that they had not been assigned to teach the hardest to reach students, 4 in 10 of those in high-needs schools say this is the case for them.

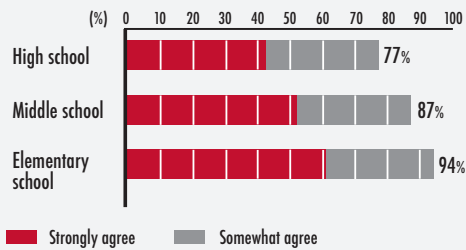
For you, as a first-year teacher, do you tend to have the hardest to reach students, or is this not the case for you in your school?

	Total	Teachers in non-high-needs schools	Teachers in high-needs schools
Tend to have the hardest to reach	33%	25%	42%
Not the case	65%	74%	56%

Figure 21

**High school teachers are less likely to be satisfied with a teaching career.**

Do you agree that teaching is exactly what you wanted—there is nothing you would rather be doing?



Percent who think of teaching as a lifelong career choice:

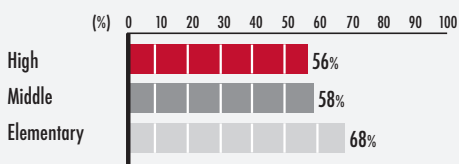


Figure 23

**High school teachers are much more likely to complain about unmotivated students.**

Is it a drawback to teaching that too many unmotivated students are just going through the motions?

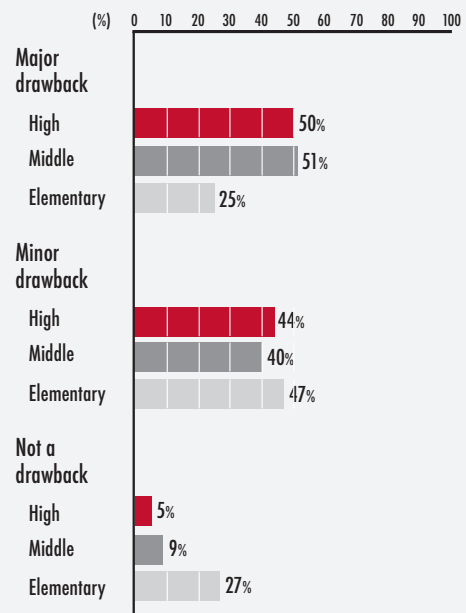
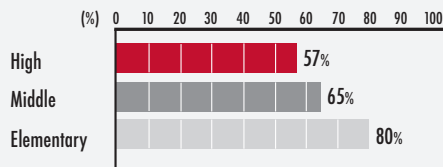


Figure 22

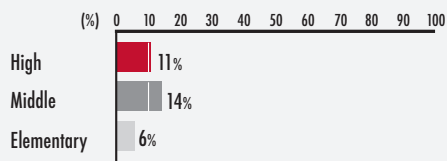
**High school teachers are less likely to think that good teachers can help all students learn.**

Which comes closer to your view?

Good teachers can lead all students to learn, even those from poor families or who have uninvolved parents.



It is hard even for good teachers to overcome these barriers.



Not sure

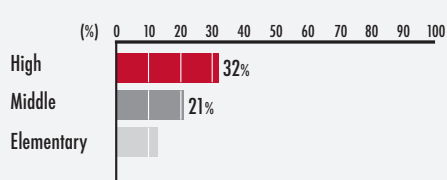
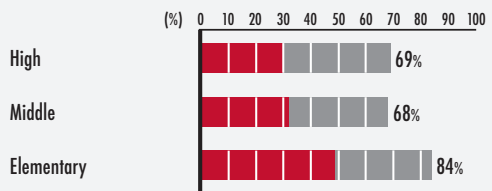


Figure 24

**High school teachers are more critical of school administrators.**

How would you rate the administration at your school when it comes to the following?

Providing adequate resources like textbooks and well-equipped classrooms:



Providing instructional leadership and guidance:

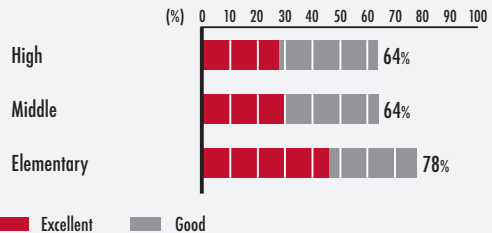


Figure 25

### High school teachers also are more likely to say their preparation focused too much on education theory.

Do you feel that your teacher training put too much emphasis on the theory and philosophy of education? Did it...

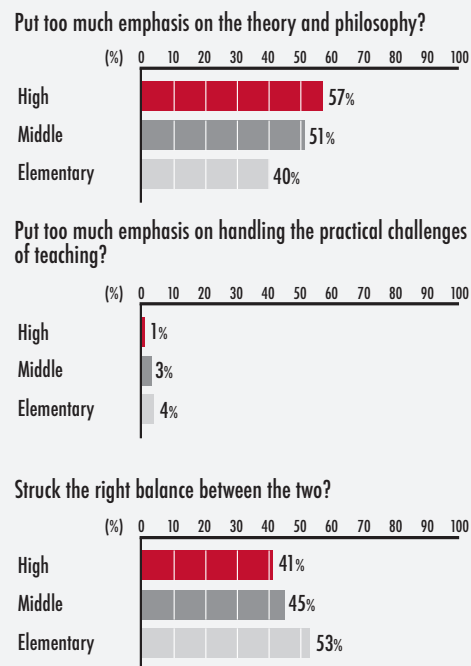
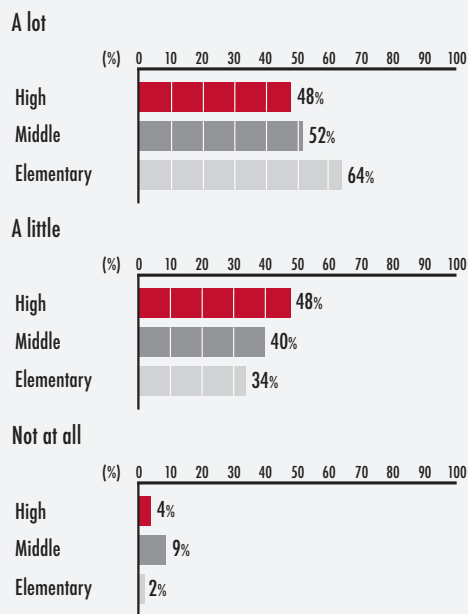


Figure 26

### They are less likely to feel that their training in classroom management and discipline management is helpful in the classroom.

Please tell me whether what you learned about classroom management and maintaining discipline helped you in your classroom experience a lot, a little, or not at all.



## Finding 7: How Would They Improve the Profession?

In addition to covering their training and early experiences on the job, the survey also queried the first-year teachers on a range of ideas for improving the profession overall. Two items top their list of recommended improvements: (1) reducing class sizes and (2) giving teachers better preparation to individualize teaching in a diverse classroom (see Figure 27).

Even teachers with more experience rank reducing class size as their top priority for improving education. In Farkas et al. (2003), all teachers rated reducing class size as more important than increasing pay for teachers.

The most common explanation for the desire for smaller classes is that it allows for more

personalized instruction (see Figure 28). Part of the need for individual instruction may be driven by the diversity of the experiences and needs that children bring to their classrooms. Others strategies for enhancing teacher quality, such as eliminating tenure, tying pay to performance, or changing certification practices, draw significantly lower levels of interest as ways to improve the profession overall.

As noted above, most new teachers (76 percent) report that teaching in a diverse classroom had been covered in their coursework, but far fewer (38 percent) say that the training has been very useful on the job.

Figure 27

Smaller classes and better preparation for diversity top the list of solutions to improve the teaching profession, with ideas such as pay for performance and alternative certification at a much lower level.

How effective do you think each of the following proposals would be in terms of improving teacher quality?

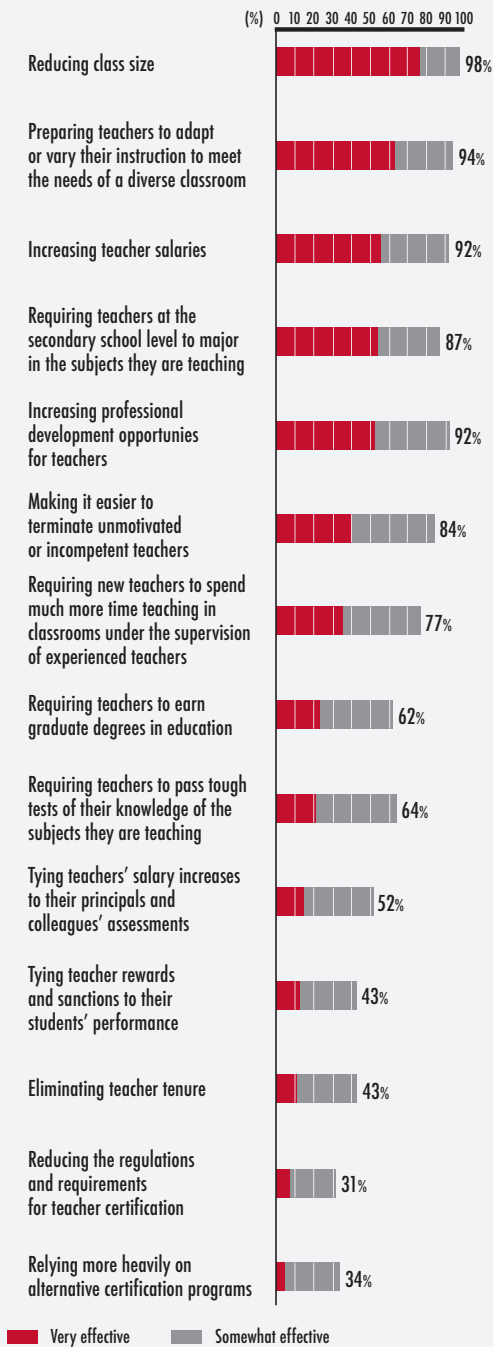
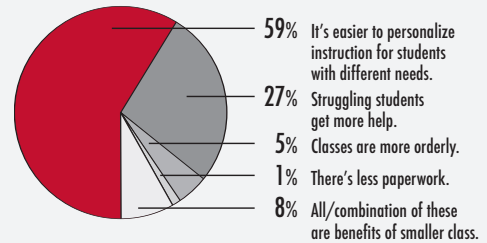


Figure 28

The desire for smaller classes is driven by a need to personalize instruction.

Which of the following is the biggest benefit of smaller classes, in your view?



## Conclusion, In Brief

Overall, the findings depict a new public school teacher corps that is optimistic and generally confident about both their classroom effectiveness and their career choice—at least in their own minds at this early point. At the same time, the survey shows distinct areas in which policymakers and researchers may want to focus additional effort. Notably, new teachers in high-needs schools are more likely to believe they have been assigned to teach the hardest to reach students, and they are more likely to complain about lack of support from colleagues and administrators. These results may just reflect perceptions of new teachers feeling insecure in difficult jobs, or they could reflect a reality in which new teachers in high-needs schools are in fact more likely to tackle the toughest teaching assignments without adequate support. In either case, the findings seem to warrant attention. This group of new teachers is seeking guidance and support.

Similarly, new teachers in high schools are less upbeat about teaching and their future in the field. In both instances—for new teachers in high-needs schools and in high schools—additional research could provide more detail on the precise nature of the problems and suggest policy responses.

The survey also suggests several areas in which training and mentoring should be strengthened. Based on their own judgments, the vast majority of new teachers believe that

they are fairly well-prepared for their jobs, but many report concerns in several crucial areas. Working with diverse student populations and communicating with parents, as well as working with students with special needs are among the areas that may merit greater attention by policymakers, both in preservice training and in support and mentoring for new teachers once they are on the job.

Finally, the research suggests that a significant part of the problem public schools face in retaining teachers stems from what happens once teachers are on the job—not because most “new hires” enter the profession as a “fall back” or take on teaching as a transitional job that they expect to leave quickly. Almost two thirds of first-year teachers (64 percent) say they intend to make teaching a lifelong career. Based on past experience, however, many may become discouraged over time by the challenges of teaching and leave the field before they expect.

NCCTQ and Public Agenda will delve further into these data to provide policymakers more guidance on how to better support new teachers and increase their effectiveness. The initial results presented here offer considerable food for thought on how to design a strategy for enhancing the equitable distribution of highly motivated and well-prepared new teachers.

## Methodology

This survey includes interviews with a nationally representative sample of 641 first-year school teachers throughout the continental United States. Oversamples of teachers who participated in alternative teaching certification programs were also conducted. Those interviews are not included in this analysis but will be included in subsequent reports on this data.

Data were collected by telephone and online between March 12 and April 23, 2007. In designing the survey questions and sample, Public Agenda conducted interviews with leading experts from both university-based

schools of education and alternative programs to discuss the sampling frame and the topics to explore in the survey. NCCTQ and the Farkas-Duffett Research Group (FDR) were consulted further regarding sampling, survey topics, and questionnaire design.

The sample includes oversamples of teachers in both Midwest and high-needs schools. The final data were weighted to account for the disproportionate sample design. Final results based on the general sample are representative of all first-year teachers in continental U.S. public schools. The margin of sampling error for the complete set of weighted data is  $\pm 4$  percent. The response rate for this survey was 29 percent, which is derived as the product of the contact rate (32 percent), the cooperation rate (89 percent), and the completion rate (99 percent). Please note that respondents deemed ineligible because they were not first-year teachers or were no longer teachers were excluded from the survey. Further details on the design, execution, and analysis of the survey are discussed on the NCCTQ website ([www.ncctq.org](http://www.ncctq.org)).

Respondents were asked 111 items. These included screener questions to ensure our respondents were first-year teachers, demographic questions to describe the teachers who took part in our survey, and closed-ended opinion questions. This questionnaire uses a blend of different kinds of questions, some of which tackle similar issues in different ways. Most questions ask the respondents to use a scale (either 3 or 4 points) to rate different aspects of their training or teaching experiences and to measure the strength of various beliefs they may have about teaching. For our 4-point scales, we often collapse the choices to the nominal level by combining the positive and negative responses. Those interested in seeing the degree to which someone agreed or disagreed with the statement can consult either the charts in the report, which break out strength of acceptance, or the full questionnaire and results online (see [www.ncctq.org](http://www.ncctq.org) and [www.publicagenda.org](http://www.publicagenda.org)).

Some questions ask the respondent to choose between two mutually exclusive and balanced statements regarding tradeoffs. Analyzed in context with other results, these “forced-choice” items shed light on respondents’ priorities and avoid the central tendency bias inherent in Likert-style 4-point scale questions.

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## **Teachers Talk: Public Opinion Research on the Profession**

### **Prospects for the Profession: Public Opinion Research on Teachers**

NCCTQ's Jane Coggshall conducted a comprehensive review of 16 nationally representative public opinion polls to investigate the ways teachers, school administrators, parents, and the general public view teaching. Tackling issues such as teacher availability, recruitment, and retention in at-risk schools, this report provides insight to policymakers working to enhance teacher quality for all students. Findings focus on teacher retention as a dominant challenge. While teachers indicate that the profession is attractive and satisfying, 25 percent also report that they plan to leave teaching in the future for other careers. Improving working conditions, specifically administrator support, is also a priority. Although administrators described widespread teacher shortages in urban and high-minority schools and districts, teachers said that they would move to such schools if they received high levels of support there.

### **How New Teachers See Their Jobs: A Comparison of the Attitudes and Experiences of Alternately Certified New Teachers and Traditionally Trained New Teachers**

This teacher opinion poll by the research firm Public Agenda delved into the attitudes and experiences of alternately certified beginning teachers as compared to those of teachers prepared in traditional, college- or university-based programs. Major findings from interviews with a nationally representative sample of 641 first-year teachers reveal that alternately certified new teachers perceive a lack of support from both administrators and colleagues, regardless of whether or not they are working in high-needs schools, and that they are less likely than traditionally certified teachers to report teaching as a lifelong career choice. Both traditionally and alternately certified teachers also cited feeling underprepared to deal with diverse students and parents. The implications of these findings inform potential policy initiatives designed to enhance teacher recruitment, retention, and quality in all schools.

