

Preliminary Results: Philadelphia New Teacher Survey November 2002

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This survey was completed by teachers new to the School District of Philadelphia at a new teacher induction session held on October 23rd at Edison High School. In all, 366 teachers filled out the survey.¹

The survey was designed and administered by Ruth Curran Neild, Assistant Professor of Education at the University of Pennsylvania, and Kurt Spiridakis, researcher at the Philadelphia Education Fund. The data will be analyzed in a more detailed way in the coming weeks by Dr. Neild.²

This research is part of a larger study, *Learning from Philadelphia's School Reform: A Research and Public Awareness Project*, involving a consortium of researchers, led by Research for Action, and funded by grants from the William Penn Foundation and the Samuel Fels Fund.

Hiring and Placement

Nearly a quarter of the new teachers (24%) claimed they were hired after school began. Only 44% were offered a job four weeks or more before school started. More than half of the new teachers (56%) did not know where they would be teaching until one week or less before the start of school, and 38% did not know what subject they would be teaching until after school began.

¹ As of the end of October 2002, the School District of Philadelphia had hired 598 new teachers. Virtually all of those attending the new teacher induction session on October 23rd filled out the survey.

² This study is part of a larger research effort, headed by Research for Action, that is examining selected aspects of the new wave of reform in Philadelphia. Dr. Betsey Useem of the Philadelphia Education Fund assisted with this report. This phase of the research is funded by a grant from The Fels Fund.

Time-frame of Hiring and Placement of New Teachers

When were/did you:	4 + weeks before school	2 weeks before school	1 week or less before school	After school started
Offered job by District	44%	13%	18%	24%
Know exact school where teaching	25%	16%	31%	25%
Know exact courses or grade(s) teaching	13%	13%	34%	38%

Credentials and Experience

More than half (52%) of the teachers new to the District have had no prior teaching experience other than student teaching. Another 17% have had just one year of teaching experience. Only 13% have had five or more years of teaching under their belt.

Half of all teachers surveyed are emergency certified, an uncommonly high number. More than half of these (54%), however, are either Literacy Interns or in the Transition to Teaching Program, both high quality alternative certification programs. Less than half (46%) of new certified teachers completed their student teaching in an urban public school, with the rest teaching either in private, suburban or rural public schools.

Years of Experience, New Philadelphia Teachers

	n	%
No Previous Experience	189	52
1 yr or less	64	17
2-3 years	54	15
4-5 years	11	3
5+ years	48	13

School Start-up

High percentages of new teachers went through their **first week** on the job without basic supports and information from school administrators. During this period:

- 32% of the teachers said they were given the Curriculum Scope and Sequence document;
- 28% were given student forms such as pink slips, hall passes, and CSP forms;
- 64% had a Staff Handbook;
- 50% knew who their Building Representative was.

More than a third of the teachers (36%) said that their course roster or grade assignment was changed after it was first assigned, an indicator of a rocky start to the year.

Almost two-thirds (63%) of new teachers had no professional development before the start of the school year. By October 23rd, only 61% had begun meeting with their formal mentor teacher although 83 percent reported that they had gotten to know a more senior teacher who was “showing them the ropes.”

A little over one quarter (27%) of teachers said that students are added or removed from their class rosters on an almost daily basis. Just over half of the new teachers (52%) reported they have enough books for each student to use in class, and only 31% said they have enough books for each student to take home.

Nearly all of the teachers (94%) have access to the internet either at school or at home, but only 39% have been given a school district email account.

Percent of Teachers Participating in Professional Development

Professional Development Days:	None	Less than ½ day	½ day - 2 days	More than 2 days
August	63%	1%	15%	21%
September	11%	3%	60%	26%

Climate and Classroom Management

Nine out of ten teachers reported that they feel safe in their schools. More than three-fourths (78%) agreed that “a visitor who came to my school at 8 a.m. tomorrow morning would think it was clean and attractive.” Two-thirds of teachers agreed that “hallway chaos during class time is not a problem in my school,” and 76% report being able to manage their classrooms effectively most of the time.

Summing Up

These data confirm what has long been known about school start-up in Philadelphia and in other urban districts. Teachers are hired late, often after the start of school, and are frequently given little support and basic information during the first week of school. For many, class rosters are changed after the school year begins. Formal mentoring of new teachers gets off to a slow start. On the bright side, new teachers report that they feel safe in their schools and that the buildings are clean and attractive.

Further analysis of the data will doubtless show that a number of schools score high in getting new teachers off to a good start. The practices of principals who are effective in this area of management should be built into the District’s leadership development efforts in the future.

Appendix: Results of 2002 New Teacher Survey

I. Credentials, Experience, and Expertise

b. Before Joining District, how many years were you a classroom teacher?

	N	%
this is 1st year	189	52
1 yr or less	64	17
2-3 years	54	15
4-5 years	11	3
5+ years	48	13

c. Which Category best describes your teaching credentials?

	n	%
Certified in PA	156	43
Certified in other state	27	7
Emergency certified	182	50

d. If Emergency Certified, are you in Literacy Intern or Transition to Teaching Program

	n	%
yes	98	54
no	84	46

e. How would you describe the district in which you did your student teaching?

	n	%
Private School	28	15
Urban Public	89	46
Suburban Public	56	29
Rural Public	20	10

f. In which grades did you do most of your student teaching?

	n	%
PreK-2	79	41
3-6	89	46
7-8	36	19
9-12	49	25

g. What was your College Major?

	n	%
Education	206	56
English	30	8
Foreign Language	14	4
History/Social Science	35	10
Science	28	8
Business	31	8
Other	113	31

h. How many Professional Development Days did you have in August 2002?

	n	%
None	229	63
<1/2 day	1	1
Between 1/2 & 2 days	56	15
More than 2 days	76	21

I. How many Professional Development Days did you have in September 2002?

	n	%
None	40	11
<1/2 day	11	3
Between 1/2 & 2 days	218	60
More than 2 days	95	26

j. Do you have Access to the Internet at Home or School?

	n	%
Yes	344	94
No	22	6

k. Have you Received your School District Email Account?

	N	%
Yes	143	39
No	215	59

II. Hiring and Placement

a.	When were you Offered a Job by the School District?		
		N	%
	4 wks or more before school	161	44
	2 wks before school	49	13
	1 wk or less before school	65	18
	After school started	89	24
b.	When did you Know Exactly Where You would be teaching?		
		N	%
	4 wks or more before school	93	25
	2 wks before school	60	16
	1 wk or less before school	113	31
	After school started	93	25
c.	When did you Know Which Courses you would be Teaching?		
		n	%
	4 wks or more before school	48	13
	2 wks before school	46	13
	1 wk or less before school	126	34
	After school started	138	38

III. School start-up

		Yes (%)	No (%)
a.	My school, course roster, or grade changed after it was first assigned	36	64
b.	During the first week of school (or before), I was given a Curriculum Scope and Sequence document for my subject(s) and grade level(s).	32	68
c.	During the first week of school (or before), I was given a Staff Handbook outlining policies and procedures.	64	36

d.	During the first week of school (or before), I was given copies of the student forms I need (e.g. book slips, hall passes, pink slips, CSP forms).	28	72
e.	During the first week of school (or before), I was given a mailbox at school.	73	27
f.	During the first week of school (or before), I was given a list of PFT Building Committee members and the name of the Building Representative at my school.	50	50
g.	I am teaching the subject (or grade level) for which I feel best qualified.	77	23
h.	I have enough copies of texts for students to use <u>in class</u> .	52	48
i.	I have enough copies of texts so that each student <u>can take one home</u> .	31	69
j.	Students are added to or removed from my class roll almost on a daily basis.	27	73
k.	Currently, more than 33 students are rostered to at least one of my classes.	15	85
l.	I have gotten to know a more senior teacher who is “showing me the ropes” around the school.	83	17
m.	I have begun meeting with my formally assigned mentor teacher.	61	39

IV. Please say how much you agree or disagree with each statement

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. Most times, I am able to manage my class effectively	22	54	19	3
b. I am knowledgeable about the subject matter or grade level I have been asked to teach.	39	52	6	1

	Hallway chaos when classes are in session is <u>not</u>	22	44	20	13
c.	much of a problem in my school.				
d.	I generally feel safe in my school	34	56	6	3
	A visitor who came to my school at 8 a.m.				
	tomorrow morning would think it was clean and	30	48	13	7
e.	attractive.				