



Teacher Leadership • Research • Policy

Retaining Great Teachers: What We Know and What We Need to Learn

Great Teachers for Our City Schools Conference

Denver, CO

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Presented by Barnett Berry

Three Questions Posed

1. What will keep quality teachers in urban schools?
2. What challenges do new teachers face?
3. Why is it so hard for policymakers to get it right?

Five More to Consider

1. Who are the “great” teachers and which ones do we want to stay?
2. How many “great” teachers are we willing to pay for and will we let them lead?
3. What counts as sufficient evidence to act?
4. Why don’t we collect more data on the experiments currently underway?
5. Do we really want a teaching profession?

Five Myths

1. Bright individuals with energy and leadership potential have the qualifications necessary to teach effectively;
2. Financial incentives alone are sufficient to entice and retain talented teachers;
3. Effective teachers in one context easily can be effective in another;

Five Myths (cont'd)

4. Incentives that entice some teachers can entice all; and
5. Individual, accomplished teachers alone can fix high needs schools.

Berry, B. (2007). Recruiting and Retaining Quality Teachers for High needs Schools: Insights from NBCT Summits and Other Policy Initiatives. Washington DC: National Education Association

Different Retention Strategies for Different Teachers

- New teachers *versus* experienced teachers;
- A Teach for America recruit *versus* a UCLA or Stanford teacher-education graduate;
- A prepared novice *versus* an under-prepared one;
- A 22-year-old, traditionally-prepared graduate *versus* a 45-year-old, alternative-route recruit

Some Evidence

- Research on National Board Certified Teachers and high-needs schools
- Voices of accomplished teachers
- Findings from a 2007 working conditions survey of almost 10,000 teachers in a large urban district
- New analyses of the North Carolina teacher working conditions survey

A Conceptual Framework for Understanding How to Recruit and Retain National Board Certified Teachers for High Needs Schools

Condition	Hard-to-staff Schools issues
Administrative Leadership	Effective principals who value National Board Certification and know how to use teacher leaders
Collegial Support	Teachers recruited not as “lone rangers” but to work with like-minded and “kindred spirits”
Instructional Resources	Curriculum that does not value teaching expertise and professional judgment
	Availability of resources—lab equipment, classroom libraries—necessary for effective teaching
	Smaller “case loads” in order to know students and their families
Professional Development	Time and training to team-build and develop the necessary cultural competence
	Leadership training and opportunities for leading professional development, mentoring novices, and preparing future teachers
Financial Incentives	A range of salary and other financial incentives

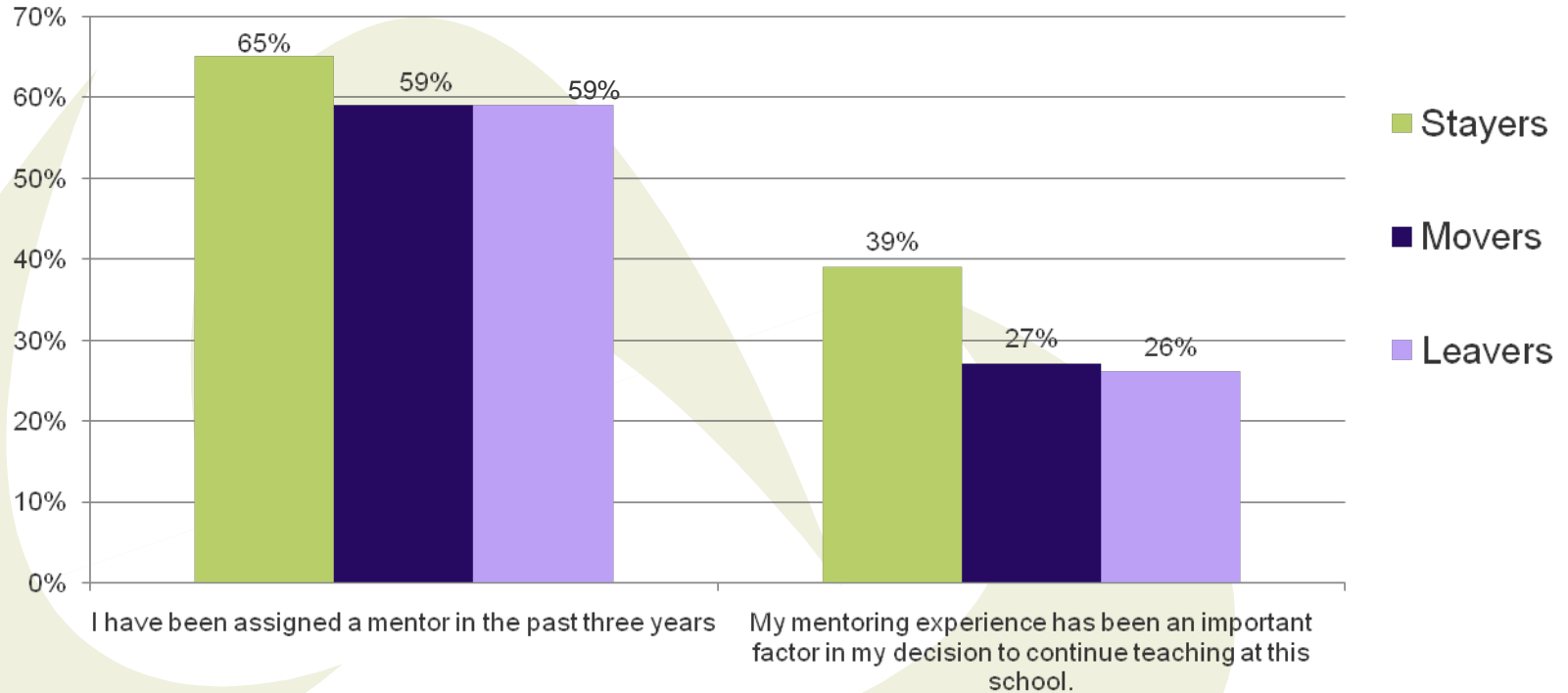
Findings from the 2007 Teaching and Learning Conditions Survey: A Dynamic Urban District

*A few data points from a
district with almost 20,000
teachers*



Novice Teachers and Retention: A Closer Look

Mentoring and Novice Teachers, by Career Intent



Findings from the 2007 TLC Survey: *Novice Teachers & Retention*

- 53% of novices say they spend 11 or more non-paid days beyond the current contract on professional responsibilities (vs. 44% of peers with 11+ years experience)
- 48% of novices say that they must work a second job during the regular school year (vs. 38% of teachers with 11+ years experience)

Differences by School Level: A Closer Look in a Large Urban District

Survey Items with the Greatest Range of Responses

Survey Statement	Elem	Middle	High	Range of % Points
School-based PD provides teachers with knowledge and skills most needed to teach effectively.	67%	54%	39%	28
PD activities enhance teacher skills as instructional leaders.	69%	28%	46%	23
Teachers have reasonable class sizes, affording them time to meet the educational needs of all students.	46%	30%	24%	22
PD has provided you with strategies you have incorporated into your instructional delivery methods.	76%	69%	57%	19

Differences in Perceptions in a Large Urban District: A Closer Look

Perception of Empowerment and Leadership, by Role

Survey Statement	Percent Agreeing:		Range of % Points
	Teachers	Principals	
Teachers play a large or primary role in school improvement planning	30%	89%	59
Teachers are centrally involved in decision-making about educational issues	39%	94%	55
The school improvement team provides effective leadership at this school	46%	92%	46
The faculty has an effective process for making group decisions and solving problems	46%	91%	45

Another Look at NC: Teacher Working Conditions that Predict Teacher Retention

- Teacher qualifications in a building may trump perceptions of working conditions
- Not every working condition that affects the perceived quality of education predicts teacher retention
- Working conditions can vary more inside of schools than between (especially in high schools)

Another Look at NC: Teacher Working Conditions that Predict Teacher Retention

- Leadership opportunities for teachers to advance—related to an “atmosphere of mutual trust and respect”—seem to matter a lot
- Accountability, curricular resources, and student support matter a great deal – but are rarely measured

Key Elements of Teacher Working Conditions

Susan Moore Johnson (2005)

- Teaching assignments
- Collegial relationships
- New teacher support
- Student supports
- Curricular supports
- Resources Assessment
- Professional development
- Influence & leadership
- Facilities
- Principal leadership

What will keep quality teachers in urban schools?

1. Good principals and great colleagues
2. Autonomy for veterans and assistance/assignments for novices
3. Preparation for the task at hand
4. Resources and class size
5. Accountability that supports, not demeans
6. Financial incentives (varied)

What challenges do new teachers face?

1. Teaching second language learners and special needs students, working with families, and finding and using engaging resources
2. Balancing life and work
3. Seeing a future in teaching
(Content is not the issue)

Why is it so hard for policymakers to get it right?

1. Lack of sound, consistent data
2. Conflicting research findings fueled by dueling researchers
3. Too many organizations too unwilling to work with each other
4. Too little voice from our nation's most accomplished teachers

For further information:

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www.teacherleaders.org**

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