



2002 BEGINNING TEACHER SURVEY

A Report on the Readiness of First-Year Teachers in Georgia Public Schools

Educator Workforce Research and Development Division
Georgia Professional Standards Commission

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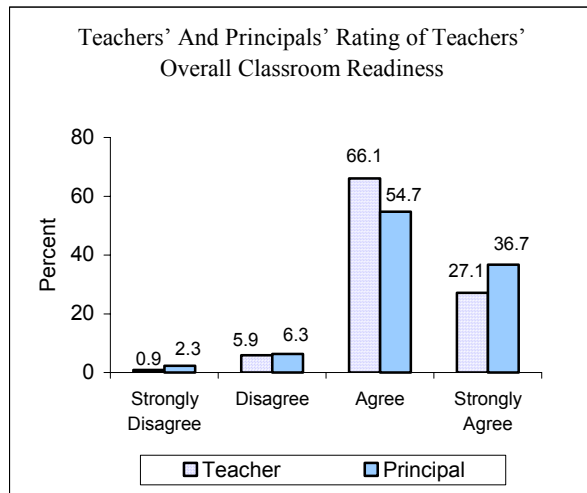
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2002 Beginning Teacher Study is the third of its kind. The study was designed to: (1) Investigate how successfully PSC-approved teacher education programs prepare teachers, and (2) Provide information on the level of readiness of beginning teachers hired in Georgia's public school systems. This year's study was conducted via an online survey. Beginning teachers, as well as their school principals, who could not access the Internet or had difficulty completing the survey online were sent paper surveys by mail and/or by fax.

All beginning teachers in Georgia's public school system, as well as their principals, were encouraged to participate in the survey. Only teachers whose corresponding principals completed the survey were participants in this study. A total of 1,357 first-time teachers and 981 principals completed the survey. However, only 986 of the beginning teachers had corresponding principal surveys. Hence, data analyses were conducted on only the 986 teachers for whom their corresponding principal completed the survey.

FINDINGS

- Overall, both beginning teachers and their principals agreed that the beginning teachers were ready for the classroom.
- Teachers' rating on overall readiness corresponded very closely to principals' rating of the same, 93.2% and 91.4%, respectively. This is consistent with survey results from the 1998 and 1999 Beginning Teacher Studies.
- Seventy-three percent (73.0%) of the beginning teachers received their teaching preparation from Georgia colleges, while twenty-seven percent (27.0%) were from colleges outside of Georgia.



- Teachers' most common certification areas were: Early Childhood (34.6%), Middle Grades (13.7%), Social Studies Broad field (7.4%), Mathematics (6.5%), and Interrelated Special Education (6.1%).
- Teachers' most common content areas were: Early Childhood (24.0%), Mental Retardation (10.3%), Reading (8.8%), and Social Studies Broad field (5.7%).
- The highest levels of non-readiness teachers reported were in Science (11.5%), followed by Social Studies (7.4%). Principals, on the other hand, reported highest percentages of non-readiness among beginning teachers in Middle Grades (11.9%) and Interrelated Special Education (11.9%).
- The top three content areas in which beginning teachers felt they needed additional preparation were: Science Broad field (10.0%), Writing (9.7%), and Mathematics (9.7%). Almost half (49.5%) of the beginning teachers did not report content areas for which they needed additional preparation.
- Both beginning teachers and principals identified the management of student behavior as a skill area for which teachers needed additional preparation (16.5% and 13.8%, respectively).

Top Seven Skill Areas for Which Teachers Stated They Needed Additional Preparation or in Which Their Principals Stated They Were Least Prepared.

Identified By Teacher			Identified By Principal		
Area of Need	%	Rank	Area of Least Preparation	%	Rank
Managing student behavior	16.5	1	Managing student behavior	13.8	1
Strategies for motivating students	11.9	2	Use of standardized test results to adjust instruction	11.6	2
Accommodating and dealing with diverse instructional needs in the classroom	10.6	3	Accommodating and dealing with diverse instructional needs in the classroom	6.8	3
Adequately meeting the instructional needs of diverse learners	9.0	4	Adequately meeting the instructional needs of diverse learners	5.4	4
Use of standardized test results to adjust instruction	6.7	5	Integrating technology into instruction	4.9	5
Solving problems in classroom management	6.6	6	Fulfilling administrative duties	4.8	6
Fulfilling administrative duties	5.9	7	Solving problems in classroom management	4.7	7

- Principals agreed that teachers were most prepared in accommodating and dealing with diverse instructional needs in the classroom (24.1%).
- The most needed skill area beginning teachers received in their teacher preparation was managing student behavior (18.1%).
- Teachers' level of readiness for the classroom did not differ on the basis of whether they were prepared in or outside Georgia.
- Beginning teachers felt they were well prepared by their colleges and that classroom experience really was the best teacher.

	Self Rating		Rating by Principal	
	Not Ready	Ready	Not Ready	Ready
Trained				
In Georgia	8.0%	92.0%	9.0%	91.0%
Out-of-State	10.1%	89.9%	5.9%	94.0%
- There is a high and positive association between beginning teachers' and their principals' perception of teacher readiness.

CONCLUSION

Overall, beginning teachers, as well as their school principals, agreed that the teachers were ready for the classroom. The findings from this study indicate that teacher preparation programs approved by the PSC prepare teachers who perceive themselves as ready for the classroom and are perceived as such by their school principals.

It is hoped that these findings will provide needed feedback to teachers and administrators in Georgia's public school system, teacher education programs, and other education stakeholders. Also, this research may offer policy implications for not only teacher education programs, but also induction programs.

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