

Supporting New Teachers

In the spring of 2011, the second iteration of the Maryland Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning Initiative (TELL Maryland) was conducted. Nearly 46,000 educators and Education Support Personnel (ESPs) (51 percent) from across the state shared their perceptions of the teaching conditions in their school in order to examine whether supportive school environments are in place that can maximize teacher effectiveness and student success.

A total of 4,583 survey respondents (10 percent) are teachers in their first three years in the profession, with nearly fifteen hundred (1,483) in their first year of teaching. Understanding beginning teacher perceptions of their conditions and the types of induction supports received has implications for new teacher effectiveness and retention as:

- ♦ Beginning teachers need additional supports to enable them to learn and refine best teaching practices, classroom management, lesson planning, and acclimate to the school community. When adequate supports are in place for beginning teachers, they have the best chance of delivering high quality, differentiated instruction and accelerating student learning.
- ♦ Research has shown that teaching conditions significantly affect teacher turnover in Maryland and across the nation. Results from the first TELL Maryland Survey found that school and teacher leadership conditions within elementary schools, teachers' role in decision making at the middle school level, and facilities and resources in high schools are statistically significant in explaining teacher

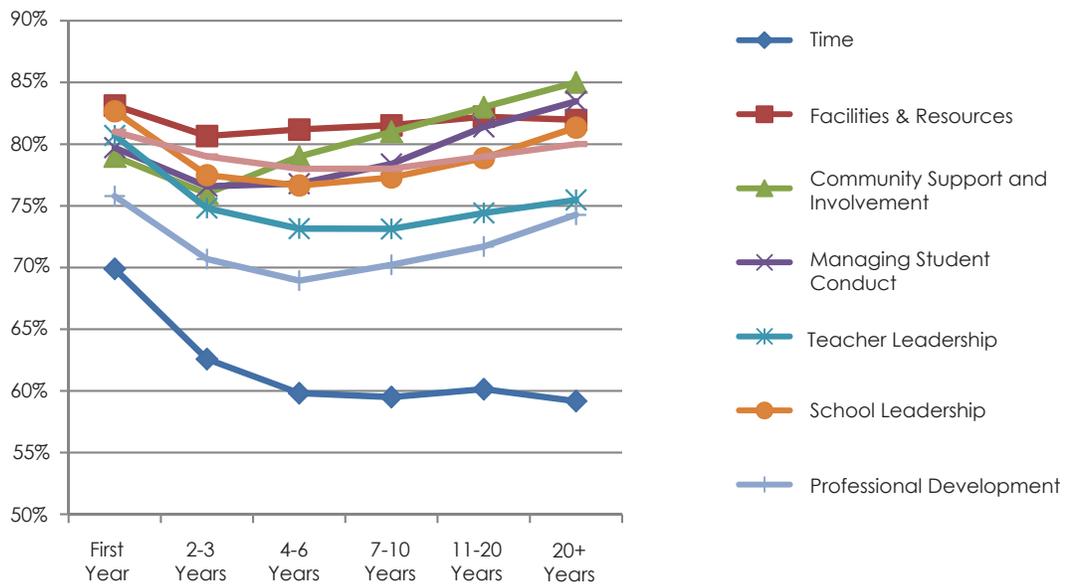
retention (Hirsch and Church, 2009). In an educational environment where teacher attrition is high and teachers new to the profession are less inclined to view teaching as a life-long career, the profession can ill afford to lose its newest members from a lack of adequate supports.

First-Year Teachers Are Generally Positive About Teaching Conditions

Maryland's newest educators are more likely to agree that they have positive teaching conditions in key areas such as leadership, resources, professional supports and time in their school than those with more experience (Figure 1). Across every construct, there is a noticeable decline in the perception of teaching conditions between first year educators and those educators in their second and third years of teaching, most likely explained by changing expectations about what conditions are necessary to provide high quality instruction. Additionally, supports for new teachers like mentoring, reduced scheduling, etc. often decline in the second and third year and beyond.

Generally, teachers are least likely to report positive teaching conditions when they have four to six years of experience, after which perceptions improve. This could be because teachers become more complacent about teaching as a profession or as they gain in their abilities with experience, they are better able to find the supports they need. Regardless, as this is the time when educators are choosing whether to make teaching a lifelong career, efforts at improving teacher attrition should be targeted toward these teachers, providing additional leadership opportunities and supports.

FIGURE 1. AVERAGE LEVEL OF AGREEMENT BY SURVEY AREA ACROSS EXPERIENCE LEVELS



There is no “rebound” in perceptions of conditions as teachers gain experience, however, in the area of time, where the most veteran teachers are the most negative about their school. This could be the result of veteran teachers having more responsibilities outside of the classroom than their more novice counterparts or due to the teaching load or class assignments of the most experienced teachers.

When comparing all novice teachers—those in their first three years of teaching—with those teachers having more than three years of experience, clear differences are evident. And it should not be surprising that those differences are in areas where new teachers often struggle in acclimating to the profession: classroom management and engaging parents/guardians and the community at large (Table 1).

- Issues assessed in the area of Managing Student Conduct are reported more positively by veteran teachers. Nearly seven out of ten veteran teachers (69 percent) agree that students at their school follow rules of conduct compared to fewer than six out of 10 beginning teachers (58

percent). More than four out of five veteran teachers (84 percent) report that students at their school understand expectations for their conduct compared to 78 percent of beginning teachers. These two findings may be contributing to beginning teachers less positive view (56 percent) that students come to school ready to learn compared to their veteran colleagues (63 percent).

- Some conditions related to the supports that parents, guardians, and community members provide are also more positively viewed by veteran teachers. About three-quarters of veteran teachers (73 percent) report that parents/guardians support teachers, contributing to their success with students compared to less than two-thirds of beginning teachers (64 percent). New teachers are less likely than veterans to report that community members contribute to their success (71 percent versus 79 percent). A similar gap is also present between the two groups that community members support teachers, contributing to their success with students (79 percent veteran teachers compared to 71 percent beginning teachers).

TABLE 1. SURVEY QUESTIONS WHERE VETERAN TEACHERS REPORTED MORE POSITIVELY THAN THEIR BEGINNING TEACHER COLLEAGUES

2011 Maryland Survey Questions	Percent Agree/Strongly Agree		
	Veteran Teachers*	Beginning Teachers**	Difference
Students at this school follow rules of conduct	69%	58%	11%
Parents/guardians support teachers, contributing to their success with students	73%	64%	9%
Parents/guardians are influential decision makers in this school	72%	63%	9%
Eligibility for retirement influences your decision making about your professional plans	67%	58%	8%
Community members support teachers, contributing to their success with students	79%	71%	8%
Personal reasons (health, family, etc.) influence your decision making about your professional plans	81%	74%	7%
Our students come to school ready to learn	63%	56%	7%
Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct	84%	78%	7%

* Veteran teachers are defined as those teachers who indicated having more than three years of experience in the classroom.
 ** Beginning teachers are defined as those teachers who indicated having three or less years of experience in the classroom.

Novice teachers report more positive conditions as they related to time (Table 2). Beginning teachers are more likely to agree that efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork teachers are required to do (60 percent compared to 53 percent). And seven out of 10 (70 percent) beginning educators report that teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students compared to more than six out of 10 veteran teachers (63 percent).

In addition to time, beginning teachers are also more positive than their veteran colleagues in areas related to autonomy and decision making. For example, more than three-quarters of beginning educators (77 percent) report that teachers have autonomy to make decisions about instructional delivery compared to seven out of 10 veteran educators (70 percent).

TABLE 2. SURVEY QUESTIONS WHERE BEGINNING TEACHERS REPORTED MORE POSITIVELY THAN THEIR VETERAN TEACHER COLLEAGUES

2011 Maryland Survey Questions	Percent Agree/Strongly Agree		
	Beginning Teachers*	Veteran Teachers**	Difference
Efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork teachers are required to do	60%	53%	8%
Teachers have autonomy to make decisions about instructional delivery (i.e. pacing, materials and pedagogy)	77%	70%	7%
Teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students	70%	63%	7%
Teachers are relied upon to make decisions about educational issues	84%	79%	5%
Teachers and staff work in a school that is environmentally healthy	82%	77%	5%

* Beginning teachers are defined as those teachers who indicated having three or less years of experience in the classroom.
 ** Veteran teachers are defined as those teachers who indicated having more than three years of experience in the classroom.

New teachers, as expected, are more likely than experienced educators to indicate a need for additional professional development to be effective (Table 3). In particular, new teachers are more than twice as likely as veterans to report a need for support in closing the achievement gap. New teachers are much more likely to need professional development in teaching methods, classroom management, differentiating instruction to students with disabilities, etc. On the other hand, beginning teachers are less likely to report a need for additional professional development in the areas of reading strategies, integrating technology into instruction, and working with English Language Learners.

Induction is the primary way, schools, districts and the state can build upon and foster new teachers' positive perceptions of supportive teaching conditions while also providing the additional support new teachers identify as necessary. However, it appears that not all beginning educators are provided mentors who onboard them into the profession effectively.

Induction Supports Are More Positively Viewed By Beginning Teachers in 2011 than in 2009

Based on data collected from the 2009 TELL Maryland survey on the supports of beginning teachers, the State Board of Education twice revised state policies in 2010 on mentoring and induction.

These changes seem to be having a positive effect on beginning teacher supports as overall more than three-quarters of beginning teachers (76 percent) report that the additional support they received as a new teacher improved their instructional practice compared to more than six out of 10 in 2009 (62 percent). The same proportion of beginning teachers (76 percent) in 2011 also agrees that overall the additional support they received as a new teacher helped them to impact their students' learning compared to sixty-three percent in 2009. Additionally, whereas about half of beginning teachers in 2009 (52 percent) agreed that overall, the additional support they received as a new teacher has been important in their decision to continue teaching at their school, that rate of agreement increased to more than six out of 10 (63 percent) in 2011.

TABLE 3. PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS REPORTING A NEED FOR ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Area of Professional Development	Beginning Teachers*	Veteran Teachers**	Difference
Closing the Achievement Gap	61%	28%	33%
Methods of teaching	53%	29%	24%
Classroom management techniques	57%	34%	23%
Special education (students with disabilities)	73%	51%	22%
Differentiating instruction	66%	46%	20%
Student assessment	45%	29%	15%
Special education (gifted and talented)	64%	49%	15%
Your content area	41%	30%	10%
English Language Learners	52%	54%	-1%
Integrating technology into instruction	54%	57%	-3%
Reading strategies	55%	63%	-8%

* Beginning teachers are defined as those teachers who indicated having three or less years of experience in the classroom.

** Veteran teachers are defined as those teachers who indicated having more than three years of experience in the classroom.

Further evidence of the impact of these policy changes can be seen in the numbers of beginning teachers reporting they are receiving a variety of supports (Table 4). With the exception of one area (My mentor and I taught the same grade level), more beginning teachers are in agreement that they have a variety of supports in 2011 than they did in 2009. Some of those supports show large increases in the percentage of beginning teachers acknowledging that they received them.

- More than twice as many beginning teachers in 2011 (68 percent) report that their mentor is in the same building with them than they did in 2009 (32 percent).
- Nearly two-thirds of beginning teachers (64 percent) agree that they had access to professional learning

communities where they could discuss concerns with other teachers in 2011 compared to more than one third in 2009 (35 percent).

- More beginning teachers are also acknowledging that they have been given time to engage in a variety of important supports. These include common planning time, time to observe other teachers, and formal time to meet with their mentor during school hours.

While there are many areas to celebrate in these findings, it is also important to acknowledge that the number of beginning teachers who received no additional supports at all increased from three percent in 2009 to fifteen percent in 2011.

TABLE 4. CHANGE IN BEGINNING TEACHER SUPPORTS FROM 2009 TO 2011

As a beginning teacher, I have received the following kinds of supports	Rate of Agreement		
	2011	2009	Difference 2011-2009
My mentor and I were in the same building	68%	32%	36%
Access to professional learning communities where I could discuss concerns with other teacher(s)	64%	35%	29%
Regular communication with principals, other administrator or department chair	75%	55%	20%
Formal time to meet with mentor during school hours	43%	26%	17%
Common planning time with other teachers	68%	53%	15%
I received no additional support as a new teacher	15%	3%	12%
Release time to observe other teachers	48%	36%	12%
Reduced workload	15%	6%	9%
My mentor and I taught in the same content area	53%	48%	5%
Seminars specifically designed for new teachers	77%	72%	5%
Orientation for new teachers	87%	82%	5%
Formally assigned mentor	70%	65%	5%
My mentor and I taught the same grade level	46%	54%	-8%

Induction Support Does Not Reach All New Educators, and For Many It is Ineffective

Of the 4,583 beginning teachers who responded to the survey across Maryland, three out of every 10 (1,274 or 30 percent) were never assigned a mentor. Of those new teachers who were assigned a mentor, many do not receive the kinds of supports that research demonstrates is necessary to improve performance and keep them in the profession (Table 5).

- ✦ Nearly six out of 10 (59 percent) beginning teachers report that they never once observed their mentor teach.
- ✦ More than one third of beginning teachers who were assigned a mentor never reviewed results of student assessments with them (35 percent), or analyzed student work (35 percent).

- ✦ About one-quarter of those beginning teachers who did receive mentoring support never met with them to develop lesson plans (28 percent) or never were observed by their mentor (24 percent).

So, in actuality, about half of Maryland new teachers receive no induction supports as they enter the profession, either because they are not assigned a mentor or do not receive any support(s) from them that could help them become a better teacher faster.

Further evidence of this inconsistency of induction support can be seen in beginning teachers' perceptions of the influence of mentoring on new teachers (Table 6). Less than half of beginning teachers reported that any of the supports they received from their mentor influenced their practice either 'quite a bit' or 'a great deal.' This is not particularly surprising given the high number of new teachers who report never or infrequently working with their mentor in Maryland.

TABLE 5. FREQUENCY OF MENTORING ACTIVITIES REPORTED BY NEW TEACHERS

Mentoring Activity	Never	Sometimes*	At Least Once Per Week
Observing my mentor's teaching	59%	35%	6%
Reviewing results of students' assessments	35%	51%	14%
Analyzing student work	35%	49%	16%
Aligning my lesson planning with the state curriculum and local curriculum	32%	48%	20%
Developing lesson plans	28%	51%	20%
Being observed teaching by my mentor	24%	66%	10%
Reflecting on the effectiveness of my teaching together	16%	61%	23%
Addressing student or classroom behavioral issues	15%	61%	25%

* The "Sometimes" category includes responses ranging from "less than once per month" to "several times per month."

TABLE 6. PERCENT OF BEGINNING TEACHERS INDICATING THAT MENTOR SUPPORT HELPED "QUITE A BIT" OR "A GREAT DEAL"

Mentor Provided Support	Quite a Bit/A Great Deal
Providing emotional support	48%
Instructional strategies	42%
Classroom management strategies	41%
Complying with policies and procedures	36%
Creating a supportive, equitable classroom where differences are valued	34%
Differentiating instruction based upon individual student needs and characteristics	33%
Working collaboratively with other teachers at my school	32%
Completing administrative paperwork	31%
Subject matter I teach	30%
Using data to identify student needs	27%
Connecting with key resource professionals (e.g., coaches, counselors, etc.)	27%
Enlisting the help of family members, parents and/or guardians	21%

Interestingly, while more beginning teachers are agreeing that they have additional supports in place to improve their practice, less beginning teachers are in agreement that those supports are influencing their practice in meaningful ways (Table 7). This suggests that the quality of provided supports may need to be reviewed to improve effectiveness and relevance.

Despite these limitations in mentoring delivery and effectiveness, beginning teachers are generally positive about mentoring support

overall, likely due to their desire to continue receiving mentoring. More than three-quarters of beginning teachers (78 percent) who received a mentor report that the support they received improved their instructional practice. Eight out of 10 (79 percent) agree that the support their mentor provides has helped them to impact their students' learning. Two-thirds of beginning teachers (66 percent) report that the additional support they receive as a beginning teacher has been an important factor in their decision to continue teaching at their school.

TABLE 7. PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN BEGINNING TEACHERS RESPONDING "QUITE A BIT" OR "A GREAT DEAL" TO THE INFLUENCE SUPPORTS HAD ON THEIR PRACTICE FROM 2009 TO 2011

How much received supports from your mentor influenced your practice in the following areas?	2011	2009	Difference 2011-2009
Using data to identify student needs	27%	28%	-1%
Subject matter I teach	30%	31%	-1%
Enlisting the help of family members, parents and/or guardians	21%	22%	-1%
Completing administrative paperwork	31%	34%	-2%
Working collaboratively with other teachers at my school	32%	35%	-3%
Connecting with key resource professionals (e.g., coaches, counselors, etc.)	27%	30%	-3%
Classroom management strategies	41%	45%	-3%
Instructional strategies	42%	45%	-3%
Creating a supportive, equitable classroom where differences are valued	34%	37%	-3%
Differentiating instruction based upon individual student needs and characteristics	33%	36%	-4%
Providing emotional support	48%	52%	-4%
Other	30%	35%	-5%
Complying with policies and procedures	36%	41%	-5%

Impact of Mentoring on Retention

The support received by new teachers, be it mentoring or other assistance such as an orientation, common planning time, seminars specifically for new teachers, etc., appears to have an impact on new teachers' employment plans (Table 8). New teachers who want to remain working in their current school are significantly more likely to have received a broad array of induction supports than those who want to remain teaching, but move to another school.

- Teachers wanting to stay in their current school are much more likely to report that they are in regular communication with their principal or other

administrators (78 percent versus 54 percent) and have access to professional learning communities (67 percent versus 53 percent) than those who want to remain teaching but move to another school.

- Eight out of 10 stayers (79 percent) were provided seminars specifically designed for new teachers compared to fewer than two-thirds (63 percent) of new teachers who want to move schools.

New teachers are more likely to stay in schools that provide strong induction supports, regular communications with leaders and other activities that will help them enhance their effectiveness to help students learn.

TABLE 8. NEW TEACHER SUPPORT BY IMMEDIATE FUTURE EMPLOYMENT PLANS

New Teacher Support Offered	Percent Indicating They Received Support		Stayers minus Movers
	Stayers	Movers	
Regular communication with principals, other administrator or department chair	78%	54%	24%
Seminars specifically designed for new teachers	79%	63%	16%
Access to professional learning communities where I could discuss concerns with other teacher(s)	67%	53%	14%
Formally assigned mentor	72%	59%	13%
Release time to observe other teachers	50%	38%	13%
Formal time to meet with mentor during school hours	45%	33%	12%
Common planning time with other teachers	70%	61%	9%
Orientation for new teachers	88%	80%	9%
Reduced workload	16%	11%	6%

Conclusion

Maryland has much to be proud of regarding the support of its beginning teachers. More than eight out of 10 (81 percent) beginning teachers in their first three years of teaching indicate that they want to remain teaching at their school in the immediate future. A comparison of beginning teacher survey results with their veteran teacher colleagues shows that beginning teachers are more positive about teaching conditions in their school than many of their veteran colleagues. Additionally, there is some indication that beginning teachers are positive about time related conditions, an essential component to their development.

However, there is more that the state can do ensure its novice educators get the induction supports they need so that they

can teach better, faster. While there has been improvement in new teacher support since 2009, the number of beginning teachers who received no supports increased from three percent in 2009 to fifteen percent in 2011. An examination of induction across Maryland shows that many new teachers are not mentored, and those who are receive infrequent and often ineffective support. With three out of 10 beginning teachers not assigned a mentor, many issues that are critical to beginning teacher development and support are being left to chance. Efforts to systemically improve the quality of and access to mentoring support can help to enhance and expedite the mastery of pedagogical skill in Maryland's newest teachers. Providing high quality supports gives beginning teachers the opportunity to produce their best work and gives students the best chance to succeed.

About the New Teacher Center

New Teacher Center focuses on improving student learning by accelerating the effectiveness of new teachers. NTC partners with states, school districts, and policymakers to design and implement systems that create sustainable, high-quality mentoring and professional development; build leadership capacity; work to enhance teaching conditions; improve retention; and transform schools in vibrant learning communities where all students succeed.



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