

First Year Teacher Readiness

Are New Teachers Prepared for the Classroom?



Webinar

March 25, 2009

Dr. Paul Horne, EOC Director of Curriculum and Program Review

Background

- Teacher Recruitment and Retention Task Force (2006-07) established by proviso
- Common complaint by school principals and district superintendents that first year teachers were ill-prepared for the classroom
- To better understand concerns, EOC administered survey of principals (Spring 2008)

Survey Purposes

To understand principals' perceptions of:

- The readiness of teachers new to the classroom
- Perceived strengths and weaknesses of first-year teachers
- Concerns regarding first year teachers



Survey Overview

- Distributed to over 1,200 SC principals and directors
 - Over 50 percent response rate
- Questions based on NCATE accreditation process and ADEPT Performance Standards for evaluating new teachers
- Collected information on six main areas of teacher preparedness: Content Knowledge, Management, Instruction, Curriculum, Assessment, and Interpersonal Relationships

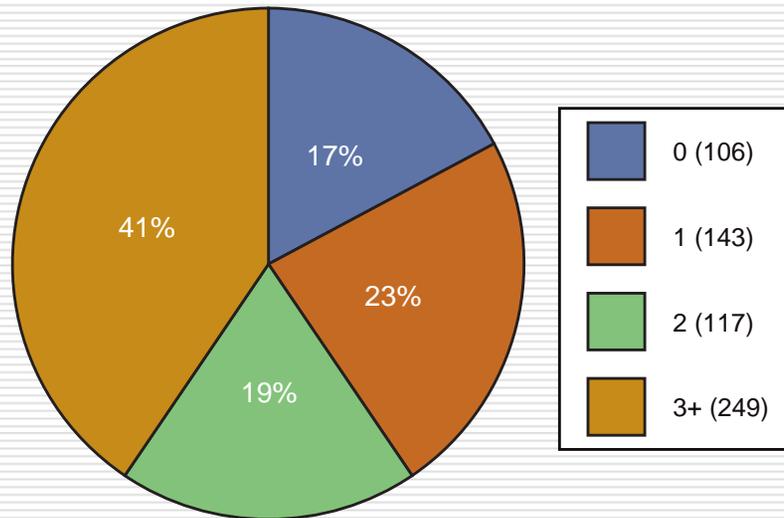
Survey Respondents

- Responses came mainly from school principals with 15 or fewer years of experience as a principal.
- More than half of the responding principals have less than five years of experience at their current schools.
- The respondents were representative of the state's demographic distribution in terms of school poverty level, school enrollment, school location, and school level.
- The response rate was representative of the ratings for all schools for 2007.



Survey Respondents: Numbers of First Year Teachers

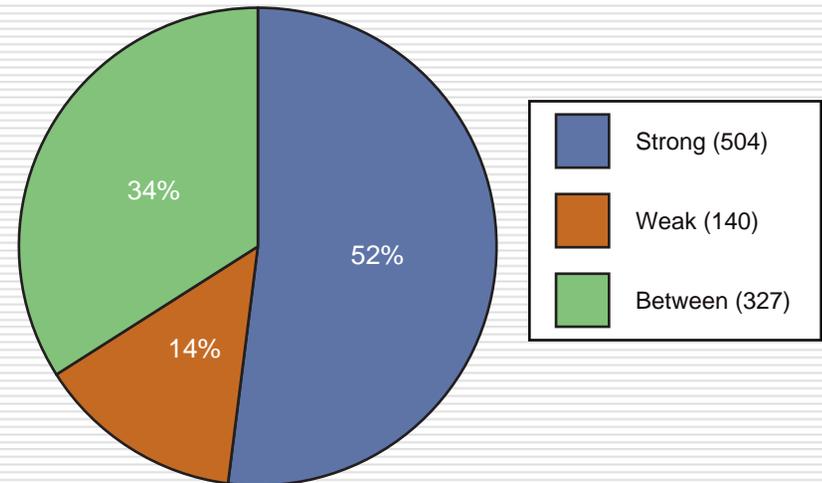
Number of First Year Teachers
in Respondent Schools, 2007-08



Readiness Details

- Respondents were asked to provide information on up to three first year teachers at their school
- Asked to “rate” teachers as “strong,” “between strong and weak,” or “weak”
- Asked to rate the teachers on six main areas of teacher preparedness – on a scale of 1-5 depending on the frequency with which they exhibited a particular behavior (1-never; 5-always)

**First Year Teachers,
Perceived Strength Level**



Perceived Areas of Strength

Average percentage often or always exhibiting behavior

First Year Teachers Rated Strong	First Year Teachers Rated Between	First Year Teachers Rated Weak
Content Knowledge (88.2%)	Content Knowledge (50.6%)	Content Knowledge (18.1%)
Interpersonal Relationships (86.0%)	Interpersonal Relationships (50.5%)	Interpersonal Relationships (19.1%)
Curriculum: Knows and Uses SC Academic Standards (84.7%)	Curriculum: Knows and Uses SC Academic Standards (40.5%)	Curriculum: Knows and Uses SC Academic Standards (12.2%)



Perceived Areas of Weakness

Average percentage often or always exhibiting behavior

First Year Teachers Rated Strong	First Year Teachers Rated Between	First Year Teachers Rated Weak
Assessment (74.9%)	Assessment (28.2%)	Assessment (6.4%)
	Classroom Management (37.3%)	Classroom Management (8.8%)
	Instruction: Individual Student Needs (36.9%)	Instruction: Individual Student Needs (10.2%)



Perceived Areas of Strength

Average percentage sometimes, often or always exhibiting behavior

First Year Teachers Rated Strong	First Year Teachers Rated Between	First Year Teachers Rated Weak
Content Knowledge (98.5%)	Content Knowledge (84.3%)	Content Knowledge (47.2%)
Interpersonal Relationships (97.3%)	Interpersonal Relationships (83.1%)	Interpersonal Relationships (38.9%)
Curriculum: Knows and Uses SC Academic Standards (97.6%)	Curriculum: Knows and Uses SC Academic Standards (80.0%)	Curriculum: Knows and Uses SC Academic Standards (35.2%)



Perceived Areas of Weakness

Average percentage sometimes, often or always exhibiting behavior

First Year Teachers Rated Strong	First Year Teachers Rated Between	First Year Teachers Rated Weak
Assessment (95.3%)	Assessment (68.7%)	Assessment (23.3%)
	Classroom Management (75.6%)	Classroom Management (29.9%)
	Instruction: Individual Student Needs (77.6%)	Instruction: Individual Student Needs (29.9%)



Additional Findings

- The type of teacher preparation training (public, private, in-state, out-of-state, traditional, non-traditional) made little or no difference in ratings distribution
- Regardless of the rating of the first year teacher, there was no statistical difference in the frequency that first year teachers exhibited behaviors often or always among school poverty level, school enrollment, school location, and school type.



Additional Findings

- Open response comments identified the teaching of **reading** by first year teachers as an area of concern
- Many principals retain weak teachers **without an improvement plan** attached to the subsequent year's contract



Recommendations for Teacher Preparation Institutions

Evaluate courses and programs to determine:

- In which courses are these topics and/or skills taught?
- How recently has the content of the courses been updated?
- How much emphasis is given to these topics in the overall teacher preparation program?
- Are there new courses that should be developed as part of the overall program?
- How are teacher candidates assessed to determine how they are putting into practice the information learned in the classes?
- How do we require new teacher candidates to practice these topics in the early field experiences?
- How can we expand the number of quality early field experiences for our candidates?
- How do (or can) we support our graduates during the first year in the classroom?
- How can we build stronger relationships with school districts regarding new hires?

Recommendations for Principals and School Districts

As principals and school district personnel interview potential new teacher candidates, they should:

- Evaluate the interview process now used and include questions addressing the areas of Assessment, Classroom Management, Professionalism, Interpersonal Relationship Skills, Individualized Instruction, and Reading
- Review transcripts for potential teachers for courses in these same areas
- Prepare materials for distribution that emphasize professionalism expectations for their employees
- Evaluate the process used to determine whether first year teachers viewed as weak should receive contracts without improvement plans



Recommendations for SC General Assembly

State policy leaders should work toward:

- All individuals completing a teacher preparation program, whether a traditional or non-traditional program, and regardless of content discipline or grade level, be required to successfully complete a course on reading instruction
- All continuing teachers, regardless of content discipline or grade level, should be required to successfully complete a course on reading instruction by the end of the 2013-14 school year
- A survey of first year teachers should be conducted to obtain their feedback on their readiness for the classroom
- A follow-up study on why weak teachers are retained should be conducted



Questions?



**SC EDUCATION
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

Reporting facts. Measuring change. Promoting progress.

Dr. Paul Horne
(803) 734-6148
phorne@eoc.sc.gov