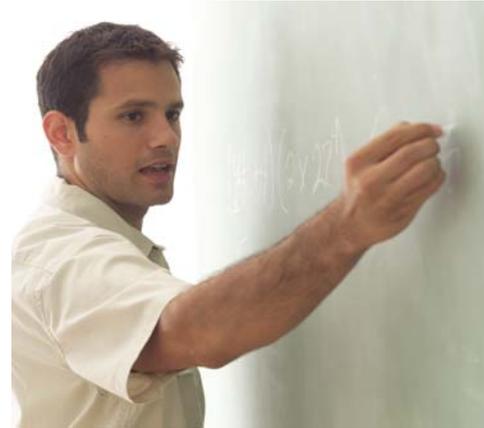


# BEGINNING TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SUCCESS



## A Summary Report for Northeast Collaborative Effort to Support Initially Licensed Professionals From the N.C. State University SUCCEED Program

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*June 10, 2007*

*SUCCEED*

<http://www.ncsu.edu/mentorjunction/>  
<http://www.ncsu.edu/mentorjunction/psi/psi.html>

## **A Summary Report for Collaborative Effort to Support New Professionals**

**Date: June 10, 2007**

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## INTRODUCTION:

Retaining beginning teachers is a critical component of school success. Recently, national studies have suggested beginning teachers’ perceptions of success are pivotal to retention and classroom excellence. This report summarizes findings from an assessment of beginning teachers in participating school systems of the Collaborative Effort to Support New Professionals. The report discusses findings with implications for the school systems.

Our nation recognizes that its well-being depends on a well-educated public. Retaining and respecting teachers is central to this enterprise. Unfortunately, too many good beginning teachers leave the profession in the first three years of teaching. Retaining these beginning teachers requires an integrated effort by school systems and policymakers that accounts for beginning teachers’ perceptions of success. Why? We now know there is an important correlation between beginning teachers’ perceptions of success across a number of key school factors and their willingness to stay in the classroom and excel.

In other words, as a community and as a school system, efforts must be made to increase beginning teachers’ perceptions of success among the key factors related to new teacher retention. This report summarizes results for each factor from the Perceptions of Success Inventory for Beginning Teachers (PSI-BT) which was administered to 225 beginning teachers in seven school systems that are a part of the Collaborative Effort to Support New Professionals. As well, it discusses implications for school leaders and community partners.

The Collaborative is receiving data on 53 of the 54 items assessed on the PSI-BT. Each item was assessed using two prompts:

- 1) This is my current experience in my school;
- 2) This is essential for effective teaching.

Beginning teachers responded to each item on a six point Likert scale as follows:

<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Slightly Disagree</i>	<i>Slightly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6

## FINDING 1: MENTOR SUPPORT

Effective programs of support for new teachers include mentoring. Typically, a beginning teacher is assigned an experienced teacher for support. Within this mentoring relationship, the beginning teacher is assisted with lesson planning, curriculum development, classroom management, and instruction. The mentoring relationship contributes to beginning teacher positive perceptions of their success. Having a mentor in the same grade and field is an optimal situation.<sup>1</sup> Mentoring is one of the strongest factors for reducing teacher attrition.<sup>2</sup>

Areas of Mentor Support assessed by the PSI-BT include:

- a) the importance of the mentoring relationship,
- b) assistance with classroom management,
- c) assistance with instructional concerns,
- d) assistance with parent/caregiver communication,
- e) encouragement in reflecting on teaching,
- f) an empathetic mentor, and
- g) whether the mentoring relationship was a positive experience.

Beginning teachers agree that mentor support is important to their perceptions of success (mean = 4.68, st. dev. = 1.28). The highest rated item was related to the *mentor being empathetic* (mean = 4.99), followed by *working with my mentor has been a positive experience* (mean = 4.89, st. dev. = 1.47). The large average standard deviation for the mentor support factor suggests that beginning teachers varied in their responses to items related to mentor support. The variability may indicate that some beginning teachers have not received sustained assistance from their mentors.

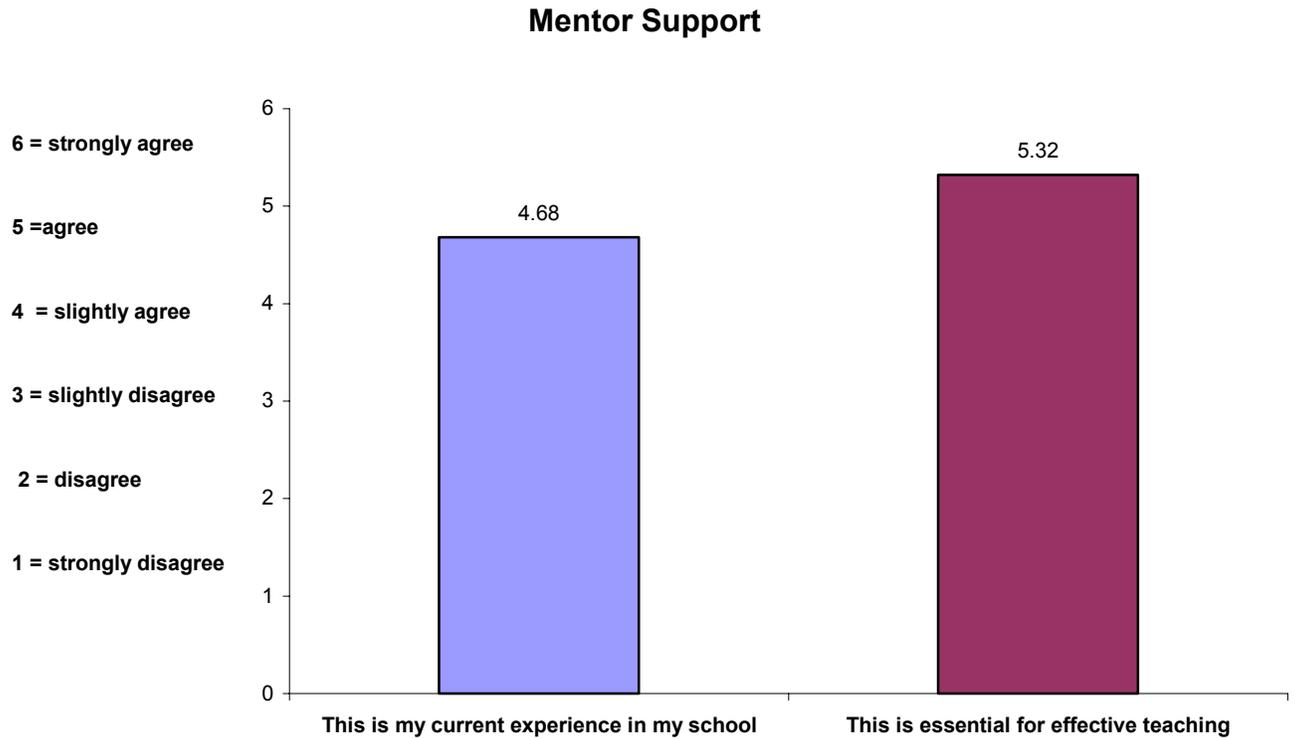
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<sup>1</sup> Johnson, S.M., & Birkeland, S.E. (2003a). Pursuing a “Sense of Success”: New Teachers Explain Their Career Decisions. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40(3), 581-617.

Ingersoll, R.M., & Smith, T.M. (2004). Do Teaching Induction and Mentoring Matter? *NASSP Bulletin*, 88(638), 28-40.

<sup>2</sup> Ingersoll, R.M., & Smith, T.M. (2004). Do Teaching Induction and Mentoring Matter? *NASSP Bulletin*, 88(638), 28-40.

The graph below provides a pictorial representation of mean scores for the factor Mentor Support. The means reported are for items 3 – 8 found in Appendix A. The x-axis of the graph represents the two prompts, and the y-axis is the 6-point Likert scale. The actual mean score for each prompt is located at the top of the bar.



The graph above indicates that beginning teachers' perceptions of the current Mentor Support are positive. However, beginning teachers would prefer even more support, and perceive mentors as relatively important to their perceptions of success. Differences between the two categories were significant.

## FINDING 2: COLLEAGUE SUPPORT

Beginning teachers value collegial interaction. They appreciate colleagues who willingly share strategies for assisting learners and improving teaching. Working in isolation can lead to attrition, but on the other hand, those teachers that feel connected with supportive colleagues describe this support as one reason they stay in their school.<sup>3</sup>

Areas of Colleague Support assessed by the PSI-BT include:

- a) opportunities to talk with other novice teachers in a setting free of evaluation,
- b) common planning times with teachers in the same subject area or grade level,
- c) time to visit and observe exemplary colleagues, and
- d) meeting with colleagues in the same grade level or subject area to ask questions.

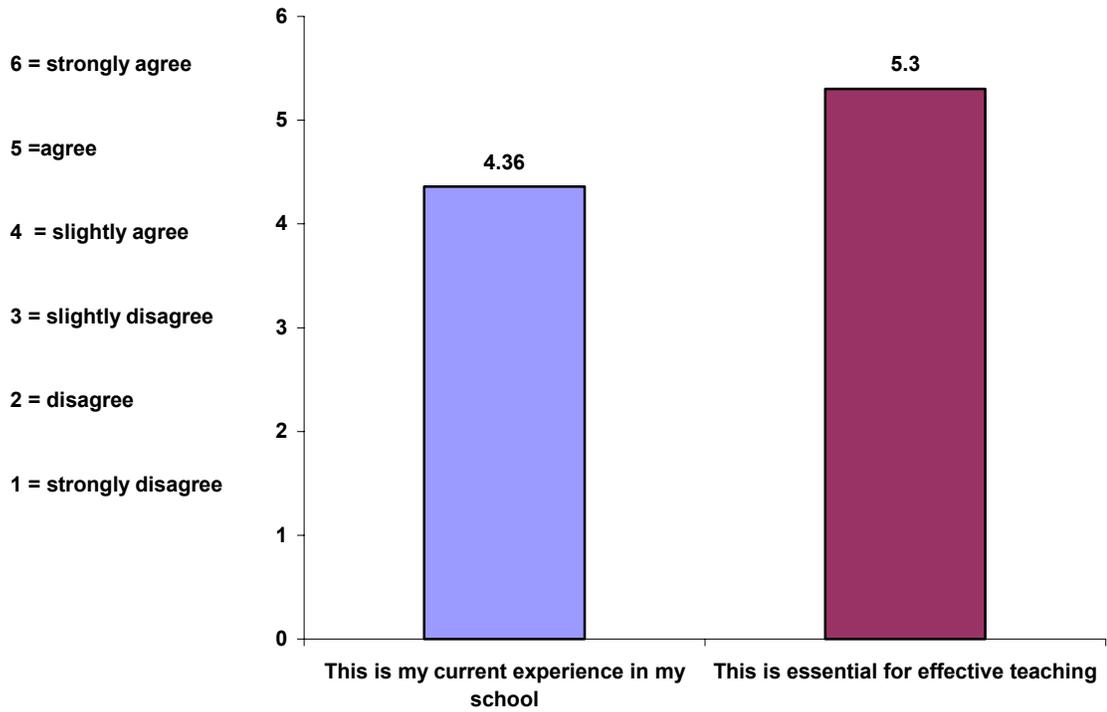
Beginning teachers slightly agree that colleague support is important to their perceptions of success (mean = 4.36, st. dev. = 1.10). The highest rated item was # 12 (mean = 4.75, st. dev. = 0.90), indicating that beginning teachers *have a colleague in their subject area or grade level who will answer their questions*. The second highest rated item was #9 (mean = 4.69, st. dev. = 4.69), indicating that beginning teachers *have opportunities for meaningful conversations with other novice teachers in a setting free of evaluation*. The high standard deviations indicate that there is a significant amount of variability in responses from the beginning teachers. The lowest rated item was #11 (mean = 3.66, st. dev. = 1.67), indicating that beginning teachers have opportunities to visit and observe exemplary teachers.

The graph on page 7 provides a pictorial representation of mean scores for the factor Colleague Support. The means reported are for items 9-12 found in Appendix A. The x-axis of the graph represents the two prompts, and the y-axis is the 6-point Likert scale. The actual mean score for each prompt is located at the top of the bar.

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<sup>3</sup> Johnson, S.M., & Birkeland, S.E. (2003a). Pursuing a “Sense of Success”: New Teachers Explain Their Career Decisions. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40(3), 581-617.

### Colleague Support



The graph above indicates beginning teachers slightly agree about colleague support. Beginning teachers would prefer more collegial interaction, and perceive collegial interaction as very important to effective teaching. Differences between the two categories were significant.

### FINDING 3: ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT

Beginning teachers value support from principals, assistant principals, and curriculum and instruction specialists. In particular, beginning teachers appreciate the following: orientations to the school, staff, curriculum, and community; feedback on teaching; and advocacy for professional growth.<sup>4</sup> When administrative support includes face-to-face interactions, it influences beginning teachers' decisions to remain in the school.<sup>5</sup>

Areas of Administrative Support assessed by the PSI-BT include:

- a) feedback on discipline decisions,
- b) encouragement to be an effective teacher,
- c) orientation to the school and staff,
- d) administrator's contact with the beginning teacher, and
- e) effective instructional leadership.

All five items related to administrative support had mean scores above 4, indicating that overall beginning teachers felt supported by the administration. The highest rating item was #14 (mean = 5.05, standard deviation = 1.18), indicating that *administration at my school encourages me to be an effective teacher*. This item is noteworthy since we know that feedback and encouragement related to teaching is correlated with higher teacher retention rates. The large standard deviations for Administrative Support items indicate that there is a fair amount of variation in responses and some responses probably are in the dissatisfaction range (below 4.0). Beginning teachers consistently note that administrative support is essential for effective teaching (mean = 5.48, standard deviation = 0.68). The lowest rated item within the administrative support factor was item #13 (mean = 4.24, standard deviation = 1.46), indicating that *the administration at my school provides appropriate feedback for my discipline decisions*.

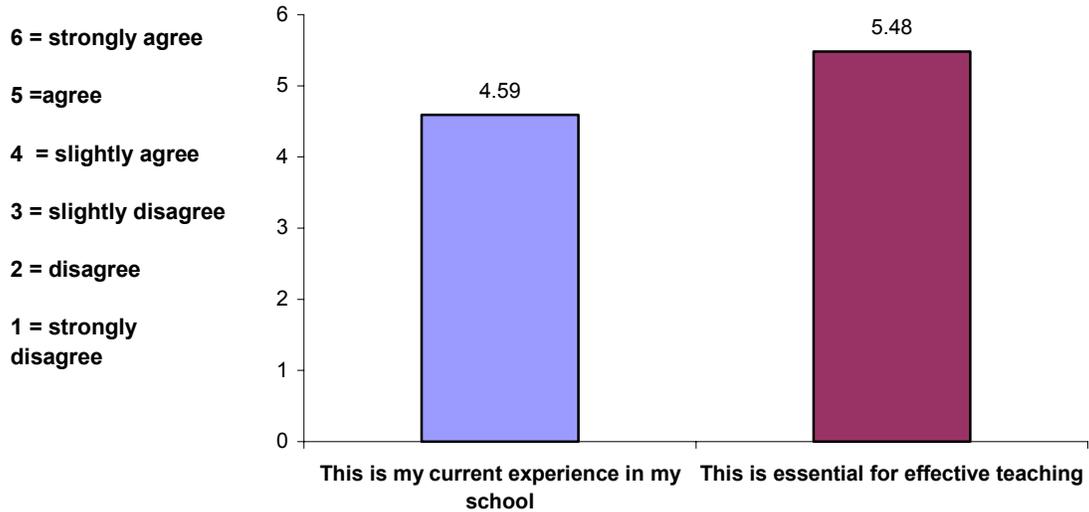
The graph on page 9 provides a pictorial representation of mean scores for the factor Administrative Support. The means reported are for items 13-17 found in Appendix A. The x-axis of the graph represents the two prompts, and the y-axis is the 6 point Likert scale. The actual mean score for each prompt is located at the top of the bar.

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<sup>4</sup> Quinn, R.J., & D'Amato Andrews, B. (2004). The struggles of first-year teachers investigating support mechanisms. *Clearing House*, 77(4) 164-168.

<sup>5</sup> Ingersoll, R. (2007). Research on New Teachers from a National Perspective. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.

### Administration Support



The graph above indicates that beginning teachers' perceptions of the current Administrative Support are positive. However, beginning teachers would prefer even more support, and perceive administrative support to be essential to effective teaching. Differences between the two categories were significant.

## FINDING 4: CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Beginning teachers cite student discipline as one reason they are dissatisfied with their teaching.<sup>6</sup> Satisfaction with teaching leads to retention of teachers, so it is important that school districts investigate how they can support new teachers in specific ways to increase teachers' satisfaction. It has additionally been found that a supportive faculty and administration can alleviate dissatisfaction with student discipline.

The PSI-BT assesses the following areas in classroom management:

- a) clear routines and procedures in the classroom that are aligned with school policy,
- b) consistent routines and procedures in the classroom,
- c) effective discipline procedures,
- d) discipline that is supportive of a good learning environment, and
- e) a feeling of being in control when teaching.

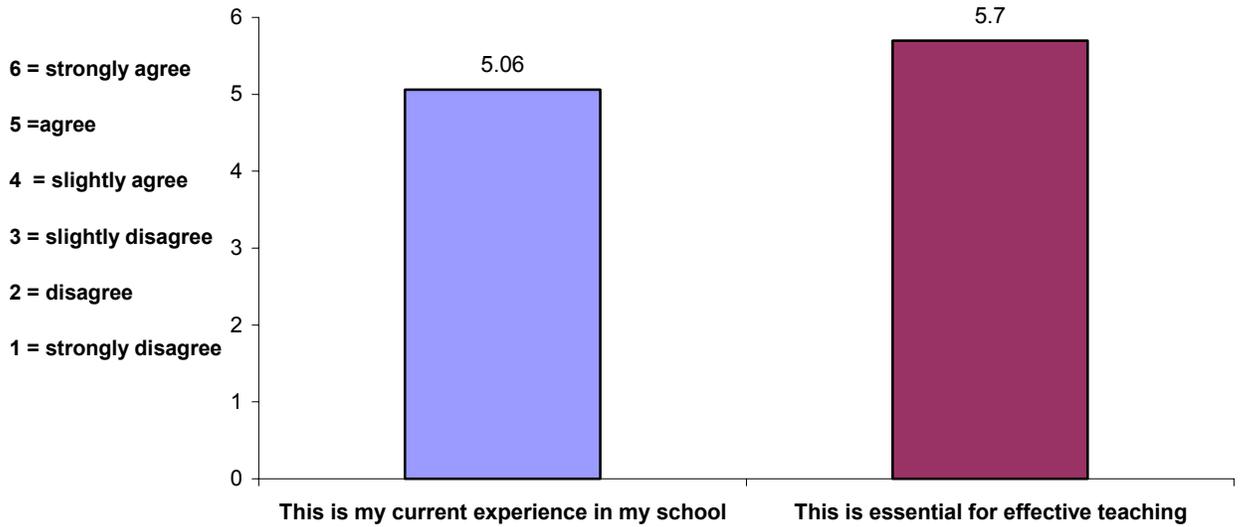
Beginning teachers were generally positive about their classroom management, noting that they *have developed clear routines and procedures* (mean = 5.26, standard deviation = 0.87), and *implemented clear and consistent discipline procedures* (mean = 5.21, standard deviation = 0.88). It is noteworthy that *beginning teachers feel in control when they are teaching* (mean = 4.96; standard deviation = 1.11). However, beginning teachers are slightly less positive about whether their procedures are effective.

The graph on page 11 provides a pictorial representation on the Northeast Collaborative mean scores for the factor Classroom Management. The means reported are for items 18-22 found in Appendix A. The x-axis of the graph represents the two prompts, and the y-axis is the 6 point Likert scale. The actual mean score for each prompt is located at the top of the bar.

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<sup>6</sup> Johnson, S.M., Baldacci, L., and The Project on the next Generation of Teachers (2006). Why new teachers leave... and why new teachers stay. *American Educator*, summer, 8-21, 45.  
 Liu, X.S. & Meyer, J.P. (2005). Teachers' Perceptions of Their Jobs: A Multilevel Analysis of the Teacher Follow-Up Survey for 1994-1995. *Teachers College Record*, 107 (5), 985.  
 Weiss, E.M. (1999). Perceived workplace conditions and first-year teachers' morale, career choice commitment, and planned retention: a secondary analysis. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 15, 861-879.

### Classroom Management



The graph above indicates that beginning teachers’ perceptions of their current classroom management are positive. However, beginning teachers would prefer even more support, and perceive classroom management as essential to effective teaching. Considering the scores for the classroom management factor, it appears that beginning teachers are experiencing relatively high perceptions of success related to classroom management. This is a noteworthy finding. Differences between the two categories were significant.

## FINDING 5: PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT

A recent study by Johnson suggested that mentors communicate different epistemic climates to their beginning teachers depending on their own reflective and moral judgment dispositions.<sup>7</sup> The type of epistemic climate fostered by the mentor contributed to or inhibited new teacher learning and perceptions of success. Specifically, more open and inquiry-based climates promoted greater new teacher feelings of success and efficacy.

The PSI-BT assesses the following areas in professional judgment:

- a) considering professional conduct with moral and ethical standards,
- b) taking action when seeing vulnerable students,
- c) communicating with parents, faculty, and staff in a professional manner, and
- d) feeling autonomy to make decisions in their own classroom.

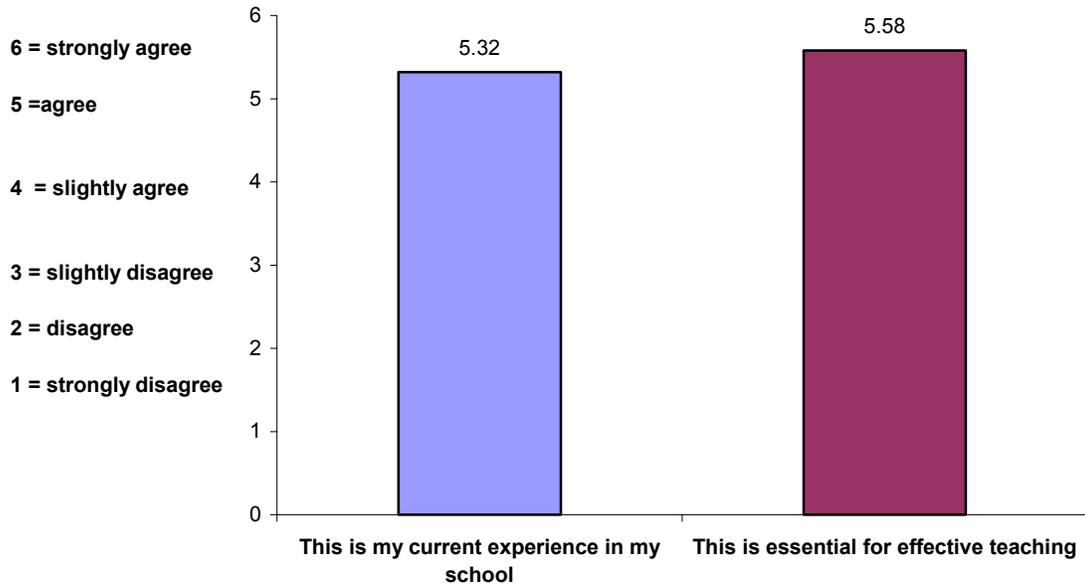
The beginning teachers feel confident in their professional judgment, as indicated by the mean current experience for this category of 5.32. The highest rated item was #23 (mean = 5.47) – *I think about my professional conduct in light of moral and ethical standards*. Two other items that were rated highly were item #25 (mean = 5.41) – *I communicate with parents in a professional manner* and item #26 (mean = 5.43) – *I communicate with other faculty and staff in a professional manner*. The lowest rated item was item #27 (mean = 4.97) – *I feel empowered to take action when I see vulnerable students that need my attention*.

The graph on page 13 provides a pictorial representation of mean scores for the factor Professional Judgment. The means reported are for items 23-27 found in Appendix A. The x-axis of the graph represents the two prompts, and the y-axis is the 6-point Likert scale. The actual mean score for each prompt is located at the top of the bar.

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<sup>7</sup> Johnson, L. (2004). *Congruence between professional judgment and professional action as disposition: A case study of mentors and beginning teachers*. Unpublished dissertation. North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC.

### Professional Judgment



The graph above indicates that beginning teachers' perceptions of the current Professional Judgment are positive. Additionally, there were high levels of congruence between current experience and whether the items were deemed essential for effective teaching. This factor should be celebrated.

## FINDING 6: STUDENT SUCCESS

The constant for all teachers is students and their learning needs. When new teachers view their students as being successful they often make a decision to continue teaching. Johnson and Birkeland<sup>8</sup>, in a study of 50 beginning teachers, found that those teachers who were settled stayers spoke often of a desire to have their students feel successful.

The PSI-BT assesses several areas of student success including the ability of the beginning teachers to:

- a) successfully teach students of all ability levels;
- b) motivate all students;
- c) use a variety of instructional strategies to effectively teach students;
- d) effectively teach students with learning disabilities, students from diverse backgrounds, and students who have limited English proficiency; and
- e) frame instructional decisions based on students' needs.

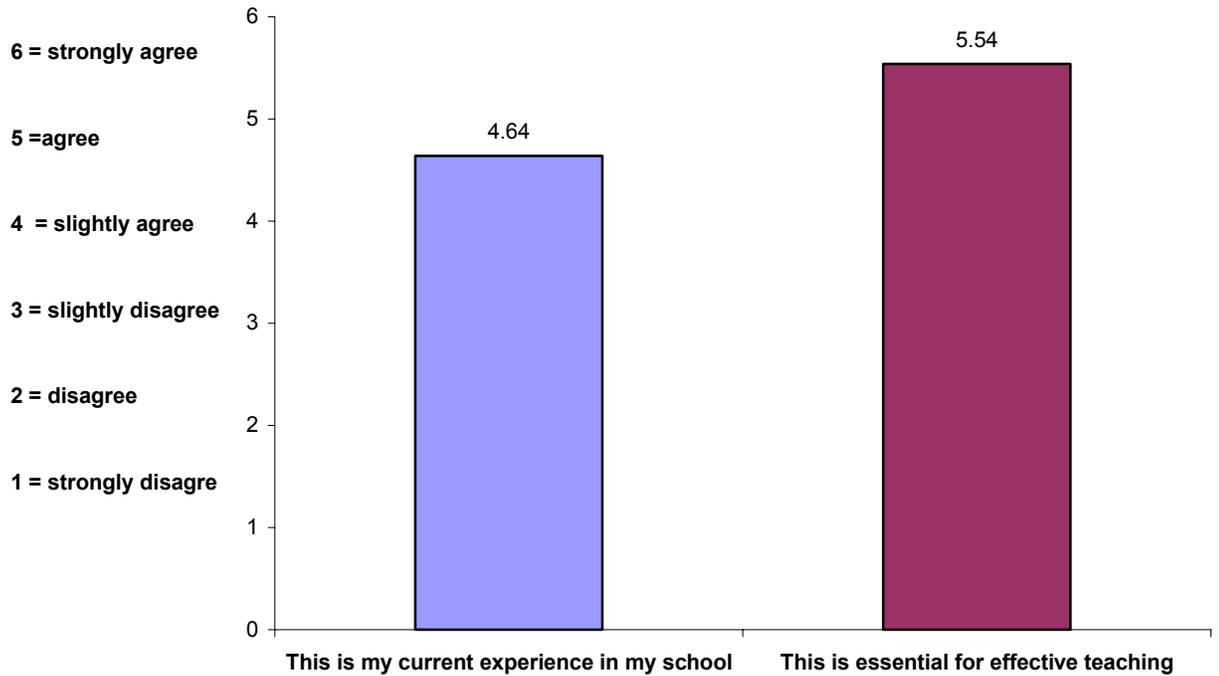
Beginning teachers in this sample feel moderately successful in their ability to use a variety of teaching strategies to reach students at all ability levels and from diverse backgrounds. The highest rated item in this factor was #33 (mean = 5.05; standard deviation = 0.87)—*I am able to effectively teach my students from diverse backgrounds*. The lowest rated items in this factor were item #29 (mean = 4.15) – *I am able to motivate all of my students*, item #31 (mean = 4.29) – *I am able to effectively teach my students with learning disabilities*, and item #32 (mean = 4.09) – *I am able to effectively teach my students with limited English proficiency*.

The graph on page 15 provides a pictorial representation of mean scores for the factor Student Success. The means reported are for items 28 - 34 found in Appendix A. The x-axis of the graph represents the two prompts, and the y-axis is the 6-point Likert scale. The actual mean score for each prompt is located at the top of the bar.

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<sup>8</sup> Johnson, S.M., & Birkeland, S.E. (2003). Pursuing a “Sense of Success”: New Teachers Explain Their Career Decisions. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40(3), 581-617.

### Student Success



The graph above indicates that beginning teachers' perceptions of the current Student Success are slightly positive. However, beginning teachers would prefer even more support, and perceive student success as very important to effective teaching. Differences between the two categories were significant.

## FINDING 7: INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

A number of studies have reported the availability of instructional and curriculum resources as an important precursor to new teacher perceptions of success. A complete curriculum should provide beginning teachers with specific content, skills, or topics to cover; a suggested timeline; and necessary instructional materials.<sup>9</sup> When curriculum and instructional resources are not provided new teachers are overwhelmed, and perceptions of their ability to teach successfully are heavily influenced.<sup>10</sup> An absence of curricular resources is particularly problematic for new science teachers.<sup>11</sup>

Specific to the PSI, the following items were assessed under the construct of instructional resources:

- a) provision of a curriculum that aligns with state objectives,
- b) provision of a curriculum necessary for effective teaching,
- c) confidence in the use of instructional technology available to the teacher,
- d) professional development that is valuable in instruction, and
- e) confident in their ability to grade student work, and comfortable with the reporting of student assessments.

The beginning teachers provided ratings ranging from 4.38 to 5.35 for the items under the instructional resources construct. The highest rated item was #39 (mean = 5.35) – *confidence in ability to grade student work*. A second highly rated item was #35 (mean = 5.28) – *I have been provided with curriculum that aligns with the state’s objectives from my grade level or subject area*. The lowest rated item was item #38 (mean = 4.38) – *the school provides professional development that is valuable to my instruction in the classroom*. The standard deviation for this item was 1.48, indicating a moderately high level of variance for this item.

The graph on page 17 provides a pictorial representation of mean scores for the factor Instructional Resources. The means reported are for items 35-40 found in Appendix A. The x-axis of the graph represents the two prompts, and the y-axis is the 6-point Likert scale. The actual mean score for each prompt is located at the top of the bar.

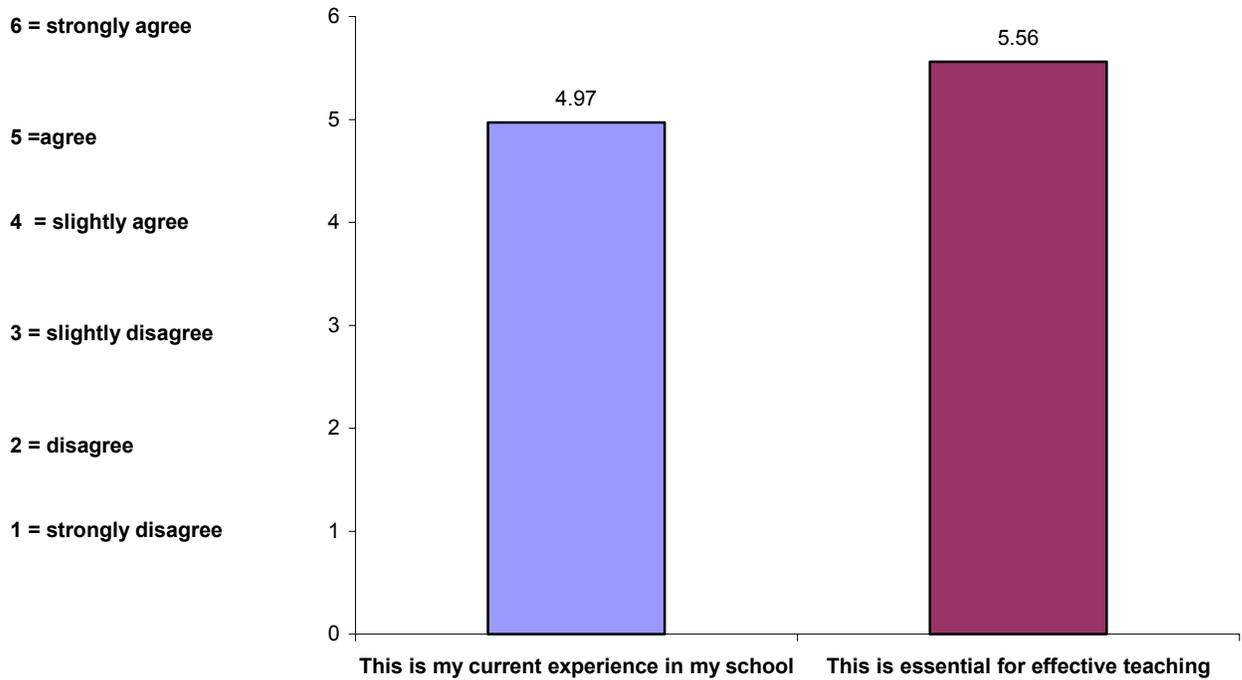
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<sup>9</sup> Kauffman, D., Johnson, S.M., Kardos, S.M., Liu, E., Peske, H.G. (2002). “Lost at Sea”: New teachers’ experiences with curriculum and assessment. *Teachers College Record*, 104(2), 273-300.

<sup>10</sup> Kauffman, D., Johnson, S.M., Kardos, S.M., Liu, E., Peske, H.G. (2002). “Lost at Sea”: New teachers’ experiences with curriculum and assessment. *Teachers College Record*, 104(2), 273-300.

<sup>11</sup> Britton, E.D. (2007). *Research in science and mathematics mentoring programs*. Annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Chicago, Illinois.

### Instructional Resources



The graph indicates that beginning teachers' perceptions of the current Instructional Resources are positive. However, beginning teachers would prefer even more support, and perceive instructional resources as very important to effective teaching. Differences between the two categories were significant.

## FINDING 8: ASSIGNMENT AND WORKLOAD

Numerous studies have noted that reduced teaching assignments and workload increase new teacher retention.<sup>12</sup> These studies also conclude that a reduced workload was often not the reality for beginning teachers. Birkeland and Johnson found that when the “settled stayers” were interviewed, the teachers reported being given “novice status,” (p. 19) meaning they had a reduced teaching load and minimal administrative duties.<sup>13</sup> Those teachers who are not overwhelmed with their teaching assignment and workload are often more likely to feel successful, specifically when they are provided with adequate mentoring, administrative support, planning time and curriculum resources.<sup>14</sup>

The PSI assesses the following items under the assignment and workload construct:

- a) the number of preparations is appropriate for a beginning teacher,
- b) at least one period a day that can be devoted to planning without interruption,
- c) overall workload is reasonable,
- d) beginning teacher is allowed to choose whether to take on extra duties, and
- e) satisfied with state and national testing policies.

Data on this factor reveals that beginning teachers in this sample are on the whole somewhat satisfied with their assignment and workload. The highest rated item was #41 (mean = 4.52; standard deviation = 1.42) – *I think the number of preparations I have for my classes is appropriate for a beginning teacher.* The second highest rated item was # 43 (mean = 4.32) – *my overall teaching workload is reasonable.* The lowest rated item was # 45 (mean = 3.47; standard deviation = 1.73) – *I am satisfied with state and national testing policies.* This low rating by beginning teachers with the large standard deviation may suggest that beginning teachers are strongly dissatisfied with state and national testing policies. It should be noted as well that beginning teachers only slightly agree that testing is essential to effective teaching. In particular, beginning teachers would prefer a daily planning period, choice regarding extra duties, and, perhaps, less emphasis on high stakes testing.

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<sup>12</sup> Ingersoll, R.M., & Smith, T.M. (2004). Do Teaching Induction and Mentoring Matter? *NASSP Bulletin*, 88(638), 28-40.

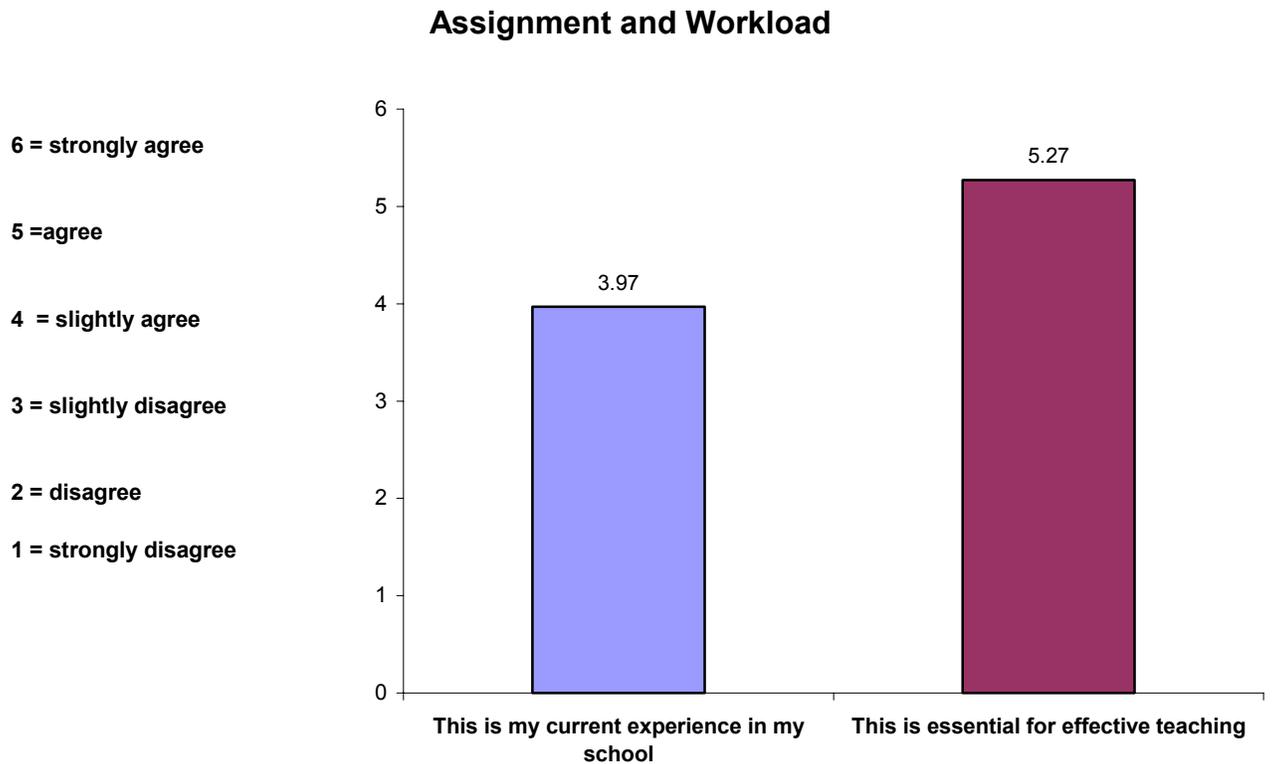
Johnson, S.M., & Birkeland, S.E. (2003). Pursuing a “Sense of Success”: New Teachers Explain Their Career Decisions. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40(3), 581-617.

Reiman, A.J., & Parramore, B. (1994). First-year teachers’ assignments, expectations, and development. In M. O’Hair and S. Odell (Eds.), *Partnerships in Education* (pp. 120-134). New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanovich.

<sup>13</sup> Birkeland, S., & Johnson, S.M., (2002). What keeps new teachers in the swim? *National Staff Development Council, Fall*, 18-21.

<sup>14</sup> Reiman, A.J., & Parramore, B. (1994). First-year teachers’ assignments, expectations, and development. In M. O’Hair and S. Odell (Eds.), *Partnerships in Education* (pp. 120-134). New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanovich.

The graph below provides a pictorial representation of mean scores for the factor Assignment and Workload. The means reported are for items 41-45 found in Appendix A. The x-axis of the graph represents the two prompts, and the y-axis is the 6-point Likert scale. The actual mean score for each prompt is located at the top of the bar.



The graph above indicates that beginning teachers' perceptions of the current assignment and workload are below the satisfactory range. The 5.27 mean for the "essential for effective teaching" category suggests that beginning teachers view assignment and workload as very essential to effective teaching. Differences between the two categories were significant.

## FINDING 9: PARENT/CAREGIVER CONTACT

One of the challenges beginning teachers face is communicating and working with their students' parents and caregivers.

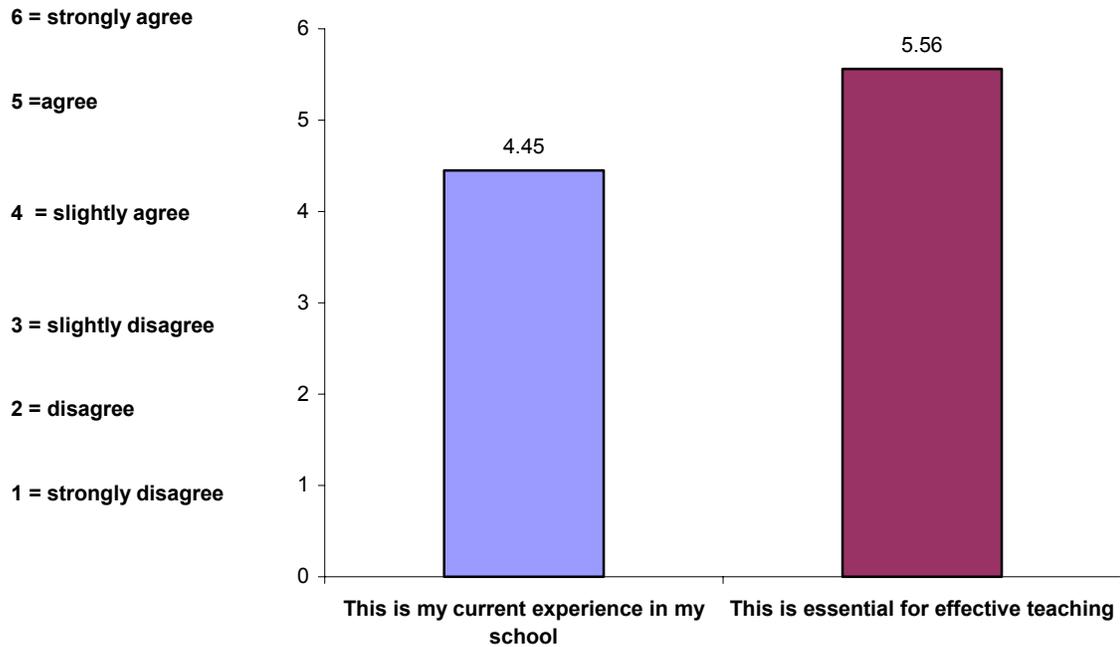
The PSI measures parent/caregiver contact using the following items:

- a) parents and caregivers are supportive of their child's progress in school,
- b) feeling comfortable with communicating with parents/caregivers,
- c) receiving guidance and support in communicating with parents/caregivers, and
- d) importance of communicating with parents/caregivers.

The beginning teachers rated the items above from 3.59 to 5.27. Beginning teachers gave the lowest mean score of 3.59 to item #46 – *the parents or caregivers of my students are supportive of their child's progress in school*. This suggests item #46 is an area of concern for beginning teachers in this sample. Despite this concern, the highest mean score was 5.27 for item #49 – *It is important to communicate with all of my students' parents or caregivers*.

The graph on page 21 provides a pictorial representation on Northeast Collaborative mean scores for the factor Parental/Caregiver Contact. The means reported are for items 46-49 found in Appendix A. The x-axis of the graph represents the two prompts, and the y-axis is the 6-point Likert scale. The actual mean score for each prompt is located at the top of the bar.

### Parent/Caregiver Contact



The graph above indicates that beginning teachers' perceptions of the current parent/caregiver support are moderate. However, beginning teachers would prefer even more support, and perceive parent and caregiver contacts as very essential to effective teaching. Differences between the two categories were significant.

## FINDING 10: SATISFACTION

Johnson and Birkeland found that satisfaction with their current job influenced the teacher's decision to stay, move, or leave.<sup>15</sup> Those teachers who felt that their dissatisfaction was job specific, and not career specific were more likely to move to another school. As schools need to retain their qualified teachers, and not lose them to other schools or another profession, administrators and school districts need to understand the areas that can increase beginning teacher job satisfaction.

The PSI assesses satisfaction in a slightly different way from the previous factors. There is one item that assesses overall job satisfaction. The teachers are then asked to select the top three items which, if improved, would increase their job satisfaction. The percentage of teachers who selected each item is listed in Appendix A under the satisfaction construct.

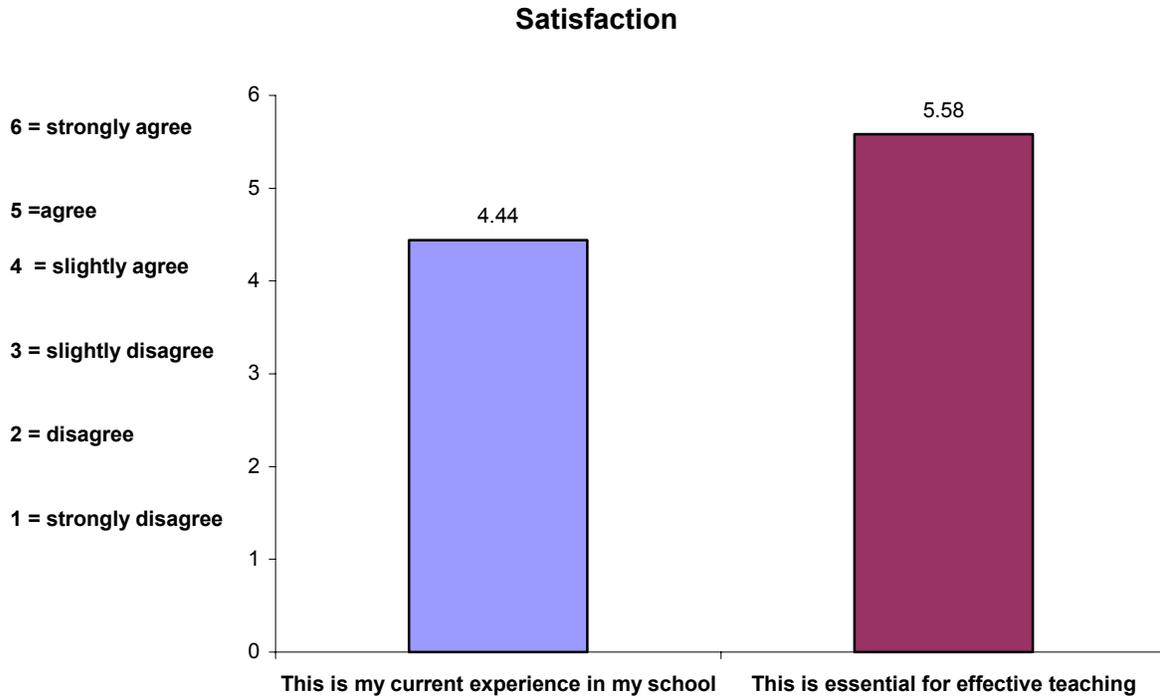
Beginning teachers ranked their current job satisfaction at 4.44 while noting that satisfaction was “very essential for effective teaching” (mean = 5.78; standard deviation = 0.85). This is a differential of over 1.0 and may be a source of concern for administrative personnel.

Beginning teachers identified the following top four items that can be improved to increase job satisfaction are: salary (68.4%), overall workload (69.2%), student discipline (47.6%), parental support (37.3%), and overall workload (26.7%). It is important to note the proportion of teachers who rated salary as needing to be improved. However, there are other items that may be more amenable to change. Research tells us that when other areas of the job are satisfactory, salary becomes less important when considering retention questions.

The graph page 23 provides a pictorial representation of mean scores for the factor Satisfaction. The means reported are for item 50 found in Appendix A. The x-axis of the graph represents the two prompts, and the y-axis is the 6-point Likert scale. The actual mean score for each prompt is located at the top of the bar.

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<sup>15</sup> Johnson, S.M., & Birkeland, S.E. (2003). Pursuing a “Sense of Success”: New Teachers Explain Their Career Decisions. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40(3), 581-617.



The graph above indicates that beginning teachers' perceptions of their current Satisfaction are somewhat positive, and satisfaction is essential for effective teaching. Differences between the two categories were significant.

## FINDING 11: COMMITMENT

The construct commitment measures the beginning teacher's commitment to the career of teaching. Researchers have found that teachers who were committed to teaching, yet dissatisfied with their present job sought out a more satisfactory job in teaching.<sup>16</sup> This construct is designed to separate the level of career commitment from measures of job satisfaction.

The PSI measures career commitment with two items:

- a) teaching as their ideal career
- b) inspired to teach students the best of their ability

Beginning teachers rated teaching as their ideal career with a mean score of 4.71. The beginning teachers gave a high rating to feeling inspired to teach students to the best of their ability (5.43), thus indicating their commitment to excellence and to the students. This is good news in terms of teaching quality and student achievement.

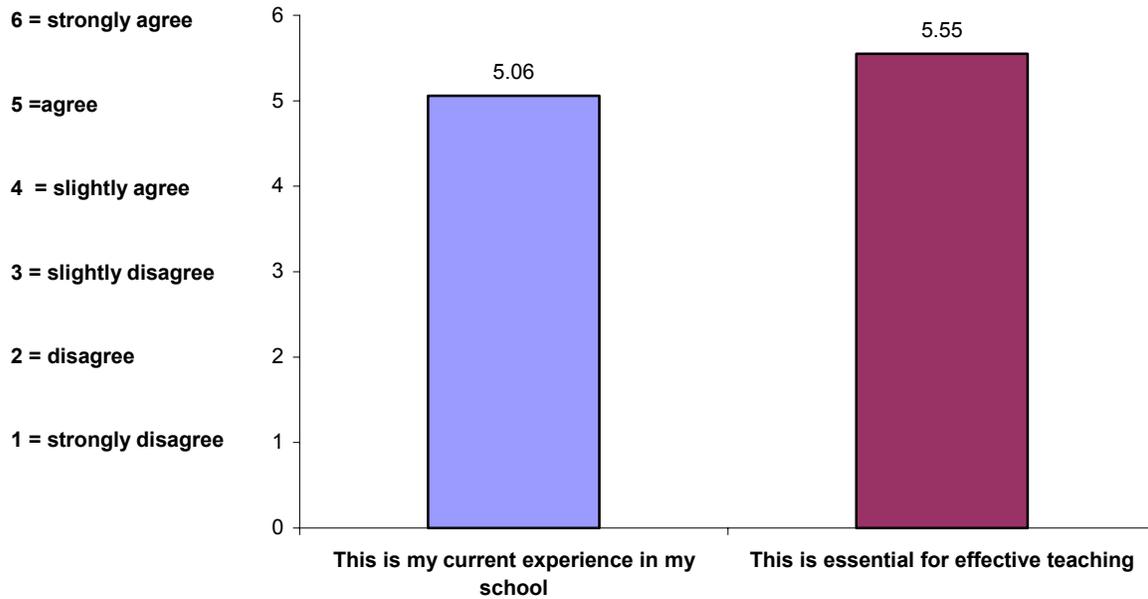
The graph on page 25 provides a pictorial representation of mean scores for the factor Commitment. The means reported are for items 52-53 found in Appendix A. The x-axis of the graph represents the two prompts, and the y-axis is the 6-point Likert scale. The actual mean score for each prompt is located at the top of the bar.

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<sup>16</sup> Johnson, L. (2004). *Congruence between professional judgment and professional action as disposition: A case study of mentors and beginning teachers*. Unpublished dissertation. North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC.

Johnson, S.M., & Birkeland, S.E. (2003). Pursuing a "Sense of Success": New Teachers Explain Their Career Decisions. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40(3), 581-617.

### Commitment



The graph above indicates that beginning teachers' perceptions of their current commitment are moderately high. As well, they feel inspired to instruct students to the best of their ability. These findings are noteworthy. Differences between the two categories were significant.

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Research indicates that teacher quality directly affects student achievement and identifies the teacher as the single most important factor that impacts student learning. In fact, the cumulative percentile gain over three years for students with the most effective teachers has been shown to be as much as 54 points higher than that of students with the least effective teachers.<sup>17</sup> Thus, it is critical to retain and promote excellence among each new generation of teachers that is recruited.

Beginning teachers in the sample school districts had a turnover rate range from 8.00 % to 20.34% in 2005-2006. The state average is 12.58% and the national average 15.7%.<sup>18</sup> The average turnover rate in other professions is 11%. The average turnover reported in recent years for businesses with 1,000 or more employees was 17%.

While turnover reflects one dimension of new teacher induction, beginning teacher perception of success provides a more detailed explanation of why teachers stay and leave, and why they may be excelling. For example, the National Education Association cites teaching assignment, administrator and mentor support, and working conditions as reasons why teachers with one to three years of teaching experience change schools or leave teaching altogether. In light of the PSI-BT data, the following implications are offered.

**IMPLICATION 1:** Beginning teachers have relatively high levels of commitment to teaching and to their students. This finding suggests that school system recruiters are attracting beginning teachers who view teaching as their ideal career. These recruitment processes should be sustained.

**IMPLICATION 2:** Effective classroom management is correlated with higher student achievement.<sup>19</sup> Beginning teachers felt efficacious in their ability to establish clear and effective routines and procedures. These perceptions suggest that beginning teachers have developed, with the help of support teachers and administration, comprehensive and well-articulated rules and procedures for classroom behavior, transitions and interruptions, use of materials and equipment, group work and independent work. Many new teachers struggle with classroom management. Thus, it is noteworthy that beginning teachers in the sample rated a majority of the items for this factor highly. Most likely, administration and supporting staff are implementing professional programs that contribute to beginning teacher perceptions of success with classroom management.

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<sup>17</sup> National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996). *What matters most: Teaching for America's future*. New York: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

<sup>18</sup> North Carolina Public Schools (2006). *Teacher Turnover Report* accessed February 14, 2007 from <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/humanresources/downloads/0506ttoreport.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Marzano, R.J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

IMPLICATION 3. Participating in collaborative learning and professional development related to instruction are correlated with student learning and school success.<sup>20</sup> Northeast Collaborative beginning teachers recognize the need to focus on collaborative approaches to instructional practices that support student learning, and they note that collegial interaction is essential to effective teaching. However, PSI-BT data indicate that beginning teachers would feel more efficacious if they had common planning times with other teachers at the same grade level or subject area. Thus, we recommend that the school system identify a collegial process for sharing promising instructional practices related to learners between new teachers and more experienced teachers at the same grade level. Such a strategy might mirror grade level planning as it has been implemented in middle schools. As well, beginning teachers would benefit from opportunities to observe exemplary teachers.

IMPLICATION 4. Organizing instruction for diverse learning needs is a hallmark of effective teachers who know their subjects and know how to teach those subjects to students.<sup>21</sup> Although beginning teachers have a strong sense of efficacy in meeting the needs of diverse learners, they are less confident in their ability to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities or limited English proficiency. PSI-BT data indicate that beginning teachers would feel more efficacious if they had professional development opportunities to understand and implement selected instructional strategies related to learning disabilities and teaching of student with limited English proficiency. Professional development could be organized to begin addressing this need.

IMPLICATION 5. Evidence suggests that instruction needs to be aligned with school-, district-, state-, and national testing and policies.<sup>22</sup> However, PSI-BT data indicate that beginning teachers are not satisfied with state and national testing policies. However, it is difficult to ascertain the reasons for their lower satisfaction. It is noteworthy that beginning teachers do not view state and national testing as highly essential to effective teaching. Steps should be taken to better understand these new teacher concerns. Action steps can follow.

IMPLICATION 6. According to research on the needs of beginning teachers, a reasonable assignment is a critical need for the success of the beginning teachers. Based on the PSI-BT data, beginning teachers feel less satisfied regarding extra duties, *noting that they may not be allowed to choose whether to take on extra duties or not, and they do not have a planning period each day.* We recommend that steps be taken to assure that beginning teachers do not assume extra duties during the first year of classroom teaching.

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<sup>20</sup> Stronge, J.H. (2002). *Qualities of effective teachers*. Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

<sup>21</sup> Marzano, R.J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

<sup>22</sup> Schalock, H.D., Schalock, M.D. & Ayres, R. (2006). Scaling up research in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 57(2), 102-119.

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Appendix A

Perceptions of Success Inventory for Beginning Teachers  
Factor and Item Means for all beginning teachers (years 1-3)

	<b>Mentor Support</b>	<i><b>This is my current experience in my school:</b></i>	<i><b>This is essential for effective teaching:</b></i>
		Mean      St. Dev.	Mean      St. Dev.
	<b>The factor score for Mentor Support is for Items 3 - 8.</b>	<b>4.68      (1.28)</b>	<b>5.32      (0.86)</b>
<b>Item Number</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
1	Do you have a mentor assigned to you by the school or another experienced teacher to provide you with assistance?	NA	
		<b>Mean      St. Dev.</b>	
2	The mentoring relationship is or would be important to me.	4.96      (1.43)	
		<i><b>This is my current experience in my school:</b></i>	<i><b>This is essential for effective teaching:</b></i>
		<b>Mean      St. Dev.</b>	<b>Mean      St. Dev.</b>
3	My mentor or an exemplary teacher has provided assistance with classroom management.	4.62      (1.49)	5.38      (0.95)
4	My mentor or an exemplary teacher has provided assistance with instructional concerns.	4.74      (1.35)	5.37      (0.93)
5	My mentor or an exemplary teacher has provided assistance related to communication with parents or caregivers of my students.	4.36      (1.55)	5.19      (1.09)
6	My mentor or an exemplary teacher is empathetic.	4.99      (1.33)	5.33      (0.96)
7	My mentor or an exemplary teacher encourages me to reflect about my teaching.	4.55      (1.50)	5.25      (1.07)
8	Working with my mentor has been a positive experience.	4.89      (1.47)	5.42      (0.98)

		<i>This is my current experience in my school:</i>		<i>This is essential for effective teaching:</i>	
	<b>Colleague Support</b>				
		Mean	St. Dev.	Mean	St. Dev.
	<b>The factor score for Colleague Support is for Items 9-12.</b>	<b>4.36</b>	<b>(1.10)</b>	<b>5.30</b>	<b>(0.71)</b>
<b>Item Number</b>	<b>Item</b>				
9	I have opportunities for meaningful conversations with other novice teachers in a setting free of evaluation.	4.69	(1.36)	5.37	(0.88)
10	I have common planning times with other teachers at my same grade level or subject area.	4.41	(1.80)	5.23	(1.12)
11	I have opportunities to visit and observe exemplary teachers	3.66	(1.67)	5.15	(1.05)
12	I have a colleague in my same subject area (secondary) or grade level (elementary) who will answer my questions.	4.75	(0.90)	5.45	(0.90)
	<b>Administration Support</b>				
		Mean	St. Dev.	Mean	St. Dev.
	<b>The factor score for Administration Support is for Items 13-17.</b>	<b>4.59</b>	<b>(1.19)</b>	<b>5.48</b>	<b>(0.68)</b>
<b>Item Number</b>	<b>Item</b>				
13	The administration at my school provides appropriate feedback for my discipline decisions.	4.24	(1.46)	5.42	(0.86)
14	The administration at my school encourages me to be an effective teacher.	5.05	(1.18)	5.62	(0.68)
15	The administration has oriented me to the school and staff.	4.75	(1.33)	5.40	(0.87)
16	I am satisfied with the contact I have with my administration.	4.54	(1.48)	5.50	(0.77)
17	The administration provides me with effective instructional leadership.	4.39	(1.43)	5.44	(0.80)

	<b>Classroom Management</b>	<i>This is my current experience in my school:</i>		<i>This is essential for effective teaching:</i>	
		<b>Mean</b>	<b>St. Dev.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>St. Dev.</b>
	<b>The factor score for Classroom Management is for Items 18-22.</b>	<b>5.06</b>	<b>(0.83)</b>	<b>5.70</b>	<b>(0.49)</b>
<b>Item Number</b>	<b>Item</b>				
18	I have developed clear routines and procedures for my classroom that are aligned with school policy.	5.26	(0.87)	5.69	(0.59)
19	I have implemented consistent routines and procedures in my classroom.	5.21	(0.88)	5.71	(0.56)
20	The discipline procedures in my classroom are effective.	4.79	(1.06)	5.73	(0.55)
21	The discipline in my classroom is supportive of a good learning environment for my students.	5.01	(0.99)	5.66	(0.65)
22	I feel in control when I am teaching.	4.96	(1.11)	5.73	(0.54)
	<b>Professional Judgment</b>	<i>This is my current experience in my school:</i>		<i>This is essential for effective teaching:</i>	
		<b>Mean</b>	<b>St. Dev.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>St. Dev.</b>
	<b>The factor score for Professional Judgment is for Items 23-27.</b>	<b>5.32</b>	<b>(0.64)</b>	<b>5.58</b>	<b>(0.54)</b>
<b>Item Number</b>	<b>Item</b>				
23	I think about my professional conduct in light of moral and ethical standards.	5.47	(0.80)	5.59	(0.71)
24	I feel empowered to take action when I see vulnerable students that need my attention.	5.23	(1.03)	5.54	(0.75)
25	I communicate with parents in a professional manner.	5.41	(0.76)	5.69	(0.58)
26	I communicate with other faculty and staff in a professional manner.	5.43	(0.77)	5.56	(0.71)
27	I feel like I have autonomy in making decisions about my class.	4.97	(1.06)	5.54	(0.65)

	<b>Student Success</b>	<i>This is my current experience in my school:</i>		<i>This is essential for effective teaching:</i>	
		<b>Mean</b>	<b>St. Dev.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>St. Dev.</b>
	<b>The factor score for Student Success is for Items 28-34.</b>	<b>4.64</b>	<b>(0.84)</b>	<b>5.54</b>	<b>(0.57)</b>
<b>Item Number</b>	<b>Item</b>				
28	I am able to successfully teach my students of all ability levels.	4.76	(1.02)	5.60	(0.63)
29	I am able to motivate all of my students.	4.35	(1.25)	5.52	(0.73)
30	I am able to use a variety of teaching strategies to provide my students with instruction that is effective for them.	4.96	(0.96)	5.60	(0.61)
31	I am able to effectively teach my students with learning disabilities.	4.29	(1.28)	5.50	(0.75)
32	I am able to effectively teach my students with limited English proficiency.	4.09	(1.41)	5.32	(1.10)
33	I am able to effectively teach my students from diverse backgrounds.	5.05	(0.87)	5.63	(0.63)
34	I am able to frame my instructional decisions based on my students' learning.	5.03	(0.92)	5.62	(0.64)

	Instructional Resources	This is my current experience in my school:		This is essential for effective teaching:	
		Mean	St. Dev.	Mean	St. Dev.
	<b>The factor score for Instructional Resources is for Items 35-40.</b>	<b>4.97</b>	<b>(0.81)</b>	<b>5.56</b>	<b>(0.39)</b>
Item Number	Item				
35	I have been provided with curriculum that aligns with the state's objectives for my grade level or subject area.	5.28	(1.10)	5.64	(0.69)
36	I have the curriculum materials I need to teach effectively.	4.65	(1.36)	5.27	(0.73)
37	I feel confident in my ability to use the instructional technology available to me.	4.91	(1.18)	5.57	(0.70)
38	The school provides professional development that is valuable to my instruction in the classroom.	4.38	(1.48)	5.47	(0.85)
39	I feel confident in my ability to grade student work.	5.35	(0.93)	5.62	(0.69)
40	I feel comfortable with reporting the assessment of my students' work.	5.25	(0.95)	5.56	(0.74)

	<b>Assignment and Workload</b>	<b>This is my current experience in my school:</b>		<b>This is essential for effective teaching:</b>	
		<b>Mean</b>	<b>St. Dev.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>St. Dev.</b>
	<b>The factor score for Assignment and Workload is for Items 41-45.</b>	<b>3.97</b>	<b>(1.11)</b>	<b>5.27</b>	<b>(0.77)</b>
<b>Item Number</b>	<b>Item</b>				
41	I think the number of preparations I have for my classes is appropriate for a beginning teacher.	4.52	(1.42)	5.41	(0.91)
42	I have at least one period per day that I can devote without interruption to planning for my classes.	3.69	(1.91)	5.49	(0.97)
43	My overall teaching workload is reasonable.	4.32	(1.44)	5.40	(0.87)
44	Beginning teachers are allowed to choose whether to take on extra duties or not.	3.91	(1.84)	5.30	(1.05)
45	I am satisfied with state and national testing policies.	3.47	(1.73)	4.73	(1.54)
	<b>Parental/Caregiver Contacts</b>	<b>This is my current experience in my school:</b>		<b>This is essential for effective teaching:</b>	
		<b>Mean</b>	<b>St. Dev.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>St. Dev.</b>
	<b>The factor score for Parental/Caregiver Contacts is for items 46-49.</b>	<b>4.45</b>	<b>(0.95)</b>	<b>5.56</b>	<b>(0.62)</b>
<b>Item Number</b>	<b>Item</b>				
46	The parents or caregivers of my students are supportive of their child's progress in school.	3.59	(1.37)	5.54	(0.83)
47	I feel comfortable with communicating with the parents or caregivers of my students.	4.74	(1.16)	5.59	(0.70)
48	I have adequate guidance and support in working with parents.	4.27	(1.40)	5.47	(0.84)
49	It is important to communicate with all of my students' parents or caregivers.	5.27	(1.08)	5.61	(0.69)

	Satisfaction	This is my current experience in my school:		This is essential for effective teaching:	
		Mean	St. Dev.	Mean	St. Dev.
	<b>The factor score for Satisfaction is only for item 50. Percentages will be given for each choice in item 51.</b>	<b>4.44</b>	<b>(1.45)</b>	<b>5.78</b>	<b>(0.85)</b>
<b>Item Number</b>	<b>Item</b>				
50	In general, I am satisfied with my current job.	4.44	(1.45)	5.58	(0.85)
51	If someone could change any of the following items, which ones would be most important to improve your satisfaction with your job? Choose the THREE most important items only. <i>This is the percent of your county choosing each selection.</i>				
	Salary		68.4%		
	Health and retirement benefits		12.9%		
	Mentor support		6.2%		
	Colleague support		3.6%		
	Administration support		16.4%		
	Student discipline		47.6%		
	Your professional judgment		1.7%		
	Teaching students with varied abilities		10.7%		
	Assessment		4.9%		
	Student motivation		32.9%		
	Instructional resources		20.5%		
	Teaching assignment		3.1%		
	Overall workload		26.7%		
	Parental support		37.3%		
	Professional development		9.8%		

	<b>Commitment</b>	<i>This is my current experience in my school:</i>	<i>This is essential for effective teaching:</i>
		<b>Mean      St. Dev.</b>	<b>Mean      St. Dev.</b>
	<b>The factor score for Commitment is for items 52-53.</b>	<b>5.06      (1.02)</b>	<b>5.55      (0.69)</b>
<b>Item Number</b>	<b>Item</b>		
52	I consider teaching to be my ideal career.	4.71      (1.44)	5.39      (1.03)
53	I feel inspired to instruct students to the best of my ability.	5.43      (0.87)	5.71      (0.60)