

Lessons From New Teachers

New teacher feedback from the
2019 Tennessee Educator Survey



First-year teachers find mentors valuable, but there appears to be room for improvement in the coaching activities in which mentors engage.



7 in 10 first-year teachers report they had a **mentor assigned to them** by their school or district.

New teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their **mentor teacher:**

83%	78%	85%	87%
HELPED THEM NAVIGATE THEIR SCHOOL	PROVIDED FREQUENT FEEDBACK	PROVIDED USEFUL FEEDBACK	WAS APPROACHABLE FOR HELP

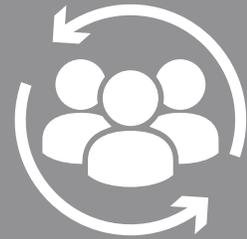
However, **1 in 3** new teachers report their mentors frequently engaged with them in high-leverage coaching activities, such as observations, co-designing or co-teaching lessons, analyzing student work, or debriefing lessons.

1 in 4 NEW TEACHERS RECEIVED NONE OF THESE HIGH-LEVERAGE COACHING ACTIVITIES.



“ My mentor was vital to my success. Without her availability, I think I would have left the profession very quickly, instead of ending my 18th year. **”**
– Teacher

Leveraging relationships is one of the most important aspects of preparing, recruiting, and developing new teachers.



Relationships Matter for New Teachers



Only **4 in 10** new teachers report feeling **“well prepared”** for their first year of teaching, a decline of seven percent from last year.



53%

OF TEACHERS FEEL WELL PREPARED BY THEIR CLINICAL EXPERIENCE.



42%

OF TEACHERS FEEL WELL PREPARED BY COURSEWORK.

59% OF NEW TEACHERS SELECTED THEIR DISTRICT BASED ON PRE-EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS, INCLUDING STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE, PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHERS, OR FAMILIARITY WITH SCHOOL OR DISTRICT LEADERSHIP.



“ I learned so much in the few days that I observed other teachers in my school after I had been in my own classroom. The classes I’ve taken are not as beneficial as the time I’ve spent one-on-one with other teachers. ”
– Teacher

How to apply these findings to support early-career teachers:

- 1 Remember that **it is common for new teachers to feel that they are not well prepared.** As part of onboarding, incorporate opportunities for teachers to form relationships that would sustain them through these early years.
- 2 Provide mentors for all first-year teachers and give mentors clear expectations. Ensure that mentors are supported to frequently engage in coaching activities that will **provide high-quality feedback.**

How to apply these findings for educator preparation providers:

- 1 Be mindful that the **clinical experience is critical for future teachers’ career trajectories**, both in their preparation to teach and in building networks.
- 2 Consider supporting local school districts in their efforts to develop
 - **Recruitment strategies** that build authentic relationships, and
 - **Structured mentorships** that provide high-leverage coaching supports for new teachers.