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%** helped them navigate their school
- **78%** provided frequent feedback
- **85%** provided useful feedback
- **87%** 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.