THE SOUTHEAST CENTER FOR TEACHING QUALITY SECTQ

TEACHING QUALITY IN THE SOUTHEAST

Policy Brief

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The Status of Teaching in the Southeast: Measuring Progress, Moving Forward

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Tables

In early January 2003, *Education Week* released a new report on the status of teaching in the United States and concluded that many states are taking steps to recruit and retain skilled teachers, but few efforts focus on the schools where these teachers are needed most. Drawing upon a large national database,[1] *Quality Counts 2003* revealed that students in high-minority, high-poverty schools are far more likely to have teachers who are inexperienced or who are not certified in the subject taught. The newspaper also found that teachers in high-poverty and high-minority schools report more difficult working conditions than do teachers in other schools.[2]

The *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001 mandates that, by school year 2005-2006, every public school student in our nation must be taught by a highly qualified teacher. State policymakers and local educators have thirty months to meet this demand. It's clear from the *Quality Counts* analysis that they face a Herculean task.

Consider what it will take to produce quality teachers for every student in America's 90,000-plus public schools. All teachers must be prepared to teach diverse students. New teachers must be well supported through high quality induction programs. To attract and retain high performers, teachers will need to be paid as professionals and rewarded for teaching in ways that increase student achievement. Many schools will need to be redesigned so teachers have time to learn from expert colleagues. Local administrators and school boards will need new tools and resources to recruit skilled teachers and create supportive school environments that will keep teachers on the job. Policymakers at every level will need reliable information about the effectiveness of their recruitment and retention strategies and the impact of investments in professional development.

ARE STATES PREPARED TO MEET THESE CHALLENGES?

The findings reported in *Quality Counts 2003* were drawn in large part from the recently released federal dataset, *Schools and Staffing Survey, 1999-2000* (SASS).[3] Using this data, *Education Week* graded the fifty states and the District of Columbia on their progress in improving teaching quality. States were evaluated on the extent to which they assess teachers, whether they have less "out-of-field teaching," and how they prepare and develop teachers (e.g., whether they require and fund induction programs, require more student teaching, and hold teacher education programs accountable).

Across the nation, the teaching-quality grades assigned to states were not encouraging. Only nine states earned a B, just 24 earned a C, and 18 earned a D.[4] As a region, the Southeast fared somewhat better. Four of the nine states earning a B were in our region: Arkansas, Kentucky, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Each of these states deserves praise for their progress. But most people would agree we still have a long way to go to ensure a competent, caring, and qualified teacher for every student in every one of our schools.

OUR ANALYSIS OF THE SASS DATA: ADDITIONAL INDICATORS

The Southeast Center for Teaching Quality also analyzed data from the *Schools and Staffing Survey* and developed additional indicators not found in the *Quality Counts 2003* report. These indicators focus on teacher preparation, induction and professional development, testing and accountability, and working conditions.

These indicators are important measures of teacher quality. As other research has begun to show,[5] high-quality preparation, induction support, positive working conditions, and training in the use of standards to improve teaching effectiveness all contribute to lower teacher turnover — and lower turnover spurs more coherent and sustained school improvement. Measuring progress on these critical teaching quality indicators is key to moving forward on student achievement.

These preliminary findings from the SASS database help describe the status of teaching in the Southeast.[6] SECTQ will continue to analyze and report on this rich source of information in the months to come.

FINDING #1: Few new teachers report they are "very well prepared" and many have little practical experience before they begin teaching.

Significantly less than half of new teachers[7] across the Southeast reported they were "very well prepared" in seven key teaching areas (see Table 1). However, they did report higher levels of readiness to teach than their counterparts in the rest of the nation. As always, classroom management was a major concern of novice teachers. Slightly more than 21 percent in the Southeast felt very well prepared to manage their own classrooms. In six of the seven teaching areas, only small percentages of new teachers reported they were not prepared at all. In the seventh area, use of computers, a much higher percentage (14% in the Southeast) said they had no preparation. Novice teachers in the Southeast felt they were best prepared in subject matter (almost 40%) and planning lessons effectively (37%).

New teachers in the Southeast were less likely than teachers nationwide to participate in extensive practice teaching before they began their stints as independent classroom teachers. As Table 2 reveals, 30 percent of North Carolina teachers who entered the classroom between 1995-96 and 1999-2000 had no student teaching, and only 54 percent had more than ten weeks. Florida and Mississippi (each with 22%) also had high percentages of new teachers with no practice teaching. Kentucky's new teachers were most likely to have ten or more weeks of practice teaching (87%). Although states like North Carolina have done much to improve their teacher education policies, the onset of "lateral entry" programs that allow individuals to bypass pre-service preparation has increased the percentage of new teachers who have no practice teaching experience.[8]

Table 1: Levels of preparedness in first year of teaching for new teachers

State	Percentage who felt "not at all prepared" or "very well prepared" in first year of teaching													
	Classroom management		Instructional methods		Subject matter		Use computers		Plan lessons effectively		Assess students		Instructional materials	
	Not at all	Very well	Not at all	Very well	Not at all	Very well	Not at all	Very well	Not at all	Very well	Not at all	Very well	Not at all	Very well
SE states	**5.6**	**21.4**	**2.8**	**25.1**	**1.9**	**39.8**	**13.9**	**17.4**	**2.0**	**37.2**	**2.1**	**23.1**	**4.4**	**22.2**
National	**5.5**	**19.1**	**3.1**	**23.6**	**2.4**	**35.7**	**15.9**	**15.8**	**2.4**	**32.8**	**3.3**	**20.4**	**5.4**	**19.9**

Table 2: Extent of practice teaching for new teachers

State	Weeks of practice teaching			
	No student teaching	4 weeks or less	5-9 weeks	10+ weeks
Alabama	5.2%	3.3%	18.5%	73.0%
Arkansas	7.2	0.4	15.7	76.7
Florida	21.8	0.6	15.0	62.6
Georgia	6.4	1.6	17.8	74.1
Kentucky	4.4	0	8.4	87.2
Louisiana	16.4	7.0	13.6	63.0
Mississippi	21.9	3.3	16.9	58.0
N. Carolina	30.2	1.0	15.3	53.5
S. Carolina	13.6	0	24.0	62.3
Tennessee	6.1	0.7	6.5	86.6
Virginia	16.8	2.5	14.5	66.2
SE states	**15.0**	**1.7**	**15.0**	**68.3**
National	**10.4**	**2.2**	**12.5**	**74.8**

FINDING #2: New teachers in the Southeast are more likely to participate in induction programs and receive extra support, although the levels vary significantly from state to state.

In general, more new teachers in the Southeast participated in induction programs than their counterparts nationwide. However, as Table 3 shows, there is tremendous variability across the region. Less than one-quarter of beginning teachers in Arkansas and Mississippi reported some kind of induction support, while three-quarters or more of teachers in Florida, Kentucky, North Carolina, and South Carolina participated in such a program. The data do not tell us about the quality of these induction programs, only the level of participation. As SECTQ has reported elsewhere,[9] many programs lack depth and are unlikely to have a positive impact on a new teacher's performance or longevity on the job.

Table 4 reveals that teachers in the Southeast were somewhat more likely to receive first-year support than teachers nationwide. Slightly higher percentages of teachers reported they had a common planning time (48% Southeast vs. 43% national) and regular supportive communication (79% vs. 76%).

In the Southeast, North Carolina had the largest percentage of first-year teachers with a reduced teaching schedule (17%), a highly desirable but uncommon practice in both the region and nation. States performed slightly better on another beneficial practice: reducing the number of lesson preparations for novice teachers. About 14 percent of new teachers in North Carolina and Louisiana enjoyed this support, and the regional average of 9 percent outpaced the nation by almost two percentage points.

In the area of common planning time, which allows teachers not only time to plan, but also to meet and confer together, Alabama's new teachers were most likely to have this opportunity (54%), and novices in Arkansas were least likely (40%).

High percentages of new teachers in North Carolina, Florida, and South Carolina (each over 79%) participated in seminars for new teachers, while only a little more than one-third of Arkansas teachers did so. More than a third of new teachers in Tennessee and Kentucky received extra classroom assistance, while less than one-fifth of teachers in South Carolina and Georgia received the extra help. Across the region, large percentages of new teachers said they received regular communications that supported their work. Kentucky topped the list with 90 percent.

Note that these survey data were collected in 1999-2000. Many states in the region have made strides in teaching policy development since that time. For example, Arkansas, which makes a weak showing in the SASS data, has begun to invest more in new-teacher support. *Education Week* recognized these efforts by awarding Arkansas a grade of B for improving its teaching quality.[10]

Table 3: Induction program participation for new teachers

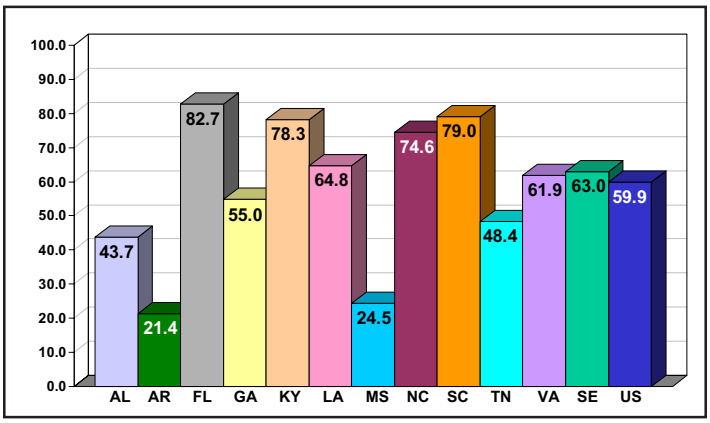


Table 4: New teacher support

State	Reduced teaching schedule	Reduced number of preparations	Common planning time	Seminars for beginning teachers	Extra classroom assistance	Regular supportive communication*
Alabama	6.0%	9.6%	53.6%	50.3%	20.6%	79.4%
Arkansas	7.3	8.2	39.9	35.3	24.3	79.5
Florida	4.5	4.6	52.2	80.5	24.3	85.4
Georgia	4.6	8.1	45.9	51.0	19.6	71.2
Kentucky	7.7	6.6	51.3	61.4	35.0	90.0
Louisiana	6.9	13.9	47.4	67.7	26.8	83.6
Mississippi	7.3	9.2	41.6	40.7	25.7	69.6
N. Carolina	16.8	14.4	50.0	86.2	28.3	81.3
S. Carolina	3.8	9.2	51.8	79.4	18.7	77.5
Tennessee	6.7	9.8	46.4	55.4	37.2	75.9
Virginia	7.8	10.3	42.5	57.0	29.0	73.9
SE states	7.3	9.2	48.3	64.5	26.2	79.3
National	5.8	7.4	43.3	63.0	26.0	75.6

*Communication with principal, other administrators, or department chair.

Education Week gives higher marks on its teacher quality report card when states require and fund statewide induction programs. Good policy, unfortunately, does not always guarantee good practice. Elsewhere, we have described how a seemingly sound statewide induction policy (for example, the one built into North Carolina's *Excellent Schools Act of 1997*) can go awry without equally sound implementation strategies.[11]

To ensure proper implementation, states must carefully examine induction programs to determine whether new teachers have opportunities to work closely with a mentor, whether they have a mentor who is trained in their subject area, and whether their mentor helped them "to a great extent."

The data in Table 5 tell us more about the implementation of new-teacher induction policies in the Southeast. We see, for example, that Kentucky's new teachers were most likely to work closely with a mentor teacher (93%). On the opposite end of the spectrum, less than half of the new teachers in Mississippi and Arkansas maintained a close working relationship with a mentor.

Among those novices who did have mentors, teachers in Alabama and Arkansas were most likely to have a mentor in their subject area, while new teachers in Kentucky and North Carolina were least likely. New teachers from Mississippi, Alabama, and North Carolina found their mentor teachers to be the most helpful, although the majority of new teachers in Alabama and Mississippi (Table 3) did not have the opportunity to participate in induction and mentoring programs. While Florida's new teachers were most likely to participate in an induction program (83%, Table 3), they were among the least likely to say their mentors helped them "to a great extent" (38%). This finding reinforces our contention that states must not only require induction programs but monitor their quality.

Table 5: New teachers and mentors: access, subject-specific support, helpfulness

State	Worked closely with mentor	Mentor in same subject	Mentor helped to a great extent
Alabama	60.2%	84.3%	49.2%
Arkansas	48.7	82.8	36.4
Florida	68.2	75.1	38.3
Georgia	57.7	75.6	35.8
Kentucky	93.1	60.1	41.9
Louisiana	69.2	70.8	45.6
Mississippi	44.5	72.5	52.6
N. Carolina	83.5	64.3	47.5
S. Carolina	74.9	74.2	42.1
Tennessee	50.8	73.1	45.1
Virginia	60.3	79.8	38.7
SE states	66.1	72.8	42.2
National	62.6	75.0	36.1

FINDING #3: Teachers in the Southeast report mixed results on working conditions.

The SASS database includes a range of indicators addressing working conditions for teachers. When we analyzed the data, we came up with a mixed bag of results.

Teachers in the Southeast, for example, are more likely to say their school administration is supportive and encouraging (Table 6). Nearly 47 percent of the region's teachers strongly agreed this was the case, compared to 42 percent nationwide. This indicator represents one of the highest positive responses from the region's teachers on matter relating to working conditions. Teachers in Florida and Arkansas felt least supported by school administrators, while teachers in South Carolina felt the most supported.

Compared to their peers nationwide, southeastern teachers were somewhat less satisfied with their salaries (Table 7). Very few teachers — no state had more than 8 percent — were

Table 6: The school administration's behavior toward the staff is supportive and encouraging.

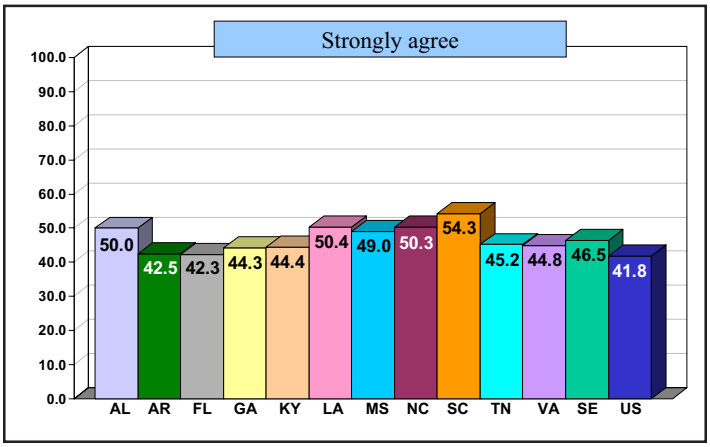


Table 7: I am satisfied with my teaching salary.

State	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree
Alabama	5.1%	28.6%
Arkansas	8.0	28.3
Florida	5.0	15.6
Georgia	6.0	35.0
Kentucky	6.8	33.4
Louisiana	2.2	14.2
Mississippi	3.6	18.0
N. Carolina	3.5	15.4
S. Carolina	6.3	22.7
Tennessee	5.9	24.2
Virginia	4.1	22.3
SE states	5.0	22.6
National	9.8	29.6

willing to say they were "strongly" satisfied with their pay. Teachers in Arkansas and Kentucky were the most satisfied, and those in Louisiana, North Carolina, and Mississippi were the least.

Southeastern teachers are more likely to report that their principals "talk" with them about their instructional practices (Table 8). Across the region, 52 percent either strongly or somewhat agreed that they frequently have conversations with principals about instruction, compared to 46 percent nationwide. Teachers from Florida and Georgia were not as positive about this important element of instructional leadership.

Teachers were also asked whether they would agree that their school staffs are recognized for "a job well done" (Table 9). Although teachers in the Southeast were more likely to agree than teachers nationwide, less than 30 percent agreed "strongly." Teachers in Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, and Tennessee appeared to feel least recognized.

Table 8: The principal talks with me frequently about my instructional practices.

State	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree
Alabama	16.2%	40.8%
Arkansas	12.9	45.0
Florida	9.6	33.6
Georgia	10.4	34.4
Kentucky	16.7	40.8
Louisiana	20.8	38.1
Mississippi	17.3	42.2
N. Carolina	16.5	39.0
S. Carolina	14.7	41.1
Tennessee	14.8	39.7
Virginia	13.1	36.5
SE states	14.0	37.9
National	11.0	34.6

Table 9: In this school, staff members are recognized for a job well done.

State	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree
Alabama	31.3%	38.6%
Arkansas	23.2	44.5
Florida	31.0	43.9
Georgia	25.1	45.0
Kentucky	23.9	42.9
Louisiana	35.1	41.1
Mississippi	30.6	38.8
N. Carolina	34.3	39.1
S. Carolina	33.4	42.6
Tennessee	25.2	45.5
Virginia	30.7	41.3
SE states	29.8	42.3
National	25.7	42.7

FINDING #4: Teachers in the Southeast are more likely to use standards and test results to guide teaching, but significant numbers say they do not receive the results or do not find them "very useful."

Strikingly, teachers in the Southeast were more likely to use standards to frame their teaching. As Table 10 reveals, 57 percent of the region's teachers (compared to 45% nationwide) use state or district standards "to a great extent" to guide their instructional practice. This should not come as a surprise, given the region's heavy emphasis on standards and accountability. Nine of the eleven southeastern states earned either an A or B for standards and accountability reform efforts from *Education Week*. (The other two states earned C's.)[12]

Even so, the variation in the use of standards was significant. At the low end, 43 percent of Tennessee teachers reported that standards extensively guided their teaching; at the high end, 64 percent of North Carolina's teachers and 63 percent of those in Alabama and Virginia made the same claim.

It is worth noting that many teachers are now under considerable pressure to "use standards" in their classrooms. The SASS data have less to say about how teachers use them, whether they have simply matched standards to their existing curriculum, or whether they have actually learned to use standards to drive improvements in their own teaching practices. The latter objective must be part of our teaching quality improvement efforts.

Teachers in the Southeast were also more likely than their counterparts nationwide to receive the results of standardized tests and to use them to group students, assess their teaching practice, and adjust their curriculum (Table 11). Teachers were most likely to use the test results to guide their teaching

Table 10: How much teachers use state or district standards to guide their instructional practice

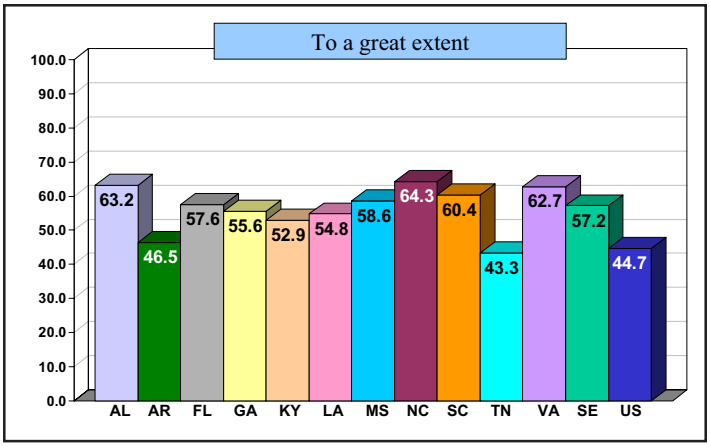


Table 11: Getting test scores and using them to group students, assess teaching practice, and adjust curriculum

State	Receive scores	Grouping Very useful	Assessment Very useful	Curriculum Very useful
Alabama	74.6%	15.9%	40.0%	40.4%
Arkansas	75.2	9.2	30.3	31.4
Florida	63.0	13.9	30.0	34.2
Georgia	66.0	16.0	31.4	30.1
Kentucky	65.2	6.0	32.3	31.9
Louisiana	67.0	14.8	38.6	43.1
Mississippi	65.4	12.4	35.2	32.4
N. Carolina	61.7	21.7	40.1	45.8
S. Carolina	72.2	14.0	38.1	41.0
Tennessee	65.0	9.0	33.1	33.0
Virginia	61.0	12.3	32.3	37.8
SE states	65.7	13.9	34.3	36.6
National	61.2	10.7	26.6	30.2

Table 12: I worry about the security of my job because of the performance of my students on state or local tests.

State	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree
Alabama	6.6%	23.2%
Arkansas	7.7	24.8
Florida	19.4	31.4
Georgia	9.8	27.7
Kentucky	7.2	27.5
Louisiana	8.7	31.8
Mississippi	10.0	25.6
N. Carolina	8.9	28.9
S. Carolina	11.3	29.0
Tennessee	6.7	28.8
Virginia	11.9	30.3
SE states	11.0	28.8
National	7.1	21.7

and curriculum decisions. Only 14 percent of teachers in the Southeast (11% nationally) said they found test scores "very useful" in making decisions about grouping. It is unclear from the SASS survey item whether teachers had in mind "ability grouping" — a practice many schools are reluctant to admit to — or targeting groups of students for short-term, high-intensity instruction in areas of weakness. The latter is a highly desirable practice.

Even though teachers in the Southeast are more likely to examine and use standardized test results, it is important to note that only two-thirds report ever receiving the test scores in their school. This begs the question: "How can teachers be held accountable for student learning when they are not made aware of (or required to examine) the data upon which they are being judged?"

In general, the data revealed in Table 11 suggest a need for states and school districts to help all teachers learn to analyze test results and apply what they learn to curriculum decisions and instructional practice. They also suggest that some state testing reports may be of limited usefulness in helping schools improve their practice. We are aware, of course, that true "data-driven" schools do not limit themselves to an analysis of standardized test data but draw on a wide range of information, including ongoing teacher assessments, collaborative examination of student work, student portfolios and performances, surveys, and other sources. In our experience, however, most schools that seek to become "data-driven" begin with an analysis of standardized test data and have a reasonable expectation that the data they receive from the state will be useful in making critical decisions.

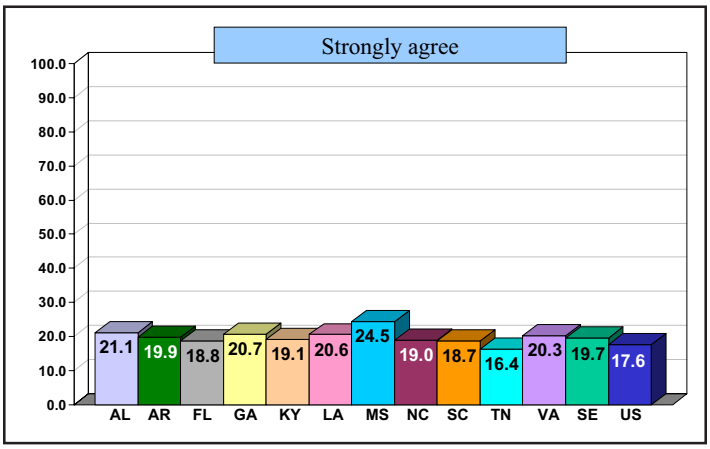
Until virtually all teachers are reporting that state data are "very useful," state leaders must continue to promote major changes in their accountability and testing systems. The advent of *No Child Left Behind*, with its requirement that all states provide more detailed, disaggregated state assessment data, creates an opportunity for states not only to produce better reports but also to provide systematic training that will help schools use the reports effectively.

Although teachers in the Southeast are more attentive to test results than their national counterparts, they are also more likely to be "worried" about their job security as a result of high stakes testing (Table 12). About 40 percent of teachers in the region reported such fears, significantly more than the 29 percent nationwide. Teachers in Florida, a state often cited for its high-pressure testing environment, were most worried. Over 50 percent of Sunshine State teachers somewhat or strongly agreed with this survey item.

FINDING #5: Teachers need more high quality professional development if we expect them to serve all students.

Teachers in our region are less likely to believe they have the necessary supports to teach students with special needs (Table 13). In no southeastern state do more than one-fourth of the teachers strongly agree they are provided with the

Table 13: I am given the support I need to teach students with special needs.



necessary assistance to work with students who have serious learning challenges. These numbers are disheartening, given the growing consequences attached to the tests these students must pass.

Table 14: Percent of teachers who taught IEP students and percent with training

State	Taught	Trained*
Alabama	83.6%	38.6%
Arkansas	84.0	27.1
Florida	81.5	36.7
Georgia	76.3	31.7
Kentucky	83.4	37.6
Louisiana	79.4	29.2
Mississippi	64.8	23.3
N. Carolina	84.9	32.3
S. Carolina	77.0	17.0
Tennessee	84.6	27.9
Virginia	81.5	29.9
SE states	80.1	30.1
National	82.0	31.0

* Eight or more hours of training in IEP in the previous three years.

Table 15: Percent of teachers who taught LEP students and percent with training

State	Taught	Trained*
Alabama	19.8%	2.4%
Arkansas	29.9	3.8
Florida	50.9	34.9
Georgia	35.2	6.2
Kentucky	19.6	2.2
Louisiana	16.4	3.1
Mississippi	15.5	1.7
N. Carolina	46.6	5.5
S. Carolina	29.3	2.4
Tennessee	22.3	1.4
Virginia	29.9	4.5
SE states	28.7	6.2
National	41.2	12.5

* Eight or more hours of training in LEP in the previous three years.

Other survey results reveal that large percentages of teachers across the nation and in the Southeast are teaching students with limited English proficiency (LEP) or other special needs, i.e., those who require an individualized education plan (IEP). Most have had minimal pre-service preparation or professional development to help them teach these students.

For example, Table 14 shows that 80 percent of the region's teachers taught special needs students in their classrooms in 1999-2000, but only 30 percent had eight or more hours of training in this area in the previous three years. In the Southeast, South Carolina had the most extreme discrepancy: 77 percent of its teachers teach special needs children, but only 17 percent have had the minimum training described in the SASS survey item.

The status of teachers' preparation to work with language-diverse students is even bleaker (Table 15). Twenty-nine percent of the region's teachers taught LEP students in their classrooms in 1999-2000, but only 6 percent had eight or more hours of training in this area in the previous three years. Florida, North Carolina, and Georgia serve growing numbers of LEP students, but very few of their teachers have been given the much-needed preparation. For example, almost 47 percent of North Carolina's teachers teach LEP, but only 6 percent had eight or more hours of training this area. Florida has done better on this score; over one-third of its LEP teachers have been trained as described in the SASS item.

FINDING #6: Teachers in the Southeast are less satisfied in their jobs and less likely to remain in the profession.

Two SASS survey items asked teachers to indicate their level of commitment to teaching (Table 16) and their willingness to continue teaching (Table 17). The results show that

Table 16: All teachers: Would I teach again?

State	Certainly would become a teacher	Probably would become a teacher	Chances about even for & against	Probably would not become a teacher	Certainly would not become a teacher
Alabama	44.0%	25.9%	15.4%	9.5%	5.2%
Arkansas	38.1	28.4	14.4	15.9	3.2
Florida	28.4	27.0	19.8	14.8	10.0
Georgia	39.0	24.7	17.0	15.6	3.6
Kentucky	35.8	30.2	15.1	13.1	5.9
Louisiana	37.3	25.2	17.3	13.7	6.5
Mississippi	40.2	23.8	16.2	12.7	7.0
N. Carolina	29.7	26.4	20.8	17.7	5.4
S. Carolina	36.5	23.9	21.0	13.4	5.2
Tennessee	34.5	25.2	20.3	13.5	6.5
Virginia	32.8	25.0	18.8	16.0	7.3
SE states	34.7	26.0	18.4	14.6	6.4
National	40.3	26.9	16.7	11.7	4.4

Table 17: All teachers: How long will I teach?

State	As long as I am able	Until eligible for retirement	Until something better comes	Plan to leave as soon as I can	Undecided
Alabama	38.9%	35.8%	7.6%	2.3%	15.3%
Arkansas	40.6	36.2	8.6	2.8	11.8
Florida	35.5	30.5	13.4	5.9	14.6
Georgia	33.6	36.8	10.1	3.9	15.6
Kentucky	33.1	41.1	9.6	2.2	14.0
Louisiana	38.4	34.6	9.3	3.9	13.8
Mississippi	38.7	29.9	8.9	4.8	17.7
N. Carolina	31.1	38.9	10.3	5.4	14.3
S. Carolina	34.2	36.4	9.8	5.1	14.5
Tennessee	40.0	31.1	9.3	4.0	15.6
Virginia	29.4	34.7	11.4	5.6	18.8
SE states	35.0	34.8	10.4	4.5	15.2
National	38.1	35.9	9.5	3.3	13.1

teachers in the Southeast are less wedded to their career choice than those in the rest of the country. Teachers in Florida were most likely to report their dissatisfaction. In fact, one out of four Florida teachers said they would probably or certainly not become a teacher again. They were also most likely (6%) to indicate they would leave teaching as soon as possible. In other states in the region, 20 percent or more of the teachers in Virginia, North Carolina, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Mississippi said they would probably or certainly not become a teacher again.

CONCLUSIONS

In our analysis of the 1999-2000 *Schools and Staffing Survey*, we find reasons for both hope and concern. On many indicators of positive teaching conditions, teachers in the Southeast edged out their national counterparts. But it is also true that on many of those indicators no state or region made a particularly strong showing.

Take, for example, the data in Table 1 on levels of preparedness for first-year teaching. The Southeast can claim a small percentage point advantage across all of the preparedness categories. Even so, the data reveal that not much more than a third of the novice teachers in the Southeast believe they are "very well prepared" in classroom management, instructional methods, subject matter, computer usage, lesson planning, assessing students, or selecting instructional materials. Similarly, when we look at those indicators (Table 4) that suggest "high support" of new teachers, i.e., reduced teaching schedules, fewer preparations, and extra classroom assistance, we see that novices in the Southeast were a little more likely to have these critical induction elements, but the vast majority do not have it.

The same point can be made about most other areas of the *Schools and Staffing Survey*. Teachers in the Southeast are more likely to make use of standardized test data (Table 11), but most do not. They are more likely to have frequent talks with principals about instructional practice (Table 8), but most do not. They are more likely to get support to teach students with special needs (Table 13), but most do not. They are more likely to be recognized for a job well done (Table 9), but most are not. In other instances, the SASS data raise more questions than they answer. Almost two-thirds of new teachers in the Southeast go through an induction program (Table 3). But how good are these programs? Other survey data suggest that, in many instances, they are probably not very good.

The SASS indicators are rough-hewn signs pointing in the direction of issues that need to be explored and addressed. At the very least, they warrant careful reflection by state education leaders. What can the data tell us about loopholes in teaching policy? How can our state collect more detailed data around critical indicators? How can such indicators be used to develop benchmarks for improving the condition of teaching in our state? How can we develop and use SASS-like instruments to track progress over time?

The SASS data suggest that in the Southeast far too many teachers doubt their decision to join the profession. Other data assembled by the Center[13] suggest that the teacher turnover problem in the Southeast is severe — and getting worse. All of this must change if we as a society and an educational system are going to "leave no child behind." As we have said before and will certainly say again, leaving no child behind begins with *leaving no teacher behind*.

We hope this report and other reports like it will motivate us as a community to gather and examine teacher and teaching quality data in productive ways. Without rich and reliable sources of information, policymakers, practitioners, and the public cannot make important connections between teacher performance and student achievement in the Southeast. Nor can we accurately measure progress toward our mutual goal: ensuring a competent, caring, and qualified teacher for every student.

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Endnotes

[1] *Education Week* has drawn upon the recently released *Schools and Staffing Survey, 1999-2000* (SASS). Under the auspices of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), SASS is a major source of data regarding teacher qualifications and teaching conditions in the United States. Since the late 1980s, these data have been collected approximately every three to four years and allow for comparisons across both time and states.

[2] Quality counts 2003: "If I can't learn from you." *Education Week, 22*(17). Available on the web at http://www.edweek.org/sreports/qc03.

[3] SASS received responses from over 72,000 teachers in K-12 schools in the fifty states and the District of Columbia. The SASS employs a complex, stratified sampling procedure that requires the use of statistical weighting but provides unbiased estimates of actual numbers of teachers in each state in the various categories. Comparisons are valid between new and experienced teachers, LEP and regular-classroom teachers, and teachers of various ethnic/racial backgrounds at the national level. Schools are the primary sampling unit in SASS. Public schools are representative at the state and national levels, and private schools at the association and national levels. Selected schools were asked to submit lists of teachers, and those teachers were then stratified according to race, whether they taught LEP, or whether they were in their first three years of teaching. More than 90% of the items had a response rate of 75% or higher; more than 80% of the items had a response rate of 90% or higher. See http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/2002313.pdf.

[4] See http://www.edweek.org/sreports/qc03/rc/rcard_frameset.htm.

[5] For example, Susan Moore Johnson and colleagues found (2001) that teachers who switched schools voluntarily did so, not to teach more affluent students, but to teach under more favorable working conditions that in turn allowed them to be successful. See Kardos, et al. (2001, April). Counting on colleagues: New teachers encounter the professional culture of their schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 37*(2). A study by Darling-Hammond, Loeb, and Luczak of Stanford (forthcoming) revealed that salaries and working conditions, not student characteristics, predicted high turnover in California schools.

[6] The eleven states included in our southeastern average are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

[7] Throughout this brief, "new teachers" refers to those who began teaching no earlier than 1995-96. Since the SASS survey was conducted in 1999-2000, these teachers have a maximum of five years teaching experience.

[8] In 1995-96, North Carolina employed at least 1163 teachers by lateral entry and had hired another 1900 teachers on provisional certificates. Recent data suggest that about 20 percent of North Carolina's teachers in 2000 worked under only a conditional license to teach — a 24 percent increase over the previous year. About one-half of the uncertified teachers were trained in NC or had taught in other states but had not yet taken tests to prove their qualifications. In particular, 5300 teachers held provisional licenses, good for up to five years. These are teachers who are state certified but not in their assigned specialties or subject areas. In addition, most of the 4111 teachers with lateral-entry licenses in 2000 were career-switching professionals from other fields who hold bachelor's degrees in related subjects but have not been trained as teachers.

[9] See the Center's publication: *Assessing and Supporting New Teachers: Lessons from the Southeast*, available at http://www.teachingquality.org/resources/SECTQpublications/Induction.pdf.

[10] See Endnote #4.

[11] See Endnote #9.

[12] See Endnote #4.

[13] The Center's Teaching Quality Indicator Project (TQIP) is a multi-state data collection, sharing and reporting initiative. The project will provide knowledge about teaching quality so policymakers, practitioners, and the public can know more about the important connections between teacher and student achievement in the region and use data to make informed decisions. We have just completed our second year of data collection. An executive summary of the preliminary findings is available at http://www.teachingquality.org/policy/tqip/tqip.htm.

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The Southeast Center for Teaching Quality conducts research, informs policy, and engages leadership in order to enhance opportunities for all students to have competent, caring, and qualified teachers.