



Novice Teacher Mentoring Program

End-of-Year Mentee Survey Results

Spring 2020

Introduction

Austin Independent School District’s (AISD) Teacher Induction Program (TIP) includes a Novice Teacher Mentoring Program component. Through this program, novice teachers are paired with an experienced AISD teacher who assists the novice teacher in improving their professional practice by providing ongoing training and support throughout the academic year. In 2019–2020, there were 637 novice teachers who participated in the Novice Teacher Mentoring Program.

This report describes the results of the End-of-Year Mentee Survey. The purpose of the survey was to gather information regarding novice teachers’ experience in the program. Overall, there was a 27% ($n = 170$) response rate.

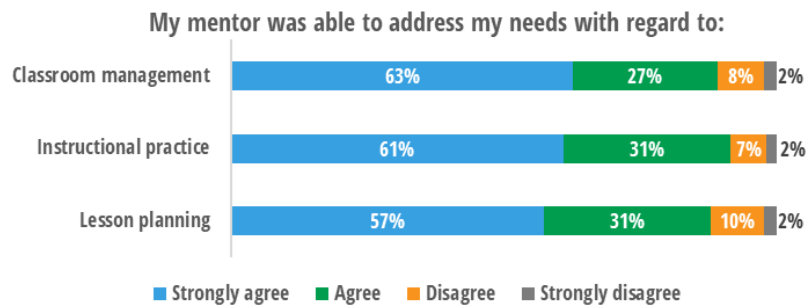
End-of-Year Mentee Survey Results

In Spring 2020, the majority of respondents indicated they had a positive experience with the Novice Teacher Mentoring Program. Ninety-four percent of respondents indicated they had a positive experience with their mentor, and 89% indicated their mentor was a good fit. Mentees strongly agreed/agreed that the quality of contact time (95%) and quantity of contact time (93%) with their mentor were adequate. In addition to structured meeting time, the majority of respondents (96%) indicated their mentor was available for outside-of-schedule meeting times.

Additionally, the majority of mentees strongly agreed/agreed that their mentors were able to answer their questions regarding classroom management (90%), instructional practice (92%), and lesson planning (88%; Figure 1).

Figure 1

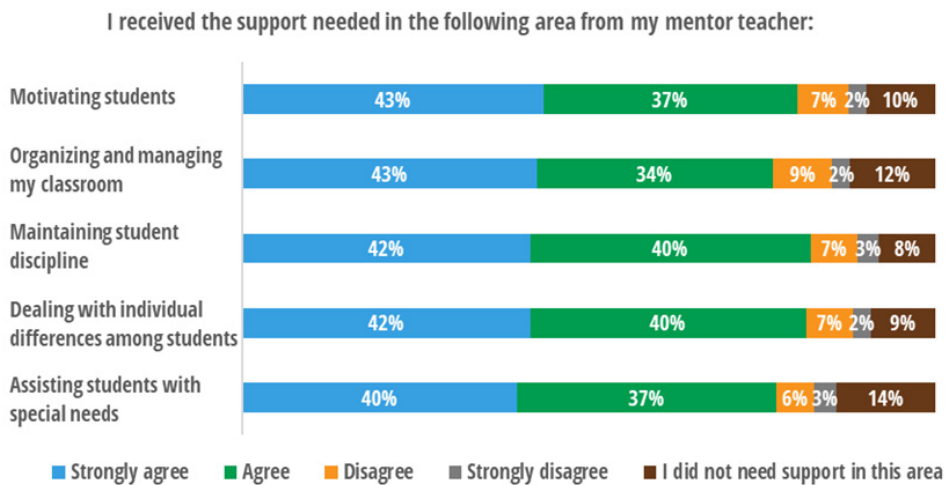
Respondents indicated mentors were able to address most of their needs regarding providing instruction.



Source. End-of-Year Mentee Survey, Spring 2020

The majority of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that they received the support needed regarding various components of managing a classroom (Figure 2). Among respondents who indicated they did not need support from their mentor teacher, support regarding assisting students with special needs (14%) and organizing and managing their classroom (12%) were mentioned at slightly higher rates than were other classroom management topics (Figure 2). Examining results of those did not select “I do not need support in this area” only, respondents indicated that they received the support needed at similar rates across classroom management topics.

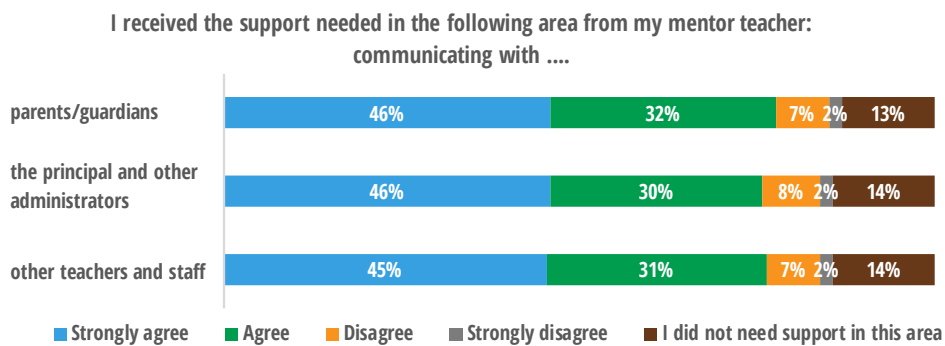
Figure 2
Respondents indicated mentors were able to address most of their needs regarding various classroom management topics.



Source. End-of-Year Mentee Survey, Spring 2020

When asked about support received regarding communication, the majority of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that they received the support needed for communicating with parents/guardians (78%), the principal and other administrators (76%), and other teachers and staff (76%; Figure 3).

Figure 3
Respondents indicated mentors were able to address most of their needs regarding communicating with various groups.



Source. End-of-Year Mentee Survey, Spring 2020

AISD's Novice Teacher Mentoring Program

AISD's Novice Teacher Mentoring Program is required for all novice teachers (i.e., teachers with less than 2 years of teaching experience) in the district. By offering targeted support to novice teachers, the program aims to increase novice teachers' effectiveness, assist novice teachers to learn district and campus policies and procedures, and increase staff retention (Evertson & Smithey, 2000; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Each year, a lead mentor teacher contact (LMTC) is assigned on each campus and is responsible for matching a novice teacher (mentee) with a mentor, as well as ensuring mentors complete their mentoring duties. Mentors are typically teachers with a minimum of 3 years of successful teaching experience or who are an instructional coach. Mentors receive professional learning to increase their mentoring capacity and to learn how to support their mentee. In addition to meeting regularly to discuss topics outlined by the district, as well as offering guidance on situations the mentee is currently facing in the classroom, mentors also observe mentees once a semester and serve as a resource to the novice teacher throughout the academic year.

In addition to the Novice

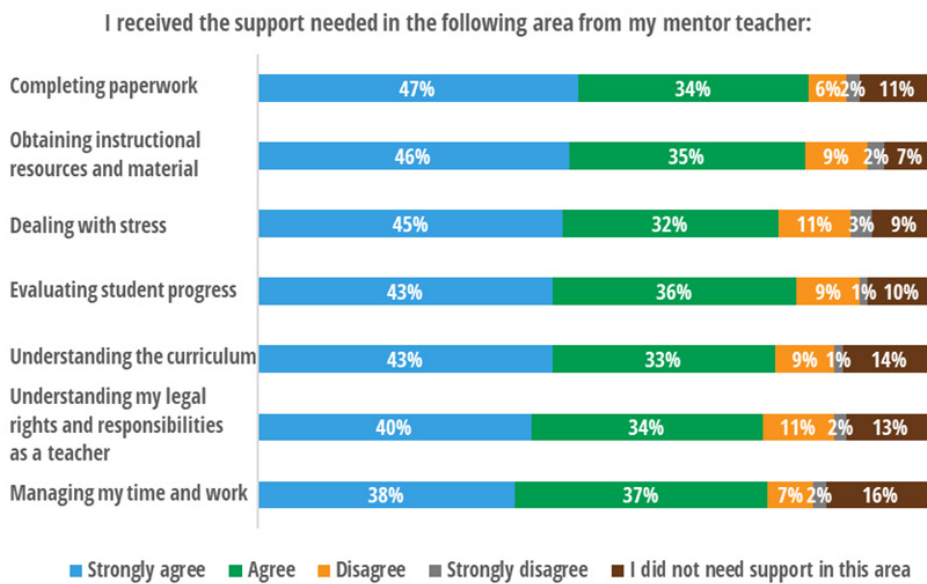
(continued)

Teacher Mentoring Program, AISD staff supported novice teachers with various professional learning opportunities throughout the academic year. Offered through the AISD Teacher Induction Program, this included professional learning sessions, such as a weeklong orientation in August for teachers new to the district (i.e., TIP Academy); the late-hire online teacher induction orientation; and AISD CONNECT, which offered professional learning sessions for topics, curated from an annual needs assessment survey.

The majority of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that they received the support needed or reported that they did not need support in various areas related to professionalism (Figure 4). Respondents indicated they did not need support managing their time and work (16%), understanding their legal rights, understanding the curriculum (14%), and responsibilities as a teacher (13%) at slightly higher rates than for other areas (Figure 4). Examining results of those did not select “I do not need support in this area” only, respondents indicated the highest level of agreement regarding receiving the support needed for completing paperwork and managing my time and work, and least agreement regarding dealing with stress and understanding my legal rights and responsibilities as a teacher.

Figure 4

Respondents indicated mentors were able to address most of their needs regarding professionalism.



Source. End-of-Year Mentee Survey, Spring 2020

Respondents were also asked what went well with their mentoring experience and what could be improved. In regard to what went well, overall themes included having a trusting relationship with the mentor and a mentor who was available, supportive, and accessible. Many respondents said their mentors were knowledgeable and able to provide helpful advice for issues they were currently experiencing and general questions. Excerpts include:

“Me and my mentor got really well along so I felt comfortable with him with whatever help I needed. He was also really helpful in providing meaningful feedback.”

“I was paired with a teacher that had a great deal of experience, taught the same subject material, and was nearby for assistance.”

“I met regularly with my mentor and talked about what was going on, what was coming up, and things like planning my observations. The conversations were helpful, and he was also willing to answer questions as they came up, even on weekends (when I was doing a lot of work, and not everyone was super available).”

Respondents were also asked what could be improved in their mentoring experience or the Novice Teacher Mentoring Program in general. Themes mentioned by respondents suggested they felt they did not have enough time to meet and would have benefited if the grade level and content area matched, if they had more information about what they should expect from the program, and if they had met the mentor prior to the beginning of providing instruction. Examples of comments include:

“We had very different ways of teaching, which made it hard to learn because I couldn’t view some things in an informative way. There was also distance from our rooms (I in a portable and she in the annex building).”

“Things were always SO busy at school that finding time to sit down and talk was VERY difficult (but not for lack of trying). We often had to discuss things over email, which was not as helpful as in person.”

“I think a more personalized experience with a mentor that was chosen specifically based on my needs and personalized would have helped.”

“Although I love my mentor and I think she is a fantastic teacher, it would have been nice to have my mentor be my English as a second language co-teacher.”

Even after the shift to distance learning, which teachers provided instruction remotely due to COVID-19, the majority of mentees (87%) strongly agreed/agreed that the quality of support provided by their mentor teacher was adequate. Many respondents indicated they were able to maintain contact with their mentor in a virtual format for support and understood that mentors were learning how to implement a distance-learning model as well.

Conclusion

Overall, the majority of respondents indicated they had a positive experience with the Novice Teacher Mentoring Program. Respondents who reported a successful mentoring experience frequently cited the availability of the mentor and developing a trusting relationship with the mentor, suggesting the importance of program buy-in from both the mentor and the mentee. Suggestions for improvement of the mentoring experience or mentoring program included providing an outline of expectations for the program to mentees (e.g., how often mentors and mentees are expected to meet) and ensuring that mentor/mentee meet.

References

- Evertson, C. M., & Smithey, M. W. (2000). Mentoring effects on proteges’ classroom practice: An experimental field study. *Journal of Educational Research*, 93(5), 294–304. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220670009598721>
- Smith, T. M., & Ingersoll, R. (2004). What are the effects of induction and mentoring on beginning teacher turnover? *Scholarly Commons*. https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1135&context=gse_pubs