Appendix to INTC Data Brief: 2011 Beginning Teacher Conference
October 2012

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This Appendix provides tables, charts, and analyses of quantitative and qualitative data. Data was gathered from a survey administered in the spring of 2011 to the 77 participants of the 2011 Beginning Teacher Conference. The survey consisted of a series of closed-ended responses as well as three open-ended questions. In addition to the survey, eight attendees also elected to participate in a focus group.

This Appendix is organized into the following sections:

- Section 1: Methodology
- Section 2: Survey Data

The Data Brief is a separate document that provides highlights of this data.

SECTION 1: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the focus group and survey is to discover what new teachers in Illinois need and how they are supported and to describe how those supports are experienced by first-year teachers.

Participants. Survey respondents and focus group participants were all attendees of the 2011 Beginning Teacher Conference. Participation in both was completely voluntary and open to all attendees. Seventy-seven individuals completed the survey, and eight attendees volunteered for the focus groups. Participants were K-12 teachers who taught in a wide variety of school settings, varying in socioeconomic groups, location (urban, rural, suburban), type (public, private), diversity of population, size, etc. The teachers themselves also represented a range of demographics, differing in age, race, level of education, teacher preparation programs, and gender. All participants had just completed their first year of teaching and were entering into year two.

Survey. The survey contained a combination of closed and open-ended questions, all geared towards explicating their year one experiences. Closed ended questions covered first year supports, frequency of those supports, school context, and future plans. Open-ended questions asked teachers to explain the positive elements of their first year experience, the limitations or weaknesses of their first year experience, and what they felt they needed the most in order to be successful in year two.

Focus Groups. There were two focus groups, each consisting of four participants. There were three main focus group questions asked by the facilitators, some containing multiple parts:
1. Thinking back before school started, what were you feeling, fearing, and/or experiencing excitement about? What's the biggest change since then? What or who most influenced this change? How are your feelings different as you enter year two?
2. What surprised you the most about your first year teaching?
3. What are some of the challenges that schools, society, and the public place on teachers? Based on your experiences, what strategies, resources, and/or supports do teachers need in order to deal with or respond to these challenges?

Although these were the main topics covered, as the conversations progressed, facilitators did have the freedom to elaborate on the discussion and add to those questions based on group comments (i.e. "Can you talk more about the pressures you faced as first year teachers?"). All participants consented to audiotaping.

Analysis. Closed-ended survey responses were compiled and quantified. Extended-response questions were coded according to themes and compared. Focus group audio was transcribed and coded according to themes. Themes were identified in individual groups, but it was noted where overlap occurred between the two groups.
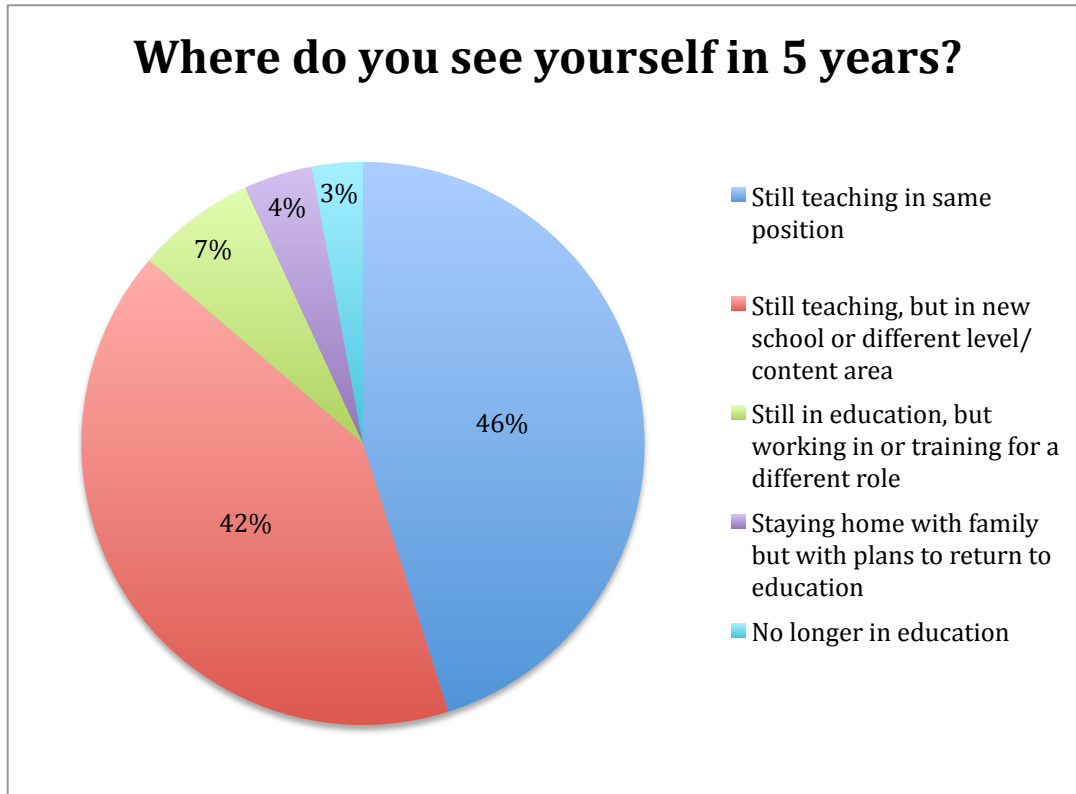
Limitations. Because of the nature of focus groups, when looking at the data, there are particular limitations that need to be kept in mind. The groups went on concurrently and were facilitated by two different people. This could lead to differences in discussion direction and emphasis, time spent on each question, follow-up questions, and overall group dynamics. As a result, it is inaccurate to look at the responses as part of a whole of both groups (i.e. 50% of teachers identified lack of detention as one of the most surprising things they encountered in year one"); each group is its own entity. Additionally, within a focus group, there is a possibility of conformance (i.e. a participant only providing responses aligned with what others in the group are saying) and/or censoring (i.e. a participant omitting items that may seem counter to others' experiences). Thus, the context of the group itself can affect what individuals are contributing to it: Responses often took on a snowballing effect where participants would agree with another person's response and elaborate on their own experiences). Due to a combination of all of these factors, the groups themselves were the unit of analysis, rather than the individuals within them. Data gathered through the focus groups serves to lend additional insights to the survey data and areas for future research, but it should not be viewed as stand-alone and/or generalizable.

SECTION 2: SURVEY DATA

Graph 2.1. Career satisfaction. Survey respondents were asked how satisfied they were with their decision to become a teacher. The graph shows the number of teachers who provided each response (n = 77).
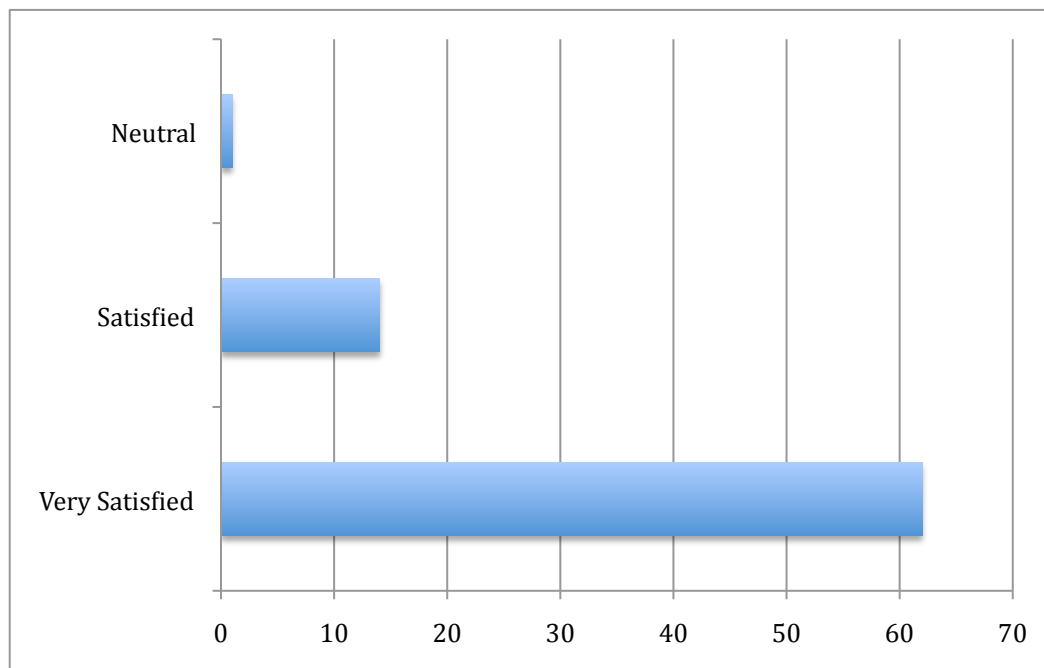
Graph 2.2. Future plans. Survey respondents were asked where they see themselves in 5 years. The graph below shows the percentage of respondents for each category.

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

- Still teaching in same position — 46%
- Still teaching, but in new school or different level/ content area — 42%
- Still in education, but working in or training for a different role — 7%
- Staying home with family but with plans to return to education — 4%
- No longer in education — 3%

Graph 2.3. Mentor types. Respondents were asked what type(s) of mentor(s) they had during their first year teaching. For example, of the 77 respondents, 53 indicated that they had a formal mentor who was part of an official mentoring program. Of those, 14 indicated that they also had an informal mentor. The graph shows the number of teachers who reported each type of mentor.

Mentor Types

- No Mentor
- Formal and Informal Mentor
- Informal Mentor Only
- Formal Mentor (official)

0   10   20   30   40   50   60
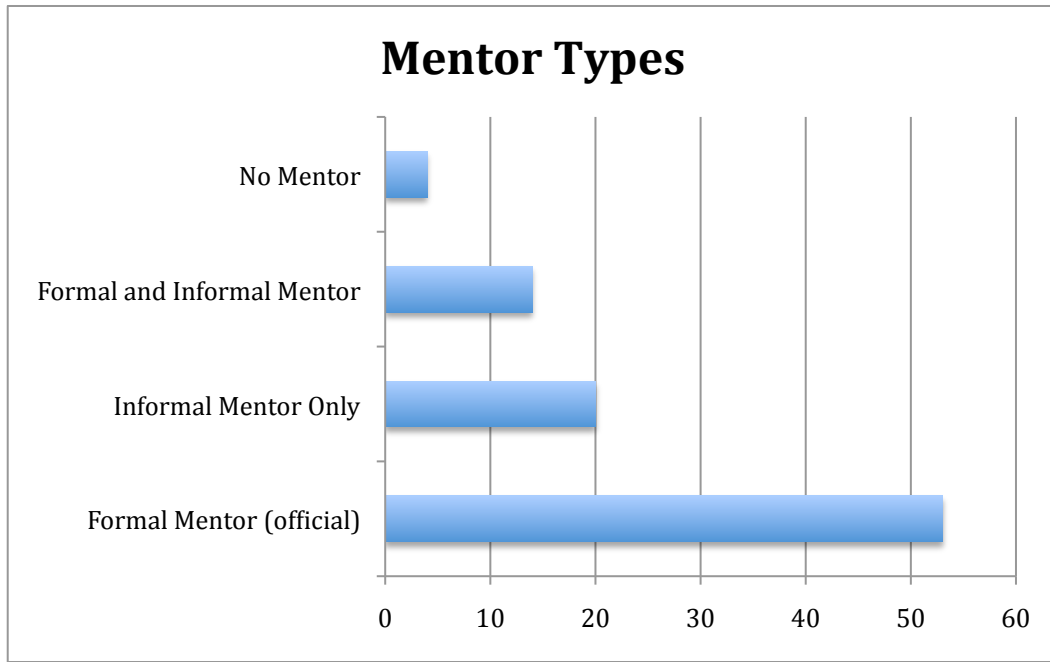
Graph 2.4. Beginning teacher experiences. Respondents were asked to indicate which experiences for beginning teachers (BT) occurred at their school. The graph below shows the number of teachers who indicated each occurrence. For example, fifteen teachers felt that at their school, beginning teachers were assigned to teach the students who presented the most challenges.
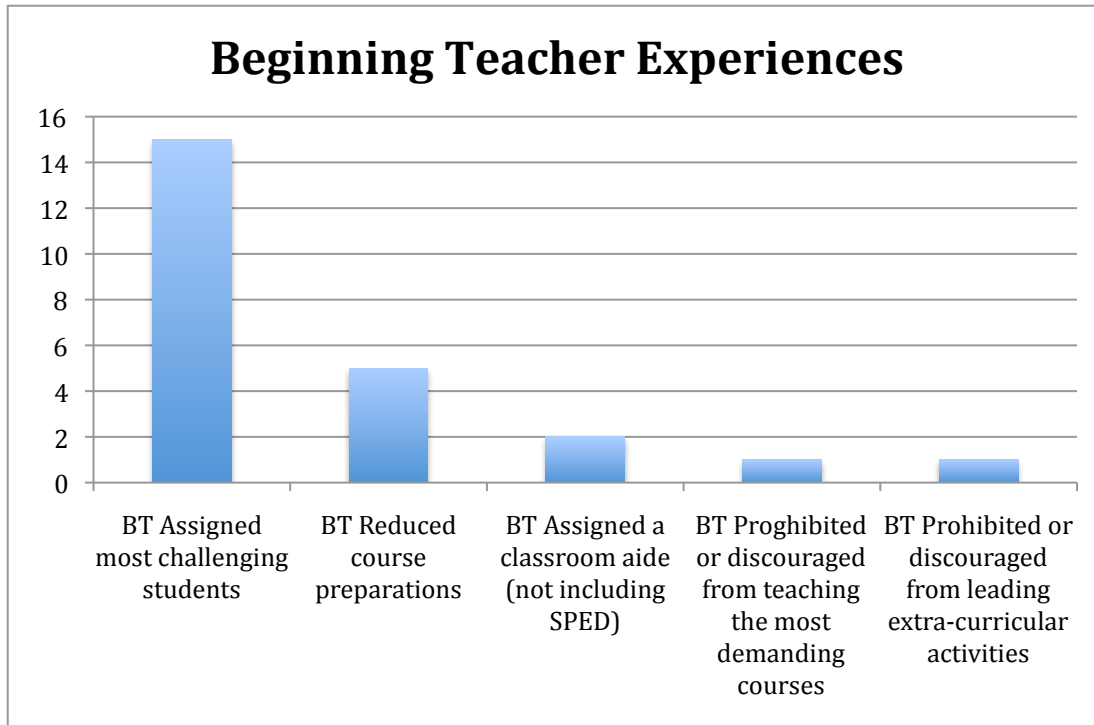
Table 2.5. Services and supports. Respondents were asked to think about the services and supports they were provided during the past school year and to indicate how often each support was received, as well as the value of each support to their development as a teacher. The left side of the table shows the frequency of each type of support reported by the teachers and the right shows the mean value the teachers rated the activity according to frequency. The table below shows the number of responses for each category and the percentage (in parenthesis) of total respondents the number represents. Note that numbers and percentages differ within the table due to incomplete responses from participants. For the mean value columns, the values were rated on a four-point scale: 1 – not valuable, 2 – minimally valuable, 3 – moderately valuable, and 4 – extremely valuable.

	Frequency					Mean Value			
	Never	Once	A few times	About monthly	At least weekly	Once	A few times	About monthly	At least weekly
New teacher meetings, not for the purposes of evaluation, with the principal at your school	25 (33%)	16 (21%)	24 (31%)	10 (13%)	2 (3%)	2.4	3.1	2.7	4
Workshops, seminars, or classes for new teachers (excluding initial orientation)	35 (46%)	5 (7%)	18 (24%)	18 (24%)	0	2.2	2.8	3.5	n/a
Release time to see other teachers teach	36 (47%)	15 (20%)	23 (30%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2.9	3.5	NR	4
Time set aside to network with other BTs	47 (61%)	2 (3%)	15 (20%)	13 (17%)	0	2	2.9	3.3	n/a
Opportunity to network with teachers outside of my school	41 (53%)	7 (9%)	20 (26%)	7 (9%)	2 (3%)	2.5	3.0	3.4	4

Table 2.6. Frequency and mean value of mentor/BT interactions. The participants were asked to think about the mentoring or other coaching support that they received during the previous year. They were asked to indicate how often their mentor/coach engaged them in each activity and to rate the value of each activity. The left side of the table below shows the number of responses for each category and the percentage (in parenthesis) of total respondents the number represents. The right side shows the mean value the teachers rated the activity according to frequency. Note that numbers and percentages differ within the table due to incomplete responses from participants. For the value columns, values were rated on a four-point scale: 1 – not valuable, 2 – minimally valuable, 3 – moderately valuable, and 4 – extremely valuable.

	Frequency					Mean Value			
	Never	Once	A few times	About monthly	At least weekly	Once	A few times	About monthly	At least weekly
Observed me teaching and provided feedback	14 (19%)	9 (13%)	33 (46%)	8 (11%)	8 (11%)	2	3.5	3.5	3.4
Worked with me to develop a professional growth plan	28 (37%)	9 (12%)	26 (34%)	6 (8%)	6 (8%)	1.8	3.2	3.25	3.8
Demonstrated lessons for me in my classroom	57 (77%)	2 (3%)	9 (12%)	3 (4%)	3 (4%)	3	3.8	3.3	4
Invited me into his/her classroom to observe	35 (49%)	10 (14%)	14 (19%)	8 (11%)	5 (7%)	3	3.5	3.9	3.8
Co-taught with me	58 (78%)	1 (1%)	5 (7%)	4 (5%)	6 (8%)	3	2.75	3	3.8
Gave me materials	11 (15%)	6 (8%)	20 (27%)	10 (13%)	28 (37%)	2.8	2.9	3.6	4
Planned lessons with me	28 (38%)	7 (9%)	10 (14%)	6 (8%)	23 (31%)	2.6	3.2	3.5	4
Analyzed samples of my students' work & assess. data to make decisions about instruction	32 (43%)	6 (8%)	19 (25%)	8 (11%)	10 (14%)	2.3	3.3	3.7	4
Talked with me about the strengths and/or needs of specific students	10 (13%)	1 (1%)	23 (31%)	16 (21%)	25 (33%)	2	3.1	3.3	3.7

Discussed instructional issues & problems	5 (7%)	3 (4%)	25 (34%)	17 (23%)	24 (33%)	2.3	3	3.6	4
Attended workshop together & discussed connections to my teaching situation	35 (47%)	6 (8%)	21 (28%)	6 (8%)	7 (9%)	3.3	3.1	3.6	4

Table 2.7. School context. Respondents were asked to describe their school context last year. The table shows the number of respondents and the percentage of total respondents (in parenthesis) for each category.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Teachers were personally supportive and friendly.	2 (3%)	0 (0%)	16 (21%)	59 (77%)
Teachers (besides my mentor) shared resources and instructional strategies.	2 (3%)	9 (12%)	19 (25%)	47 (61%)
Administrators (e.g. principal, dept. head) were approachable and supportive.	2 (3%)	9 (12%)	13 (17%)	53 (69%)
I had adequate resources (e.g. books, manipulatives, etc.) to do a really good job.	4 (5%)	6 (8%)	23 (30%)	44 (57%)
The parents with whom I interacted were supportive.	0 (0%)	5 (6%)	32 (42%)	40 (52%)
I felt isolated in my classroom.	34 (44%)	21 (27%)	15 (19%)	7 (9%)

Table 2.8. Improvement. Respondents were asked to identify which three areas they needed the most improvement on during their first year teaching and which areas they most wanted to improve in during year two. The table below shows the number of responses for each category and the percentage (in parenthesis) of total respondents the number represents.

	During Y1	During Y2
Using data to plan instruction	28 (36%)	28 (36%)
Creating a positive learning environment (incl. classroom management)	26 (34%)	30 (39%)
Working with students with Individualized Education Plans	24 (31%)	17 (22%)
Using differentiated instructional strategies	23 (30%)	33 (43%)
Contributing to district or building-level decision-making	18 (23%)	10 (13%)
Using strategies for interacting with parents	14 (18%)	16 (21%)
Using informal and formal assessment strategies	13 (17%)	16 (21%)
Using various instructional techniques	12 (16%)	21 (27%)
Using strategies for interacting with colleagues and staff	11 (14%)	8 (10%)
Teaching various subject matter	10 (13%)	13 (17%)
Using textbooks or other curricular materials	10 (13%)	8 (10%)
Working with English Language Learners	10 (13%)	5 (7%)
Designing lessons that will meet the needs of students from diverse backgrounds	9 (12%)	9 (12%)
Reflecting upon my own teaching practices	8 (10%)	7 (9%)
Using strategies for interacting with administrators	8 (10%)	6 (8%)
Making choices inside and outside of school that reflect positively on the teaching profession	1 (1%)	2 (3%)