

**Survey Responses From Washington State's
Principals and Beginning Teachers: A Chartbook**

**Eddie Harding
Barbara McLain**

January 2000

Survey Responses From Washington State's Principals and Beginning Teachers: A Chartbook

**Edie Harding
Barbara McLain**

January 2000

Washington State Institute for Public Policy
110 East Fifth Avenue, Suite 214
Post Office Box 40999
Olympia, Washington 98504-0999
Telephone: (360) 586-2677
FAX: (360) 586-2793
URL: <http://www.wa.gov/wsipp>
Document Number 00-01-2901

WASHINGTON STATE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Mission

The Washington Legislature created the Washington State Institute for Public Policy in 1983. A Board of Directors—representing the legislature, the governor, and public universities—governs the Institute, hires the director, and guides the development of all activities.

The Institute's mission is to carry out practical, non-partisan research—at legislative direction—on issues of importance to Washington State. The Institute conducts research activities using its own policy analysts and economists, specialists from universities, and consultants. Institute staff work closely with legislators, legislative and state agency staff, and experts in the field to ensure that studies answer relevant policy questions.

Current assignments include projects in welfare reform, criminal justice, education, youth violence, and social services.

Board of Directors

Senator Karen Fraser
Senator Jeanine Long
Senator Valoria Loveland
Senator James West
Representative Ida Ballasiotes
Representative Jeff Gombosky
Representative Helen Sommers
Representative Steve Van Luven

Lyle Quasim, Department of Social and Health Services
Marty Brown, Office of Financial Management
David Dauwalder, Central Washington University
Jane Jervis, The Evergreen State College
Marsha Landolt, University of Washington
Thomas L. "Les" Purce, Washington State University
Ken Conte, House Office of Program Research
Stan Pynch, Senate Committee Services

Staff

Roxanne Lieb, Director
Steve Aos, Associate Director

CONTENTS

Introduction	i
Part I: Beginning Teachers	
A. Career Pathways to Teaching.....	1
B. College Education Programs for Teachers.....	5
C. Beginning Teacher Assistance Programs.....	12
Mentors	13
Training	16
Other Assistance.....	19
D. Current Teaching Assignment	22
Part II: Principals	
A. Student Teaching.....	28
B. College Teacher Education Programs.....	32
C. Type of Assistance for Beginning Teachers	36
D. Additional Comments.....	38
Appendix A: Additional Information on Survey and OSPI Data Sources	40

INTRODUCTION

In 1998, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (Institute) undertook a study on the preparation and development of teachers in Washington State at the request of its Board of Directors. A report was published by the Institute in August 1999, *Teacher Preparation and Development*. The study included surveys of beginning teachers and principals. Due to space limitations, not all the data from the surveys and from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI) certification and employment data base were available in the report. This chartbook provides additional insights from the Institute's study.

This chartbook has two parts. Part I is divided into four sections and contains information from the Beginning Teacher survey and data from OSPI:

- A. Career Pathway to Teaching;**
- B. College Education Programs for Teachers;**
- C. Beginning Teacher Assistance Programs; and**
- D. Current Teaching Assignment.**

Part II is divided into three sections and contains information from the Principal survey and data from OSPI:

- A. Student Teaching;**
- B. College Teacher Education Programs;**
- C. Type of Assistance for Beginning Teachers; and**
- D. Additional Comments.**

For a full copy of our report on teacher preparation and development, call the Institute at (360) 586-2677 or download it from the Institute's Web site: <http://www.wa.gov/wsipp>.

Part I

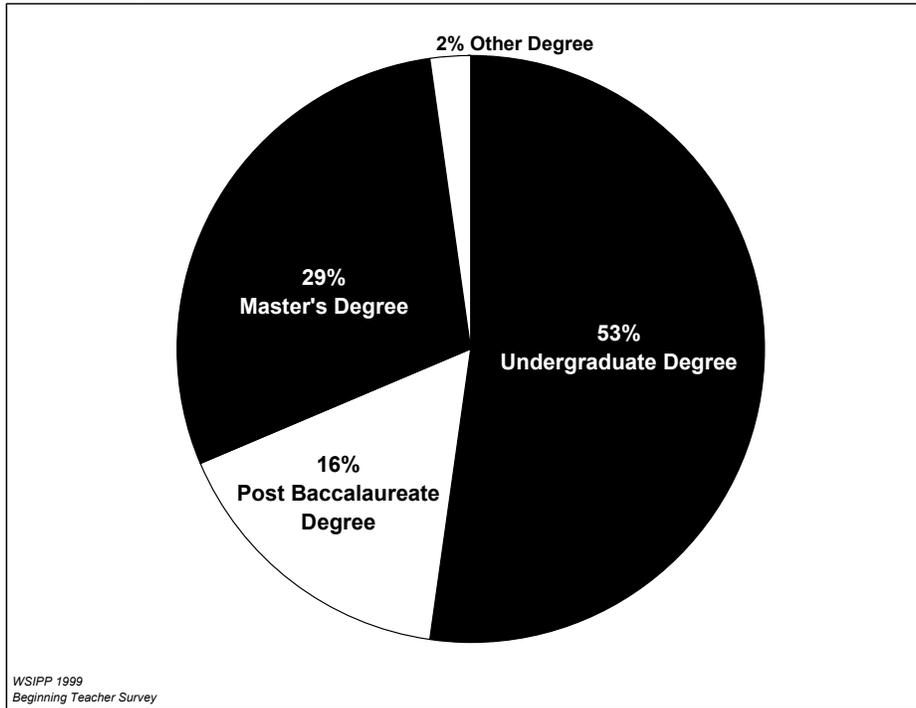
Beginning Teachers

A. CAREER PATHWAYS TO TEACHING

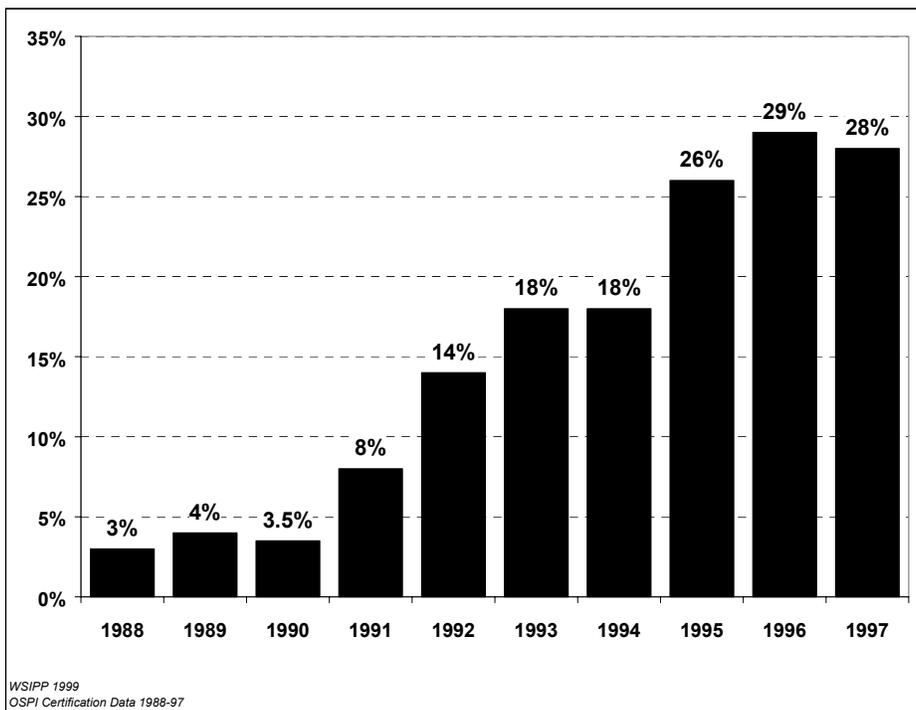
The Institute survey asked beginning teachers what degree they completed to obtain their initial teaching certificate, their undergraduate GPA, and their major. The Institute also reviewed trends in OSPI's certification data.

- Traditionally, young people who sought to become teachers completed education courses as part of their undergraduate education. Over the last ten years, some new trends have emerged as more people return for their teaching certificate after they complete their bachelor's degree.
- The Legislature authorized a Master in Teaching degree at universities and colleges in 1987 and required teachers to obtain a master's degree. The requirement to obtain a master's degree was rescinded in 1992; however, there is an incentive on the state salary schedule for teachers to obtain a master's degree. Today 17 of the 22 teacher preparation programs offer a Master in Teaching or Master of Arts in Teaching program.
- The State Board of Education created a pilot internship program for alternative certification in 1991. The program is no longer in existence, and the regulations for the pilots expired in August 1999. (Although there is no alternative certificate route, school districts may hire an individual on an emergency or conditional teaching certificate.)

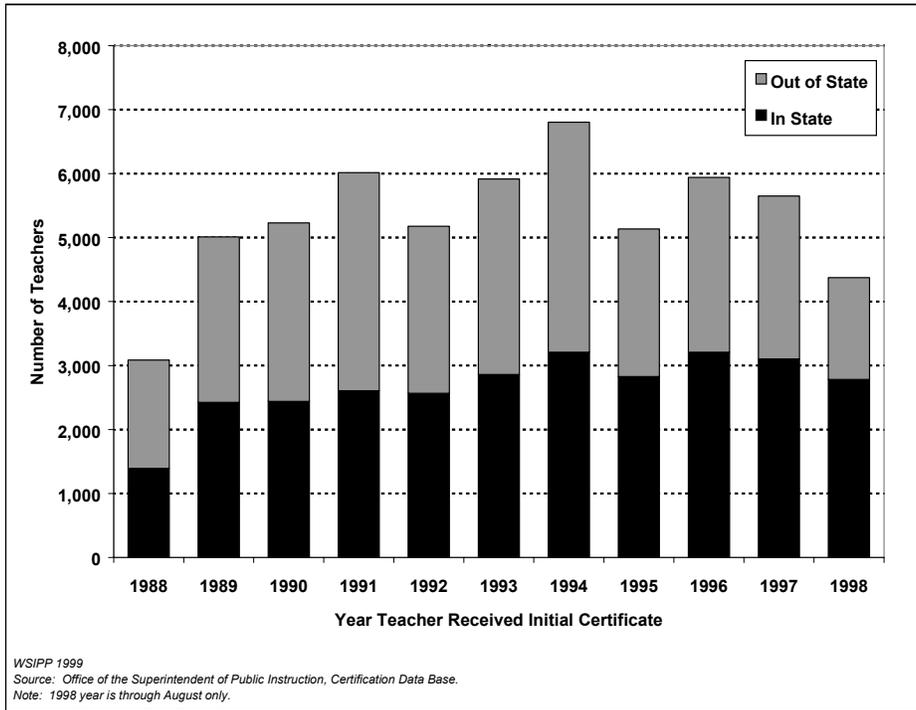
Almost Half of Beginning Teachers Obtained a Degree Beyond Their Baccalaureate for Initial Certification



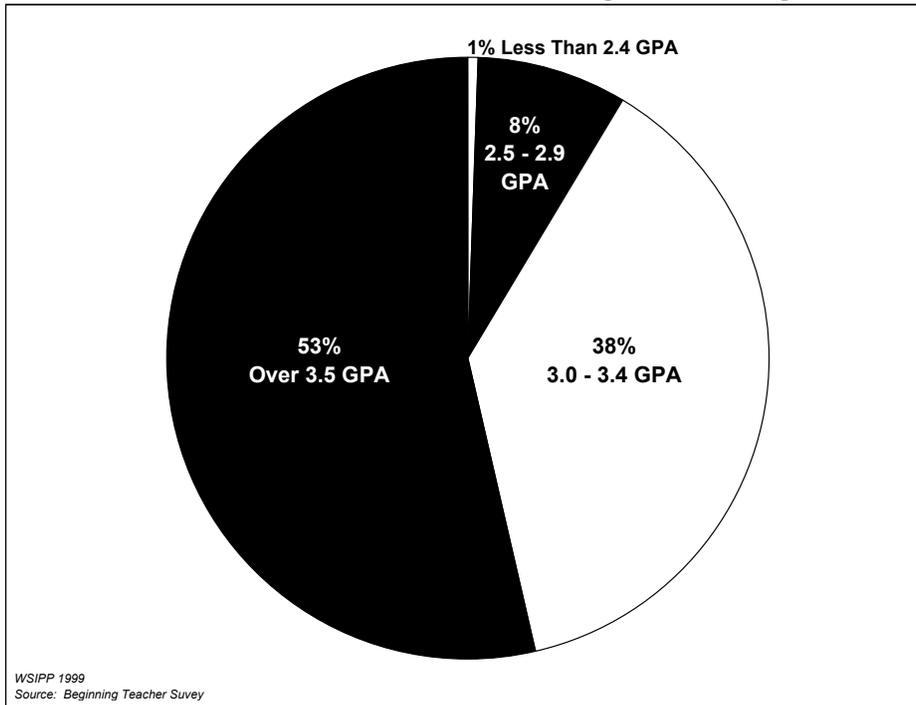
The Percentage of Teachers Obtaining a Master's Degree for Initial Certification Has Increased Over the Last Ten Years



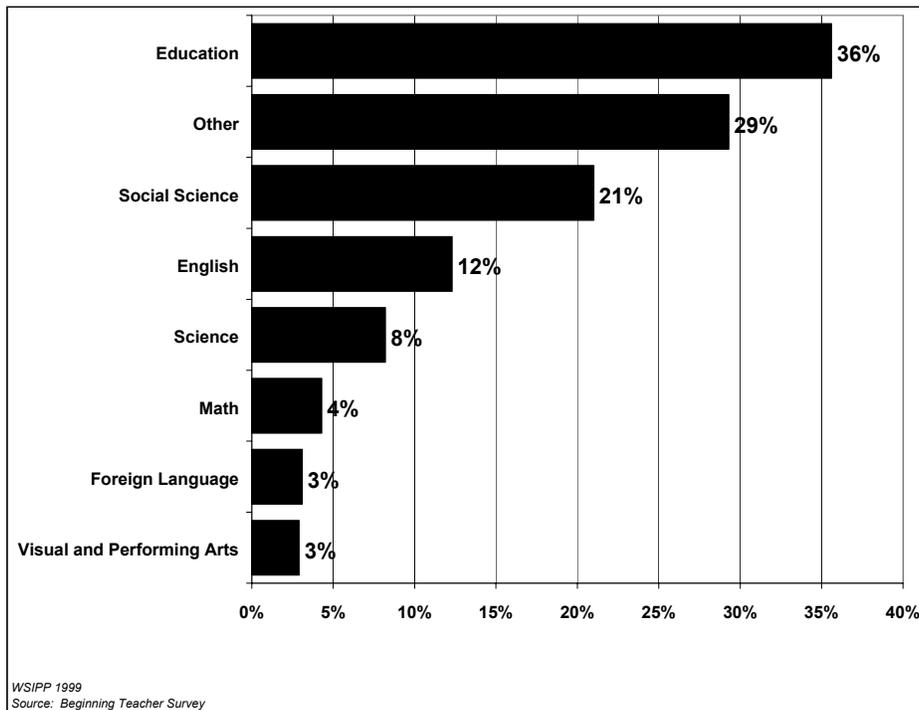
Fifty Percent of Initial Certificates Were Granted to Instate-Trained Teachers Over the Last Ten Years



Over 50 Percent of Beginning Teachers Surveyed Reported a GPA of 3.5 or More for Their Undergraduate Degree



Over One-Third of the Beginning Teachers Surveyed Majored in Education

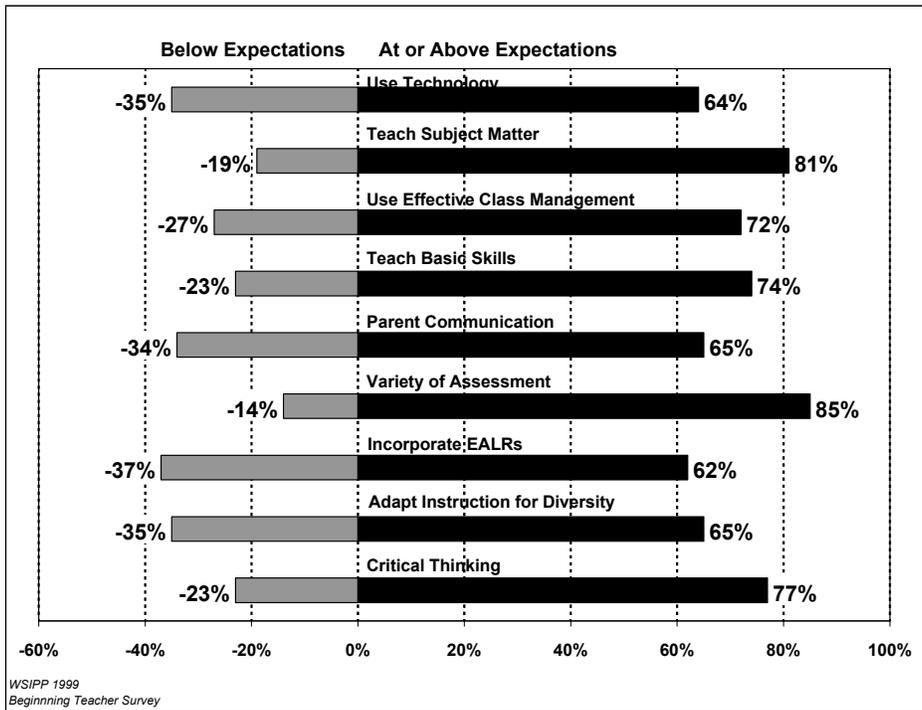


B. COLLEGE EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR TEACHERS

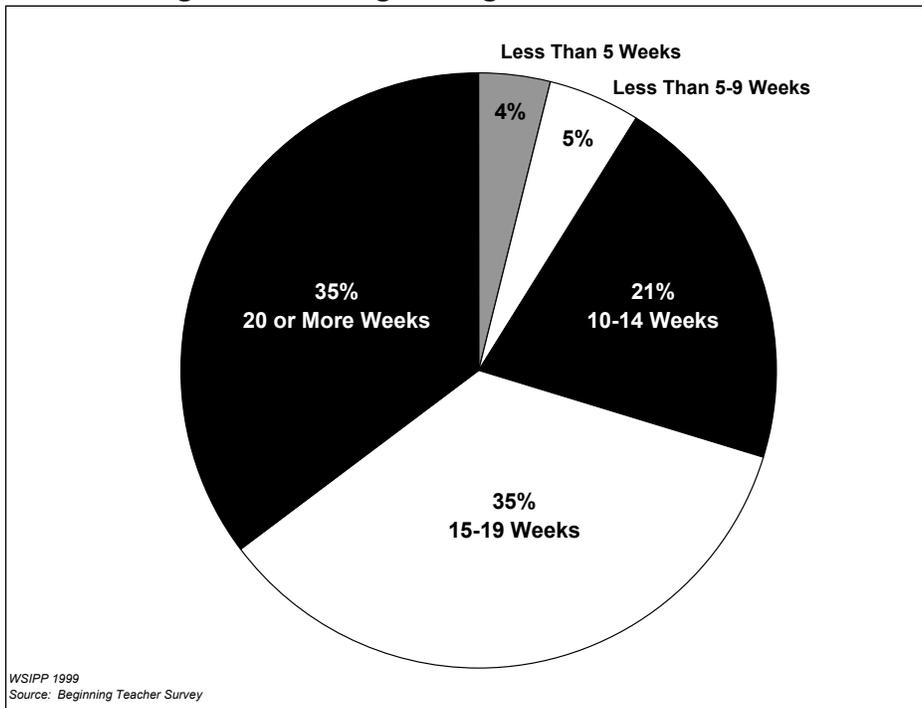
The Institute survey asked beginning teachers how they rated their college education programs and their student teaching experiences. The certification data base was reviewed for information on endorsements.

- In Washington, the 22 colleges of education that prepare beginning teachers are given the major responsibility of ensuring candidates are well qualified. The state provides some oversight, primarily in the area of setting program approval standards, approving programs, and providing technical assistance. Half the teacher preparation programs elect to receive a national review by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).
- In 1997, the State Board of Education revised the approval standards for teacher preparation programs to be phased in over a three-year period. The new standards are performance-based and require candidates to demonstrate a positive impact on student learning.
- The state's standards for the knowledge and skills of beginning teachers include new or additional emphasis on the state's learning goals and essential academic learning requirements (EALRs), content for endorsement area, ethics, group decision-making strategies, education technology, critical thinking and problem solving skills, and special education.
- In 1998, the State Board of Education also revised its endorsements to (1) align with the state education reform's efforts, (2) reduce the number of endorsements, (3) require pedagogy (how students learn) training specific to the endorsement sought, and (4) increase the number of credit hours for certain endorsements. Washington does not require an academic major other than education, but every teacher candidate must have at least one endorsement.
- Education reform places new emphasis on teachers using assessment of student performance to improve their instructional strategies. A variety of assessment techniques (e.g., portfolios, videotaping, observation, etc.) can be used to measure student performance.

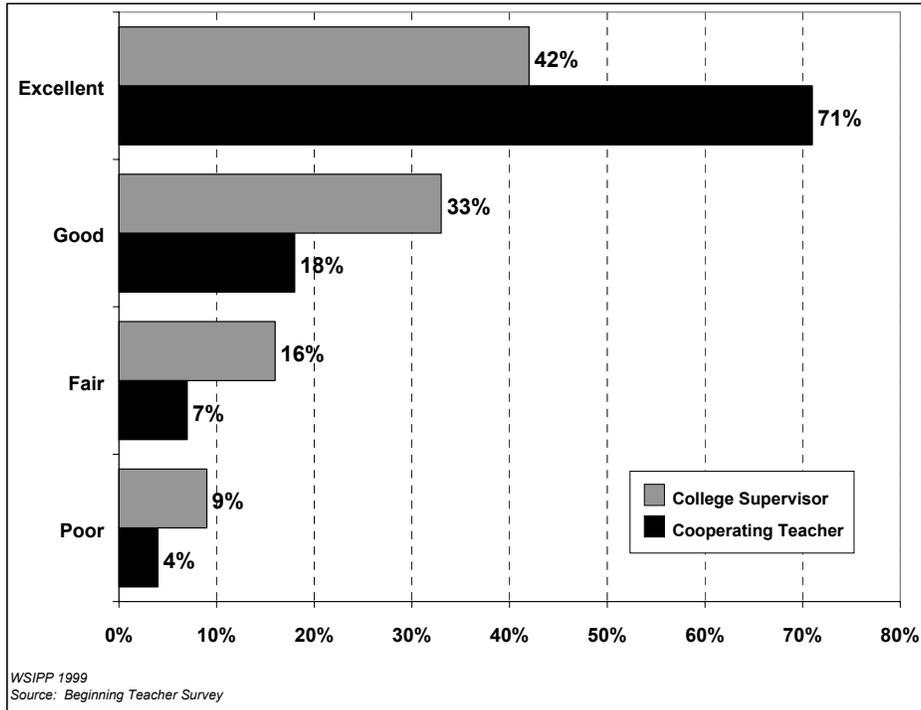
The Majority of Teachers Found Their Education Programs Met Their Expectations



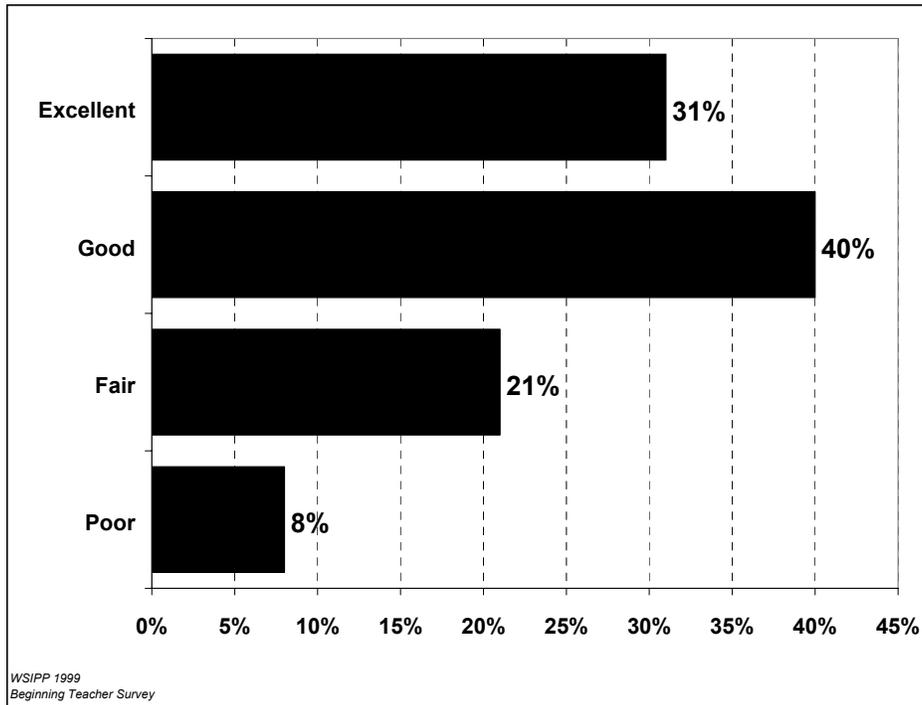
Over One-Third of Teachers Spent 20 or More Weeks in K-12 Classrooms Student Teaching or Observing During Their Teacher Education Program



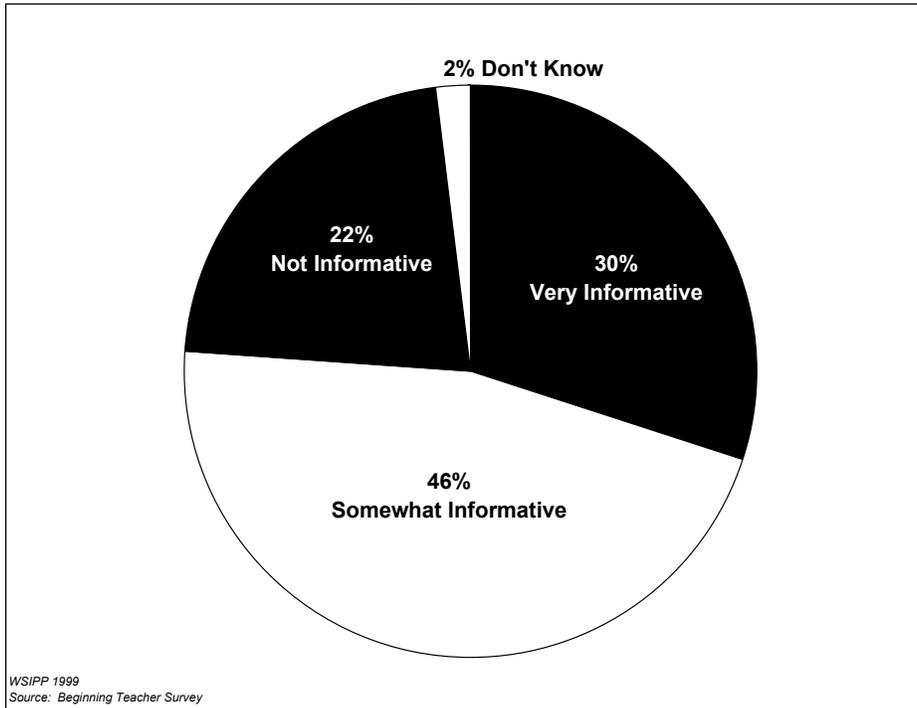
Teachers Ranked Cooperating Teachers Higher Than Their College Supervisor for Help While Student Teaching



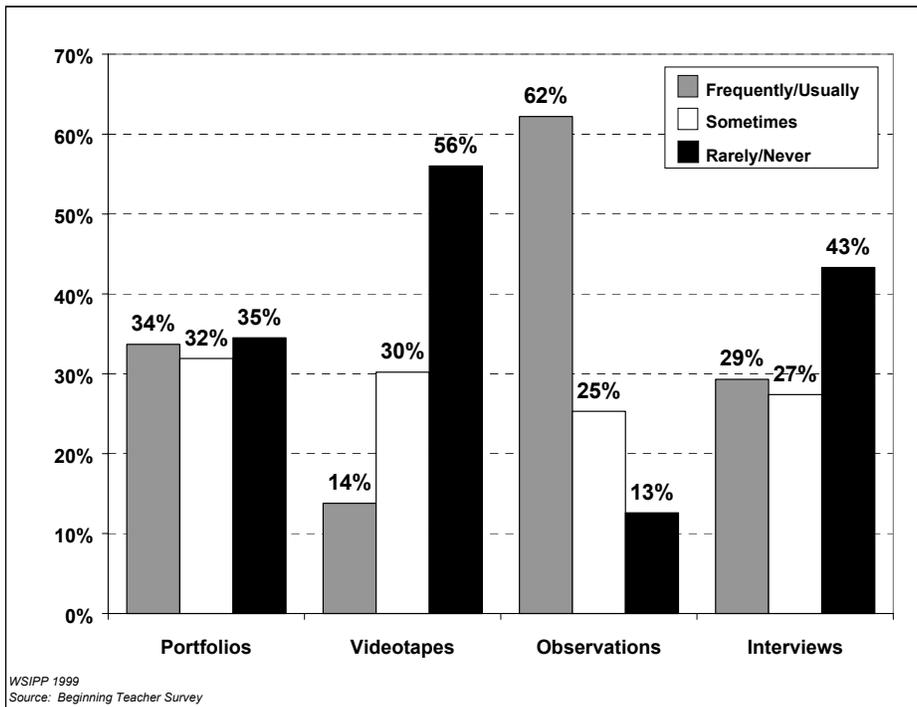
Almost Three Quarters of Student Teachers' Cooperating Teachers Ranked Their Cooperating Teachers Good to Excellent on Their Understanding of the EALRs and State Education Reform



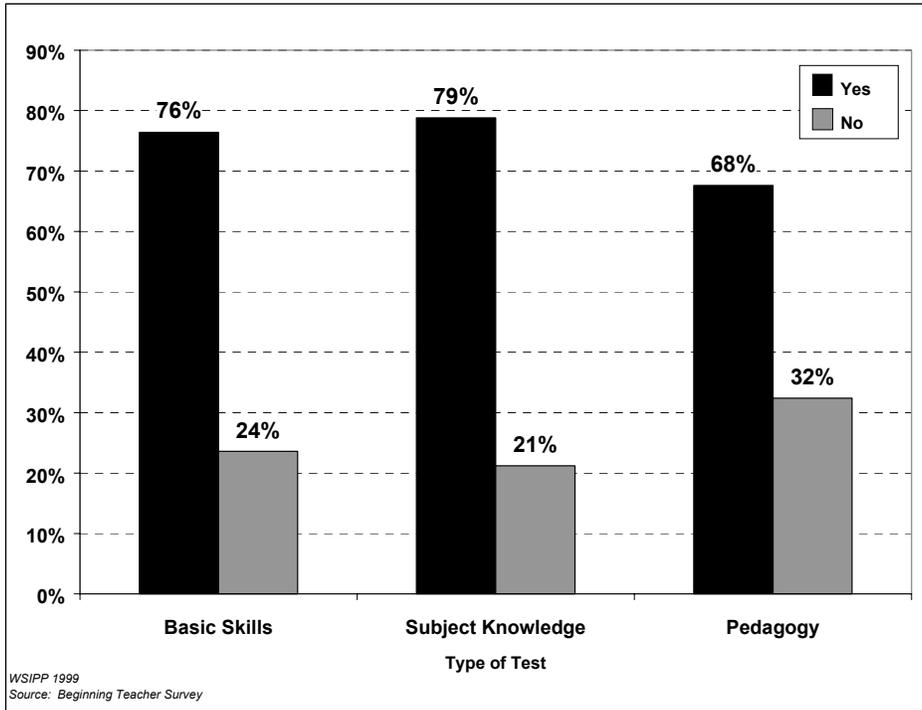
Three Quarters of Teachers Found the Curriculum in Teacher Education Programs Informative About EALRs



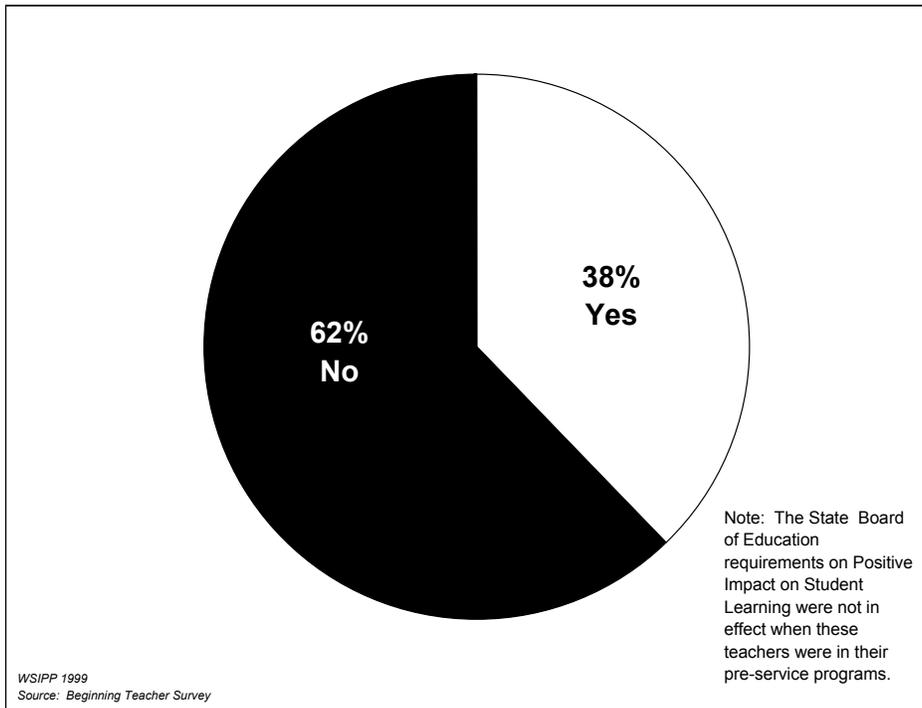
Teacher Education Programs Use Observations As the Most Common Form of Assessment (Excluding Writing)



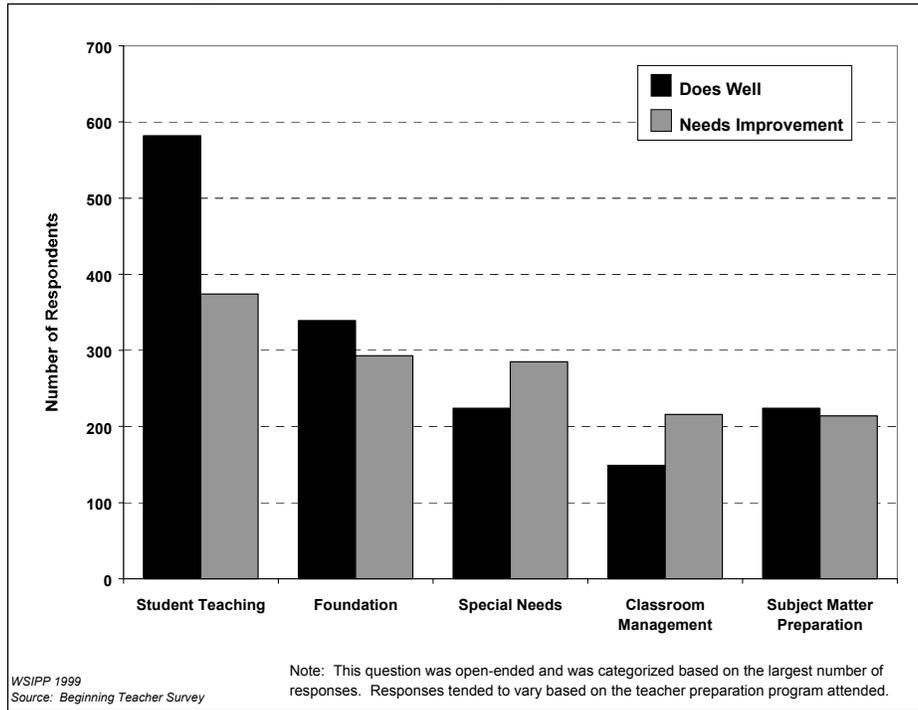
Over Two Thirds of Beginning Teachers Support Tests for Teacher Candidates



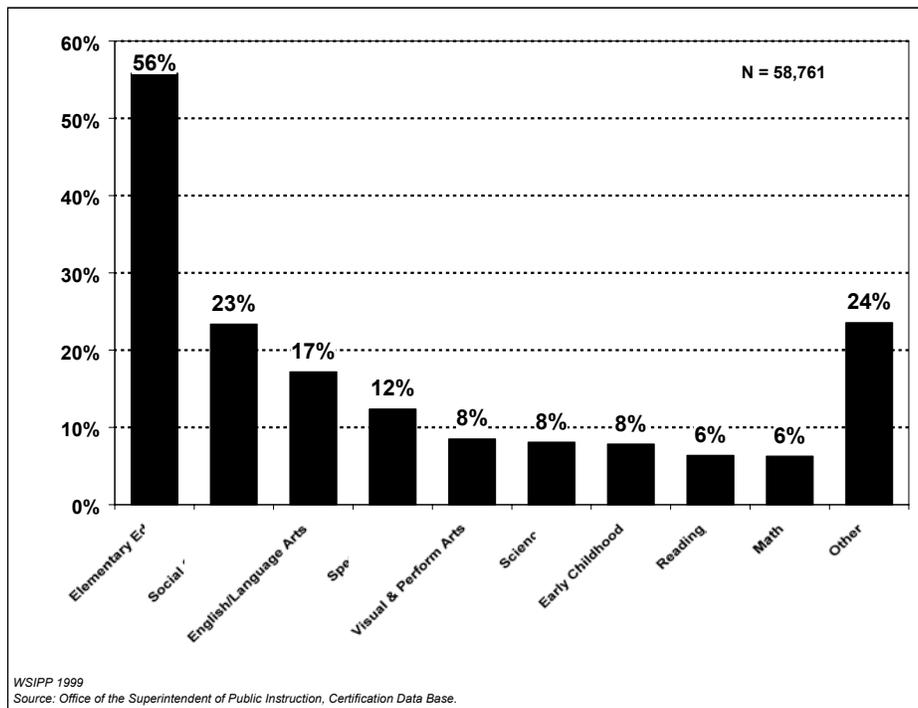
One Third of the Candidates Had to Demonstrate Positive Impact on Student Learning in Their Teacher Education Program



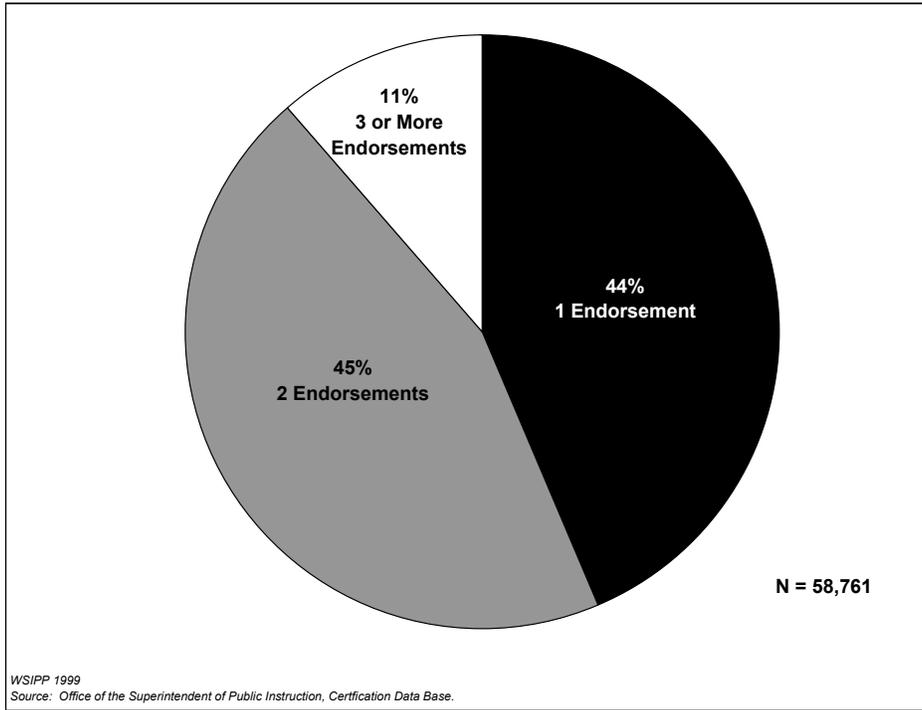
Respondents Have Varying Views About How Well Colleges of Education Prepared Them In Five Areas



Over Half of Teachers Receive An Endorsement in Elementary Education



Over the Last Ten Years More Than Half the Teachers Seeking Initial Certification Have Obtained Two or More Endorsements



C. BEGINNING TEACHER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The Institute survey not only addressed teacher preparation, but also assistance provided during the first year of teaching. Questions were asked about mentors, training, and other types of assistance provided in beginning teacher assistance programs.

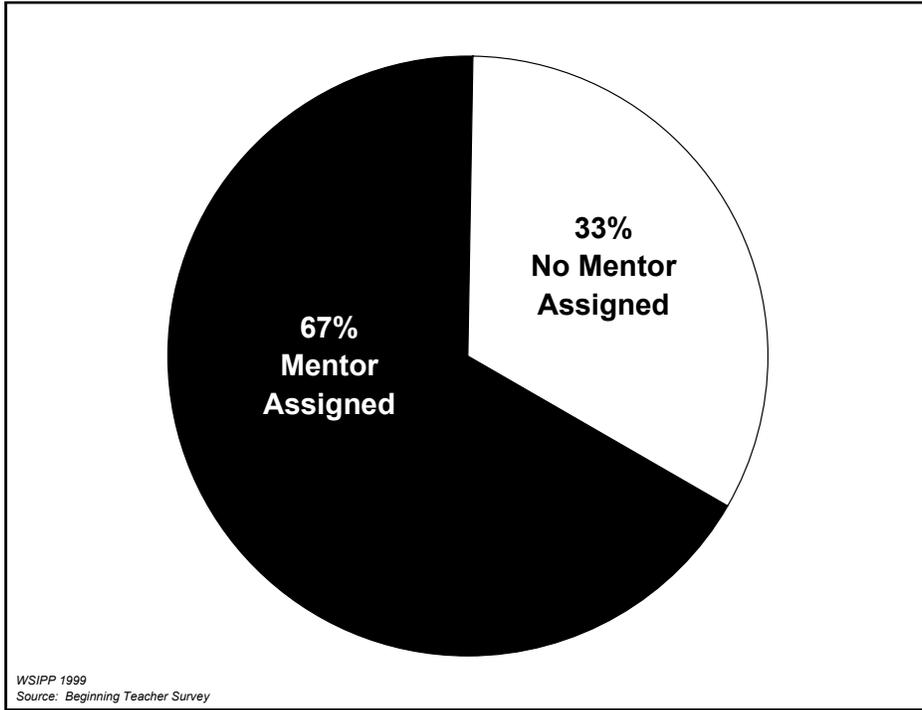
- Parents and the public share high expectations for teachers regardless of whether the teacher is new or experienced. But even the best teacher preparation programs provide only a foundation of knowledge and skills that teachers will need to build upon throughout their careers.
- First-year teachers frequently mention problems dealing with basic issues such as discipline, motivating students, communicating with parents, accessing instructional resources, and planning and organizing class work.
- Washington has provided state funds for the Teacher Assistance Program (TAP) for first-year teachers since 1985. Local assistance programs are administered by school districts or Educational Service Districts (ESDs).
- Assistance programs include the assignment of an experienced mentor teacher, training for mentors and beginning teachers, and release time for participants to observe other classrooms.

Mentors

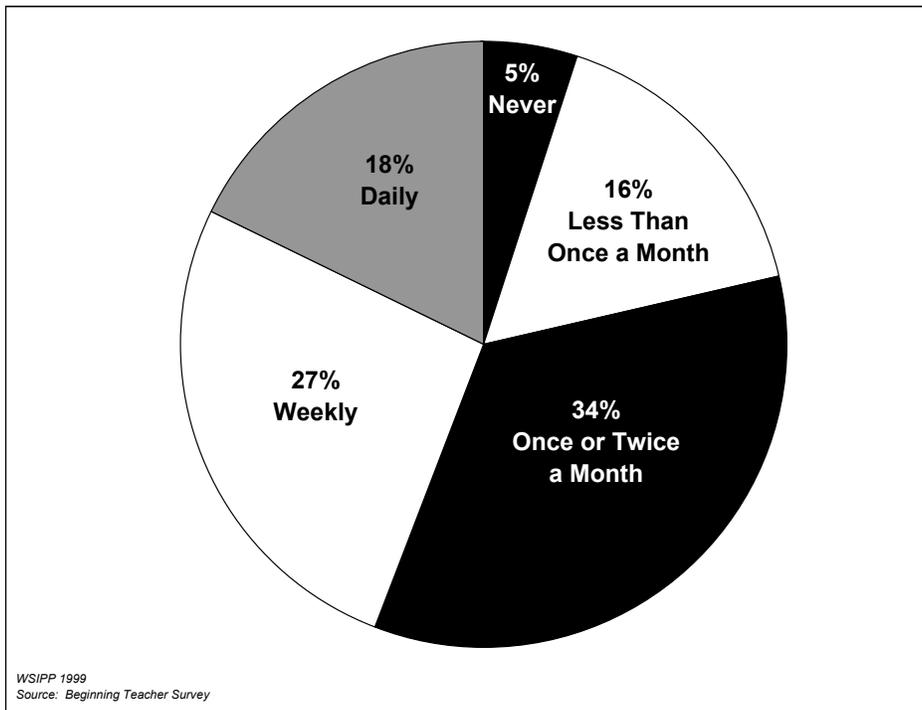
The Institute survey asked beginning teachers whether they were assigned a mentor, how often they met with or were observed by their mentor, and how valuable they found this type of assistance.

- One of the most consistent findings in studies of beginning teacher assistance programs is the importance of the mentor teacher.
- A competent, experienced colleague can provide practical advice about effective instructional strategies and can serve as a readily available resource on everything from finding materials to school curriculum. Yet what many beginning teachers appreciate most about a mentor is simply having “someone to talk to.”
- It is unclear how effective a mentor could be as coach or advisor without watching the beginning teacher in his or her classroom. Beginning teachers also often request the opportunity to watch experienced teachers and learn how they engage their students, pace the lessons, and solve problems. Observations are, however, difficult to arrange because they necessitate hiring a substitute teacher or arranging for another teacher to cover the classroom.

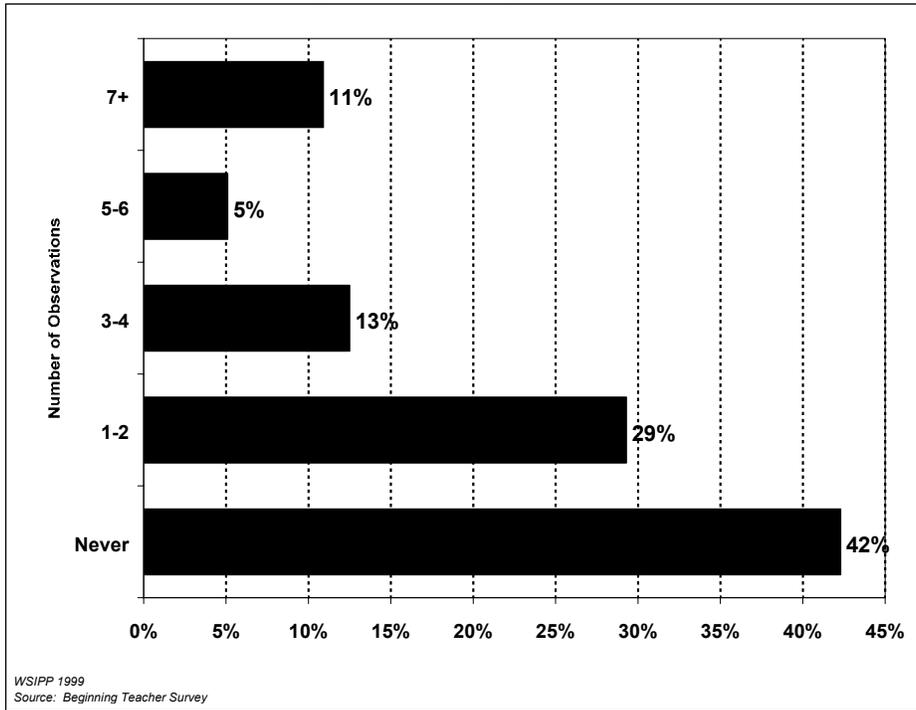
Two-Thirds of Beginning Teachers Were Assigned a Mentor Teacher for Their First Year of Teaching



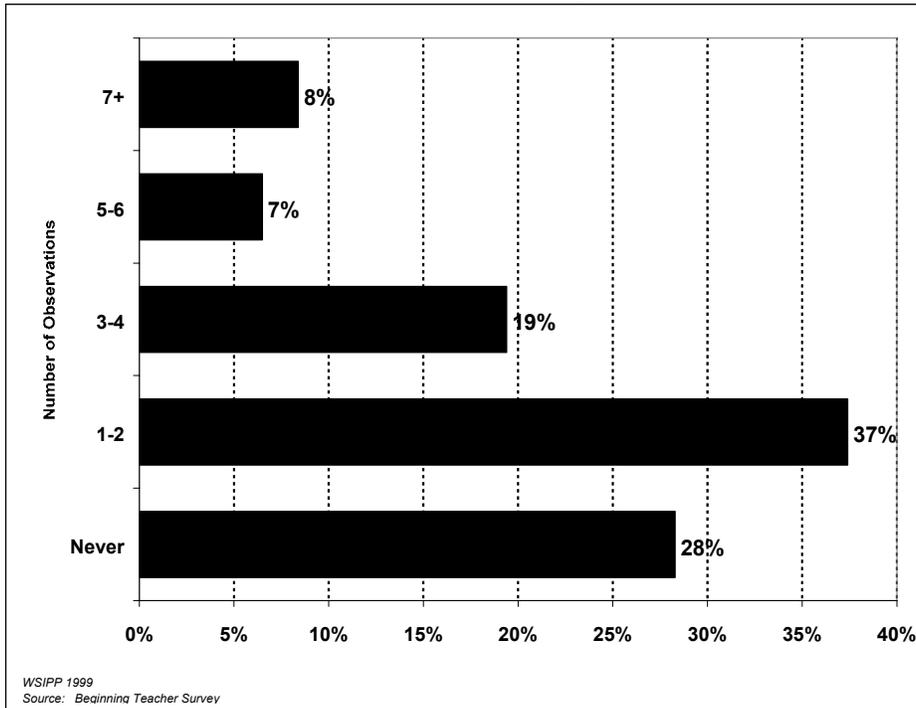
Almost Half of Beginning Teachers Met With Their Mentors Daily or Weekly



Two-Thirds of Beginning Teachers Were Never or Rarely Observed by Their Mentors



More Than Half the Beginning Teachers Never or Rarely Observed Other Teachers During Their First Year

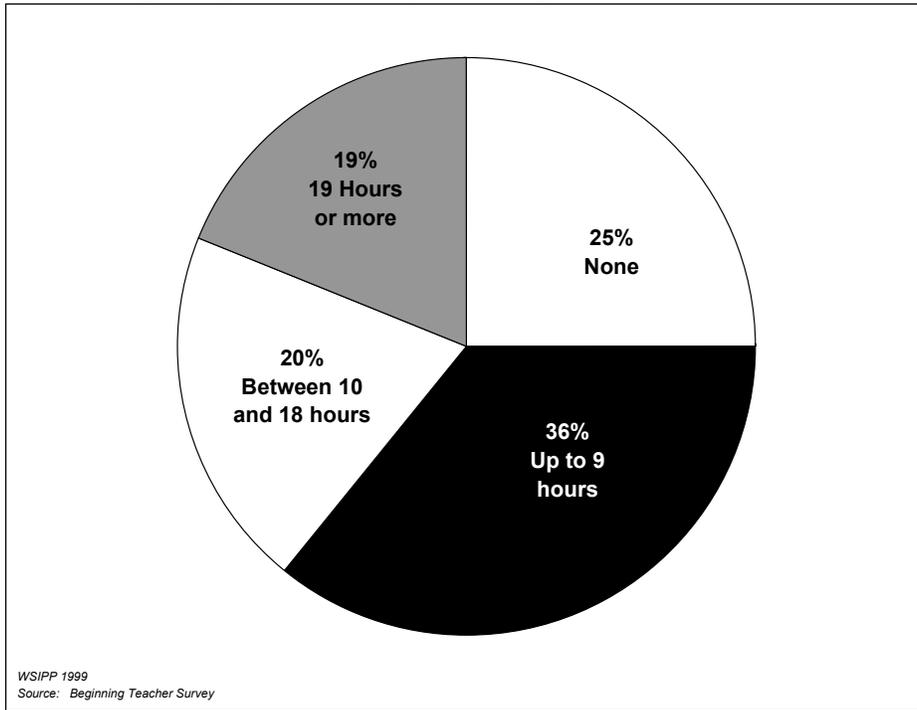


Training

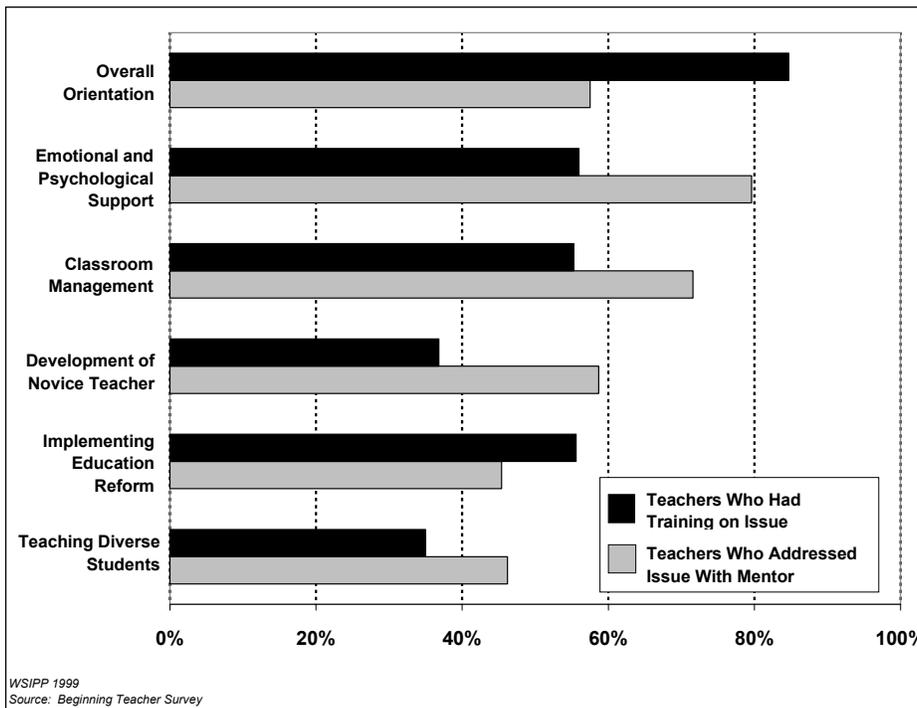
The Institute survey asked beginning teachers how much training they attended, what topics were covered, and how valuable they found this type of assistance.

- Most school districts include training in their assistance programs for beginning teachers, offered either by the district or through the ESD.
- Training typically covers topics of interest to the beginning teacher, such as classroom management, report cards, and parent-teacher conferences. Most districts also use this opportunity to provide orientation on district policies and procedures for new employees.
- Beginning teachers also have training opportunities beyond those offered through an assistance program. The majority of those surveyed reported that training especially for beginning teachers represented less than a fourth of the total training they encountered in their first year as a teacher.

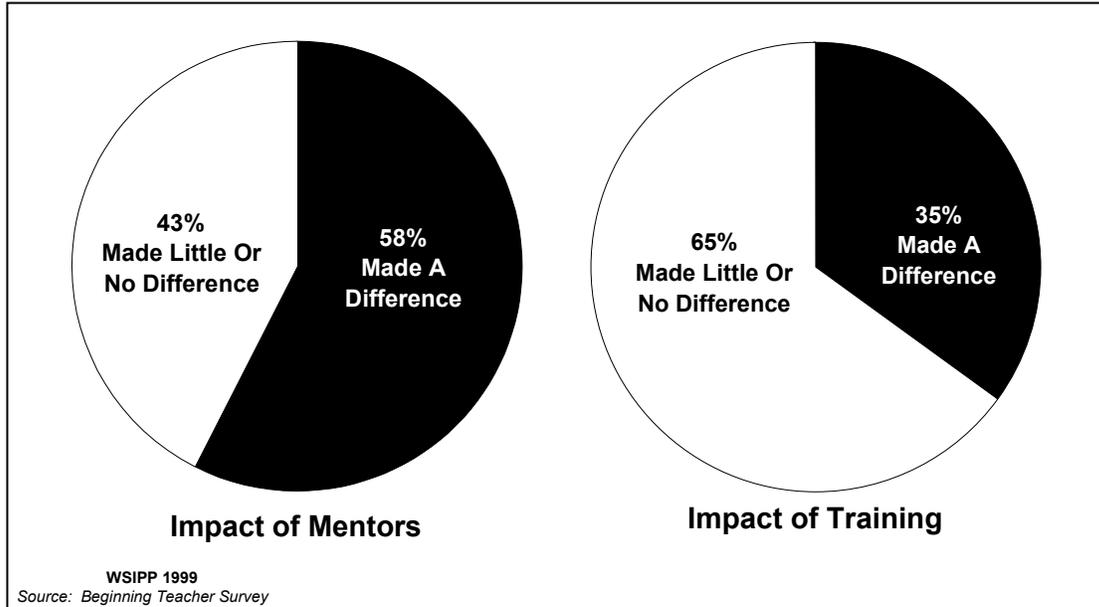
Beginning Teachers Reported a Wide Range in the Amount of Training They Attended Specifically for First-Year Teachers



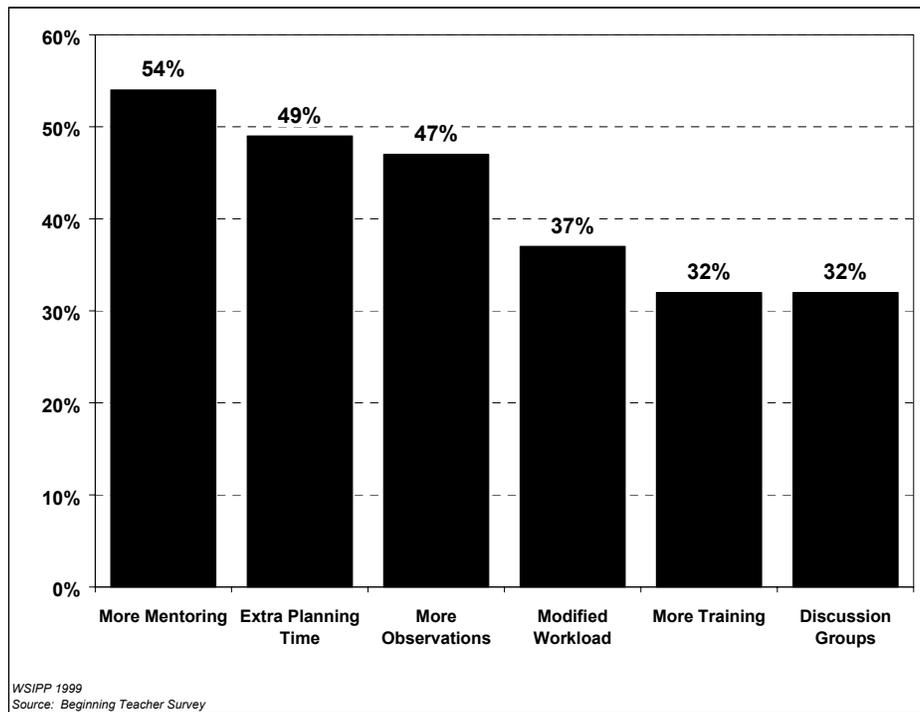
**Most Common Topic for Beginning Teacher Training: Orientation
Most Common Topic Covered with Mentors: Emotional Support**



Beginning Teachers Said Mentors Made More of a Difference in Improving Their Teaching Than Training



What Beginning Teachers Said Would Significantly Improve Their Teaching: More Mentoring, Extra Planning Time, Observations

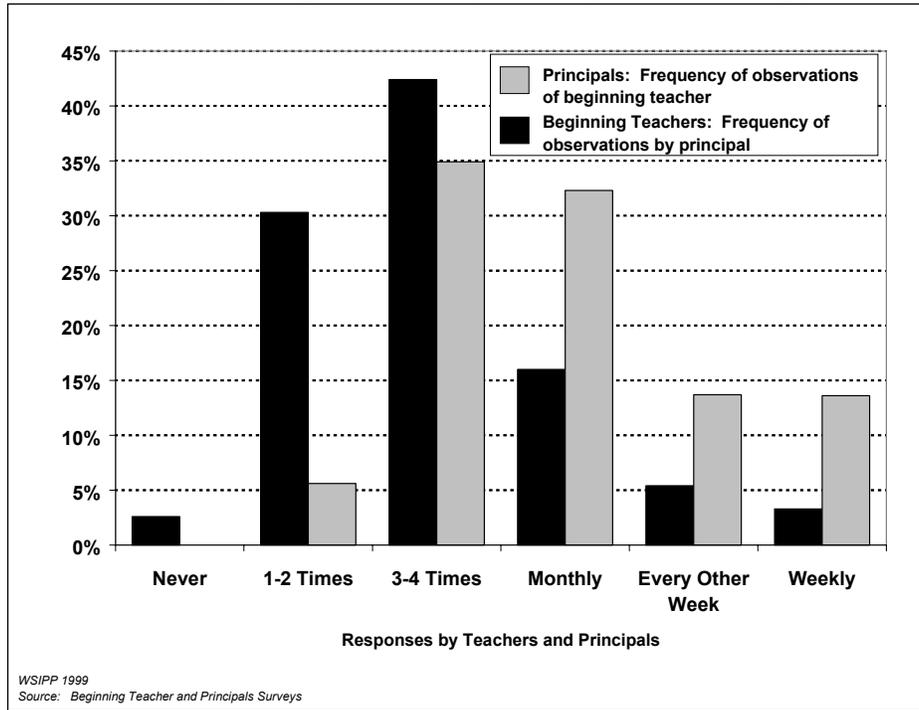


Other Assistance

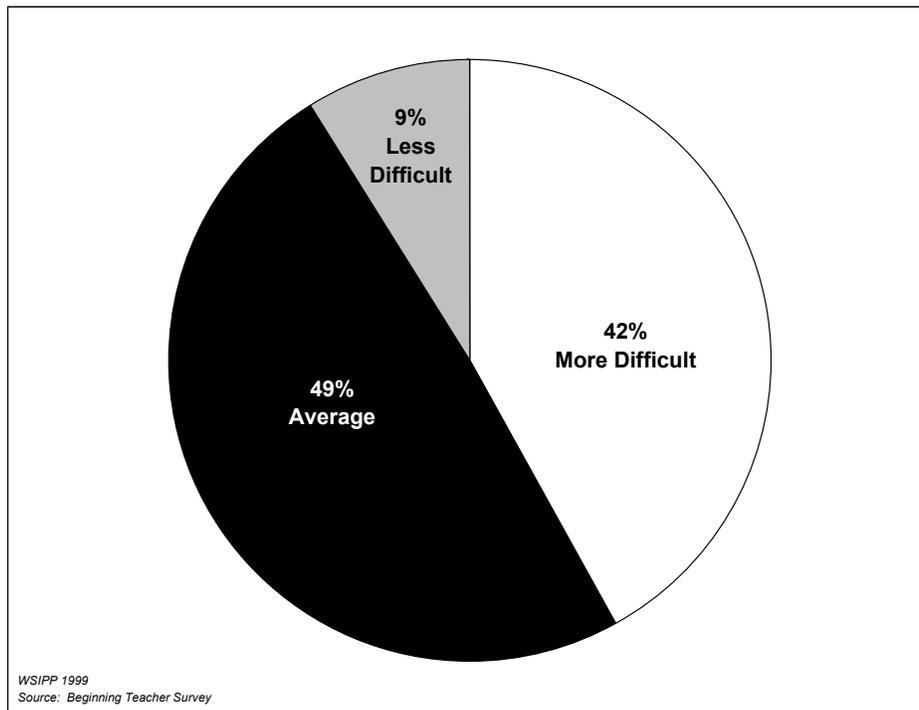
The Institute asked beginning teachers about observations by their principals, how their assignment compared to other teachers, and whether there were standards associated with their beginning teacher assistance programs. The teachers were also asked about the impact mentoring, training, and other assistance had on their first year of teaching.

- **Observations:** In Washington, principals are required to observe teachers at least twice during the school year for formal performance evaluation. However, many beginning teachers want their principals to play an active, informal role in providing feedback on their teaching and assistance in developing and improving their skills. The Institute asked both beginning teachers and principals how often principals provided assistance and monitored the progress of first-year teachers.
- **Assignment:** Some studies have found that beginning teachers are more likely to be placed in an assignment outside their area of expertise or assigned more difficult teaching situations (such as teaching multiple subjects or grade levels or not having a permanent classroom). Beginning teachers were asked how their assignment compared to the assignment of other teachers in their school.
- **Standards:** The TAP program for beginning teachers has not been changed to reflect standards and accountability associated with education reform. There are no statewide standards for what the program is intended to accomplish. However, it is possible that standards are set at the local level. The Institute asked school districts, principals, and beginning teachers whether standards or expectations had been set for their beginning teacher assistance programs.
- **Impact:** The two major objectives of beginning teacher assistance programs are retention (including increasing a beginning teacher's confidence in their ability to handle the basic responsibilities of teaching) and improvement of teaching skills. The Institute asked beginning teachers for their perspective on what impact assistance programs had on their first year of teaching.

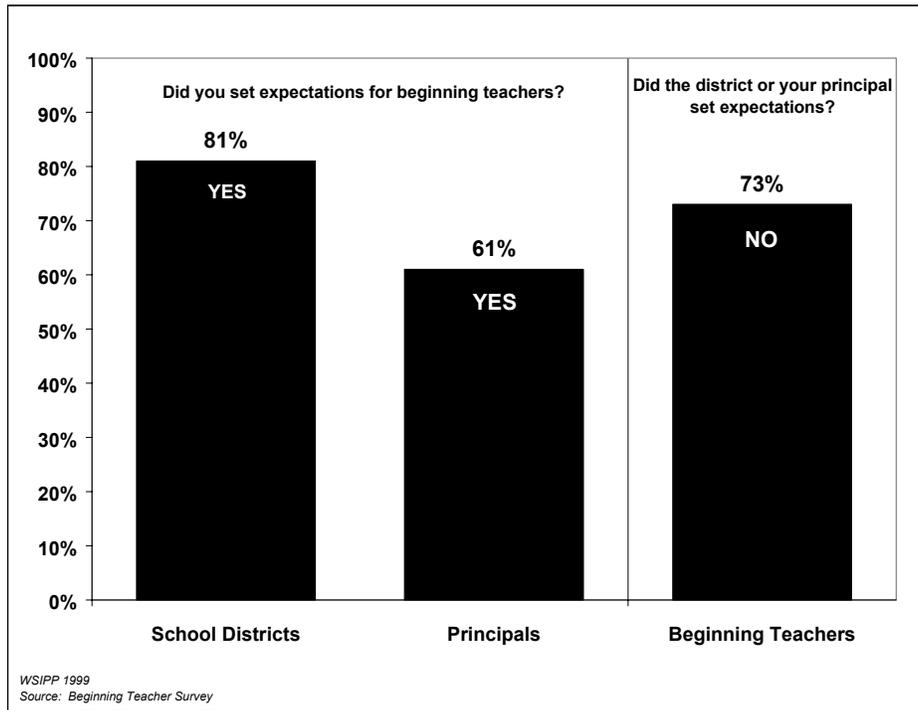
Frequency of Reported Principal Observations of Beginning Teachers (Formally or Informally)



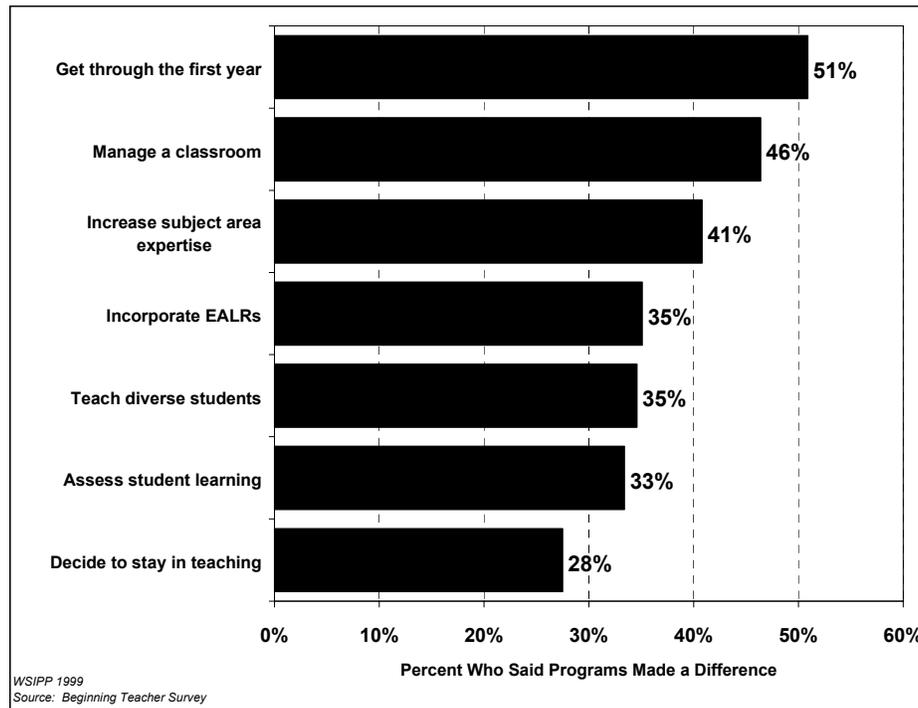
Most Beginning Teachers Reported Their First Year Teaching Assignment Was No More Difficult Than Other Teaching Assignments in Their School



Participants Have Different Perceptions About Standards in Beginning Teacher Assistance Programs



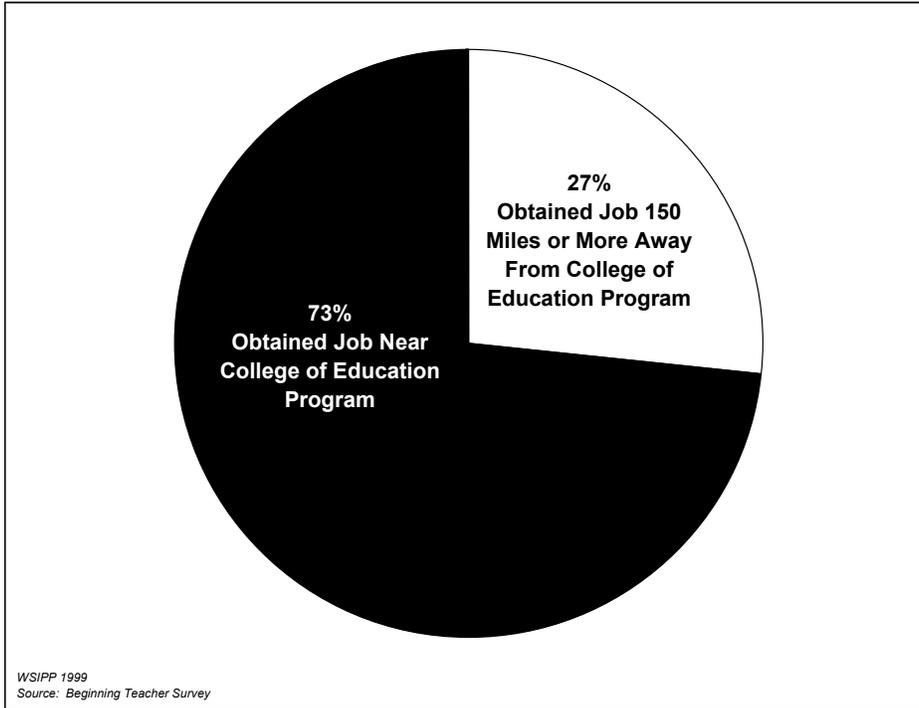
Beginning Teachers Report That Assistance Programs Help Them Get Through the First Year



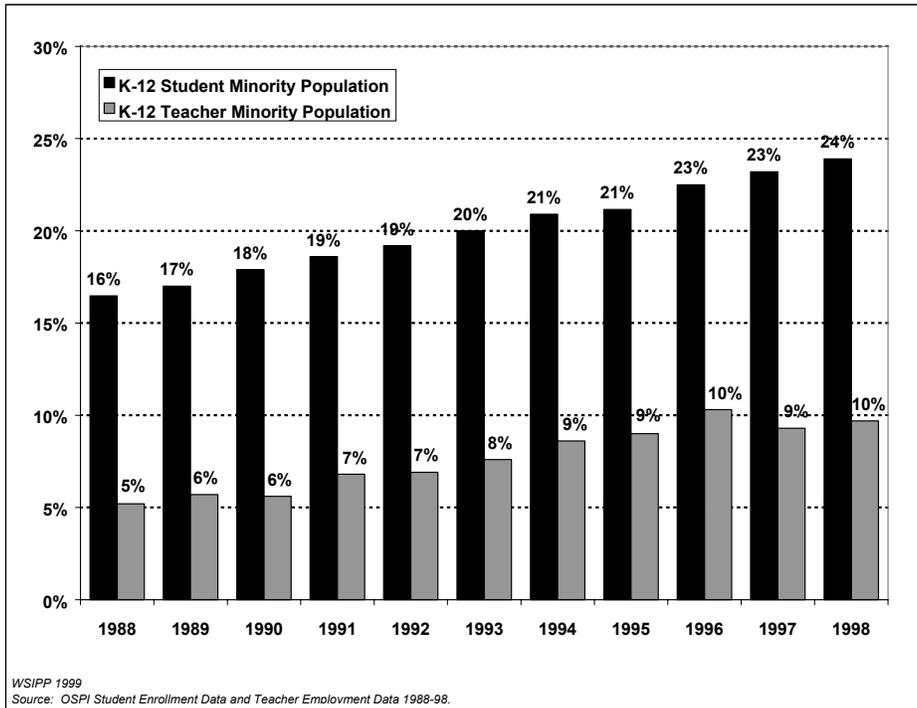
D. CURRENT TEACHING ASSIGNMENT

The Institute survey asked beginning teachers about their current teaching assignments (including out-of-endorsement teaching), the type of school where they are teaching, and reasons they might consider leaving teaching.

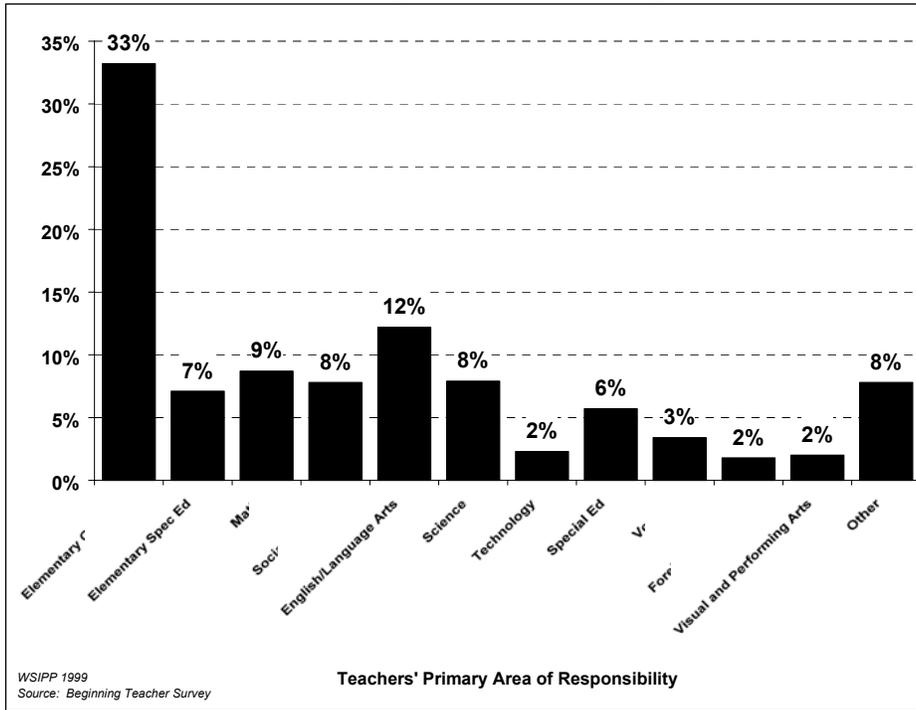
Three Quarters of Teachers Obtained Jobs Near (150 Miles or Less) Their College of Education Program



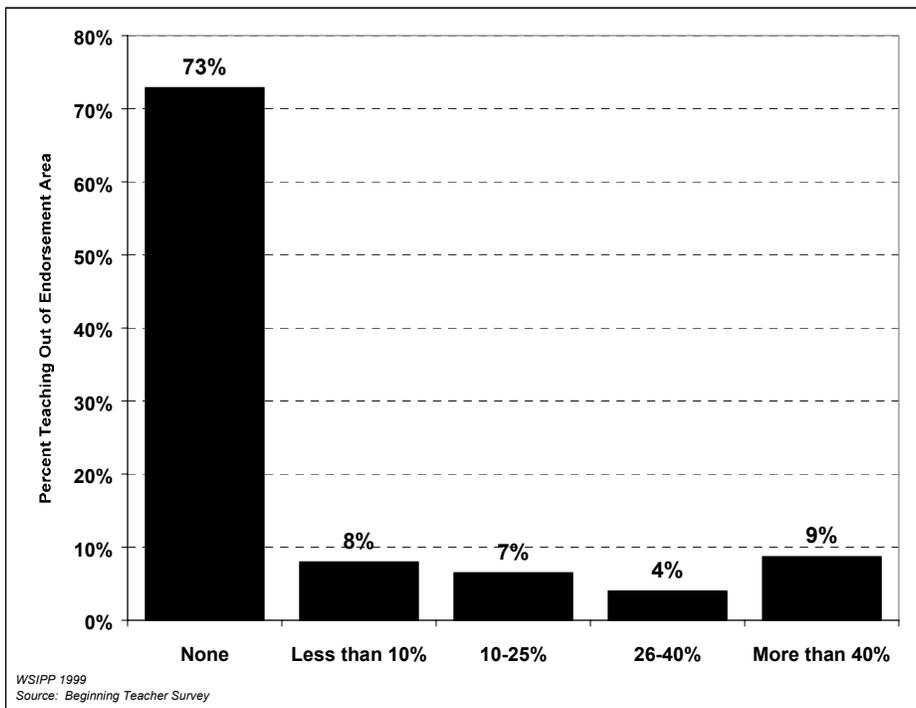
The Percentage of Minority Teachers Has Increased at a Slower Rate Than the Percentage of Minority Students in Washington State



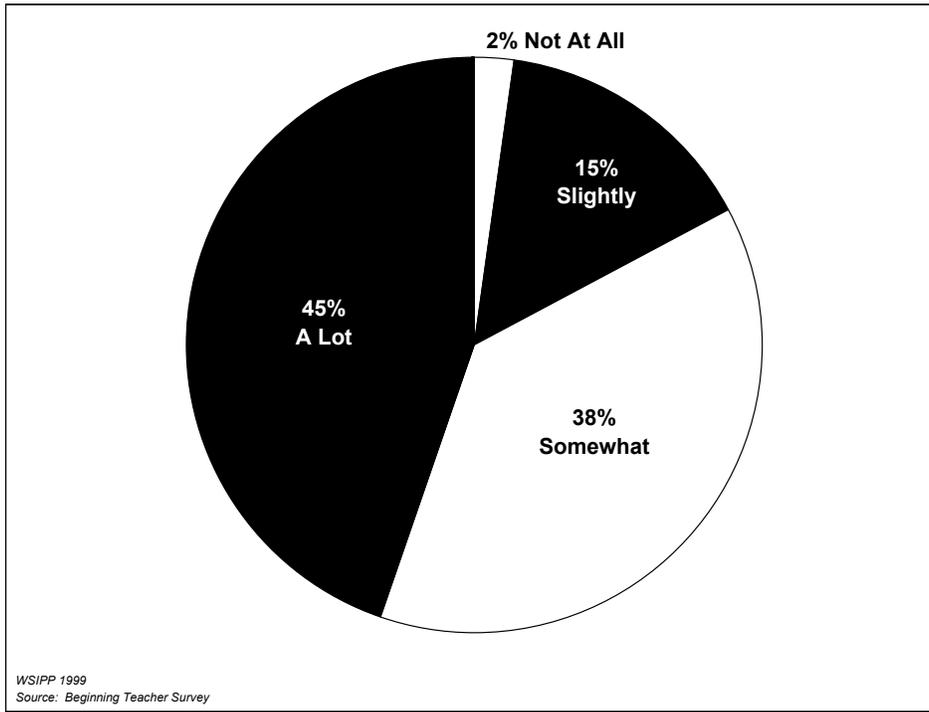
Forty Percent of Beginning Teachers' Surveyed Are Working at the Elementary Level



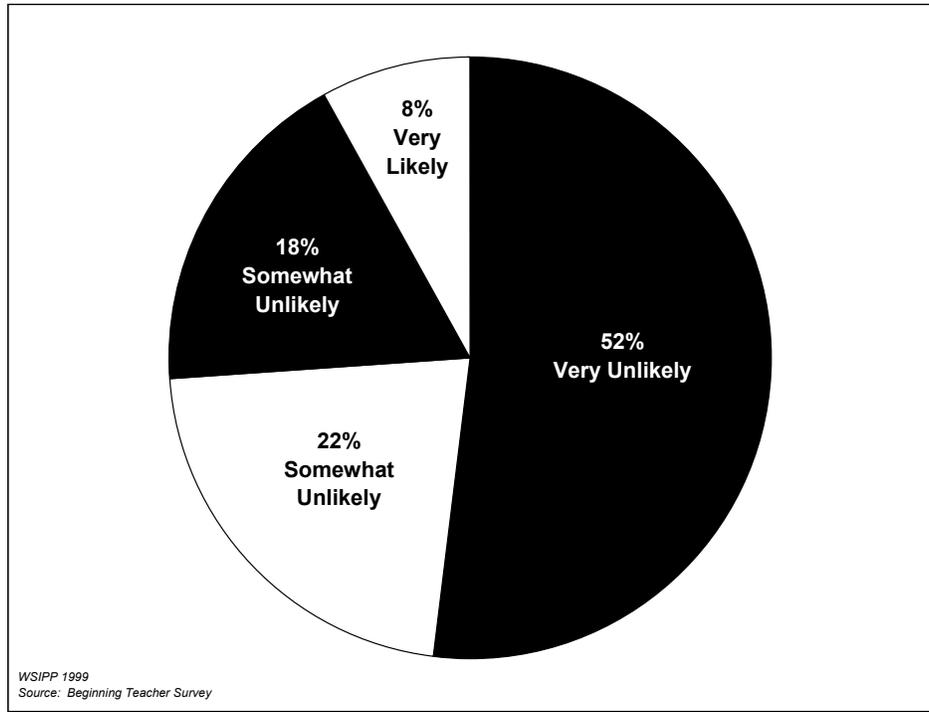
Three Quarters of Beginning Teachers Are Not Teaching Outside Their Endorsement Area



Three Quarters of the Schools In Which Teachers Work Are Involved in Education Reform



Most New Teachers Said They Were Unlikely to Leave Teaching in Next Five Years



**Forty-Three Percent of New Teachers Cited “Salary”
As Top Reason They Might Leave Teaching**

Main Reason to Leave Teaching in the Next Five Years	Salary level	43%
	Family	15%
	Limited opportunities for career growth or other career interests	14%
	Lack of administrative support	11%
	Student discipline problems	10%
	High expectations for student performance	4%
	Isolation from colleagues	3%

*WSIPP 1999
Source: Beginning Teacher Survey*

Part II

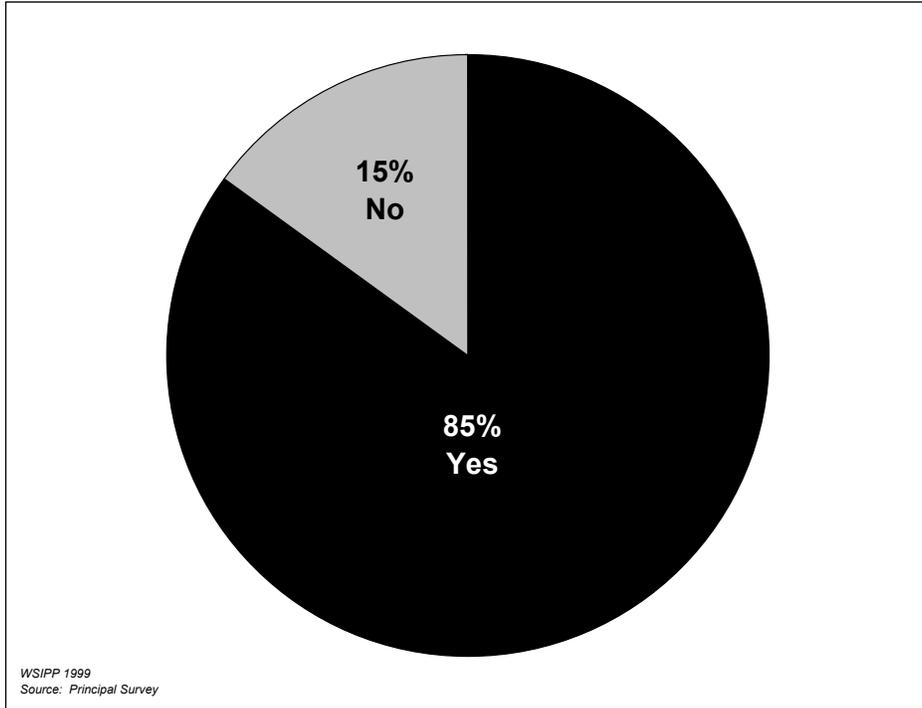
Principals

A. STUDENT TEACHING

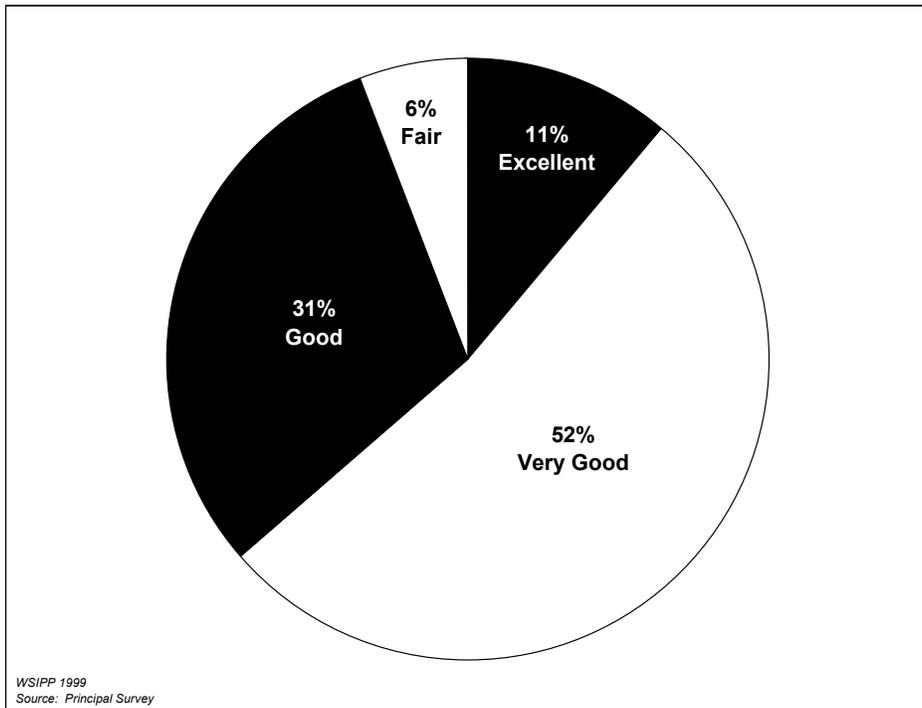
The Institute survey asked principals to assess the preparation beginning teachers received from the colleges of education, the extent of the partnerships between school districts and colleges of education, and the ability to recruit cooperating teachers.

- School districts provide an opportunity for student teachers to obtain the “hands on” experience that they most value in their teacher education programs.
- In the Institute’s case studies and surveys, both teachers and principals wanted to have longer student teaching experiences, preferably lasting an entire school year. Several Washington teacher preparation programs have started Professional Development Schools where teacher candidates participate in K-12 classrooms all year and also receive most of their college work on the school site.
- According to the beginning teachers’ survey, cooperating teachers rank very high in terms of their assistance to the student teacher. To be a cooperating teacher takes extra time, yet many teachers are willing to undertake this role in spite of the time demands.

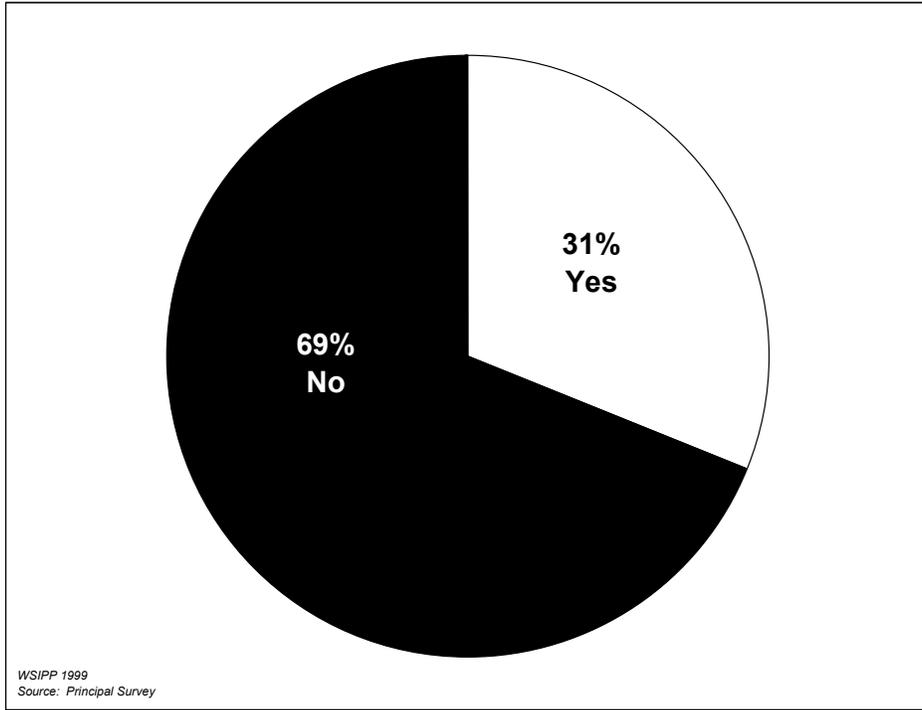
Eight-Five Percent of Principals Surveyed Had Student Teachers in Their Buildings Over the Last Three Years



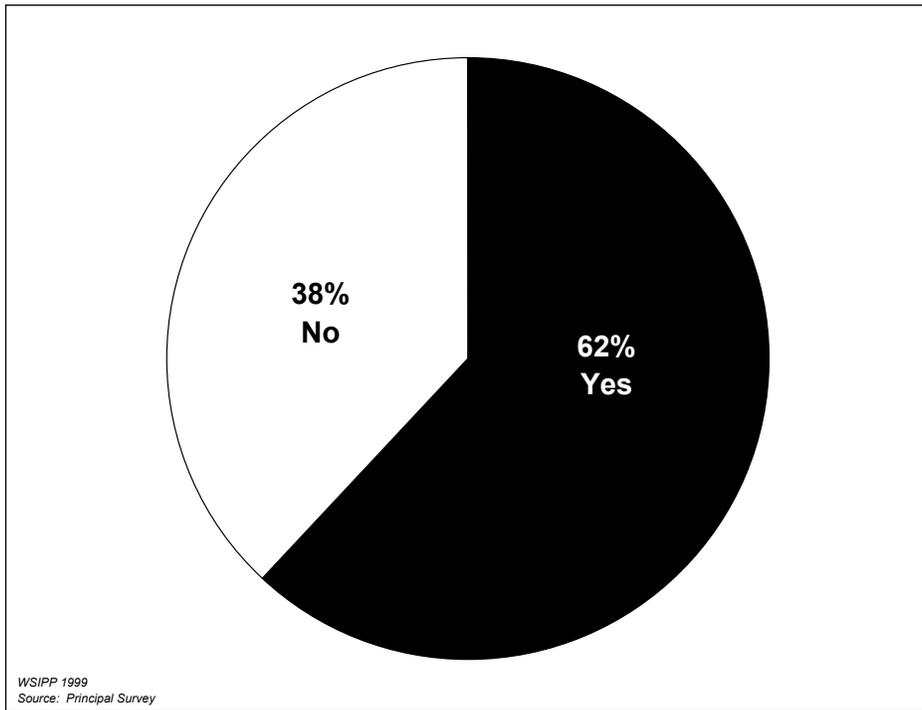
Two Thirds of Principals Rated Their Student Teachers as Very Good or Excellent



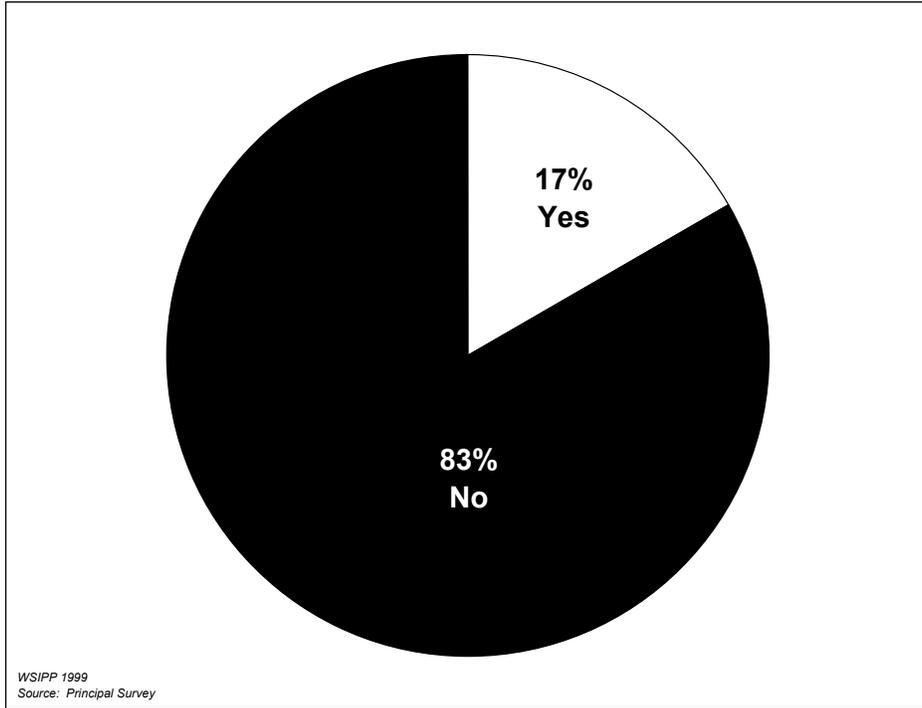
Over Two-Thirds of Principals Did Not Find It Difficult to Recruit Cooperating Teachers



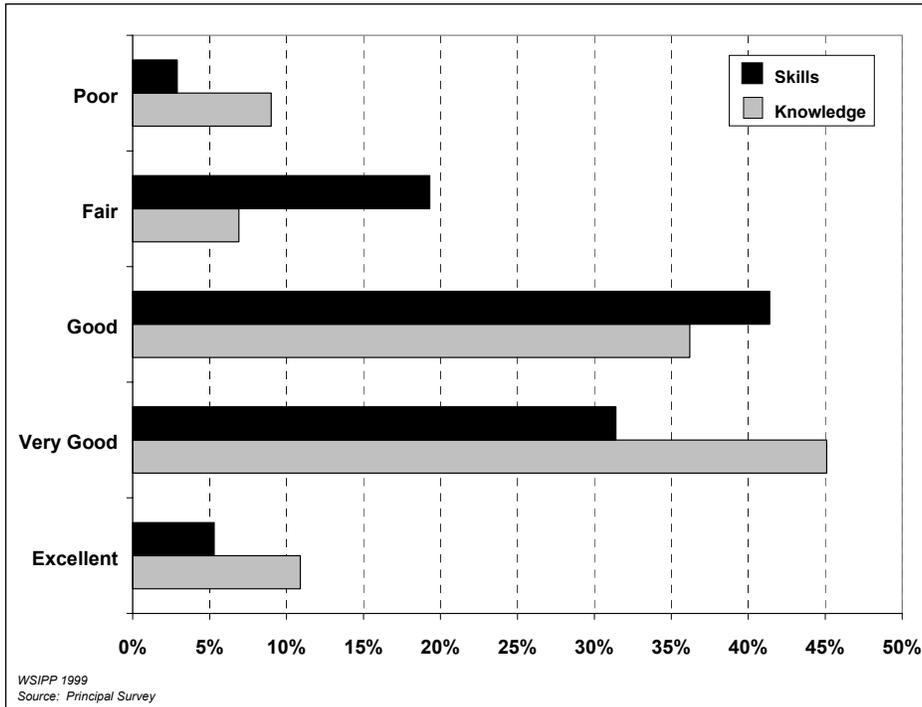
Two-Thirds of Principals Provide Incentives (Primarily Stipends) to Cooperating Teachers



Most Cooperating Teachers Did Not Receive Any Specific Training



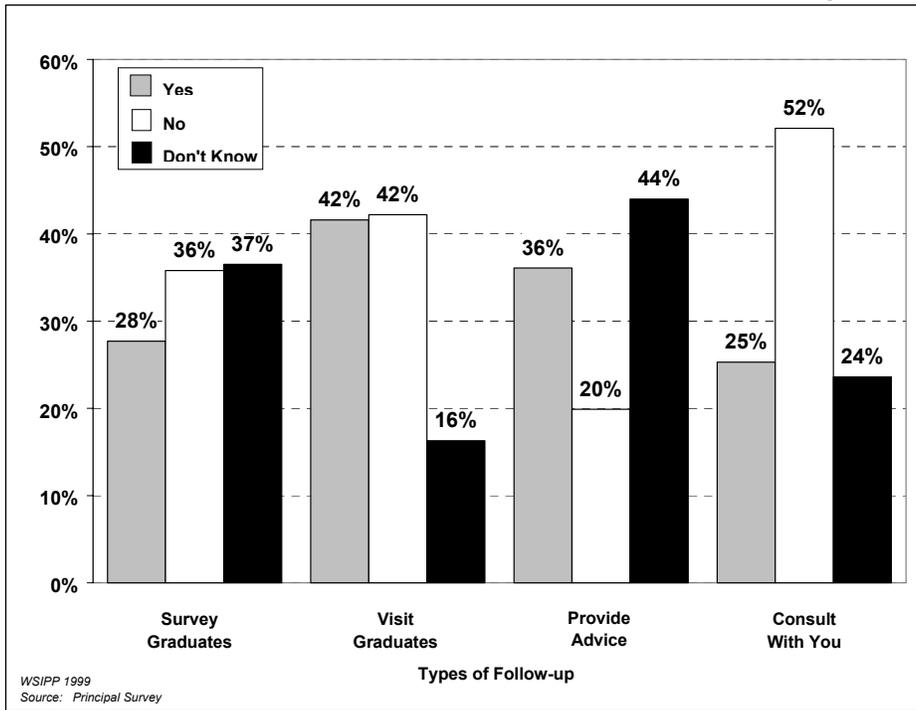
Principals Rate Knowledge Higher Than Skills for What Teachers Learned in Teacher Education Programs



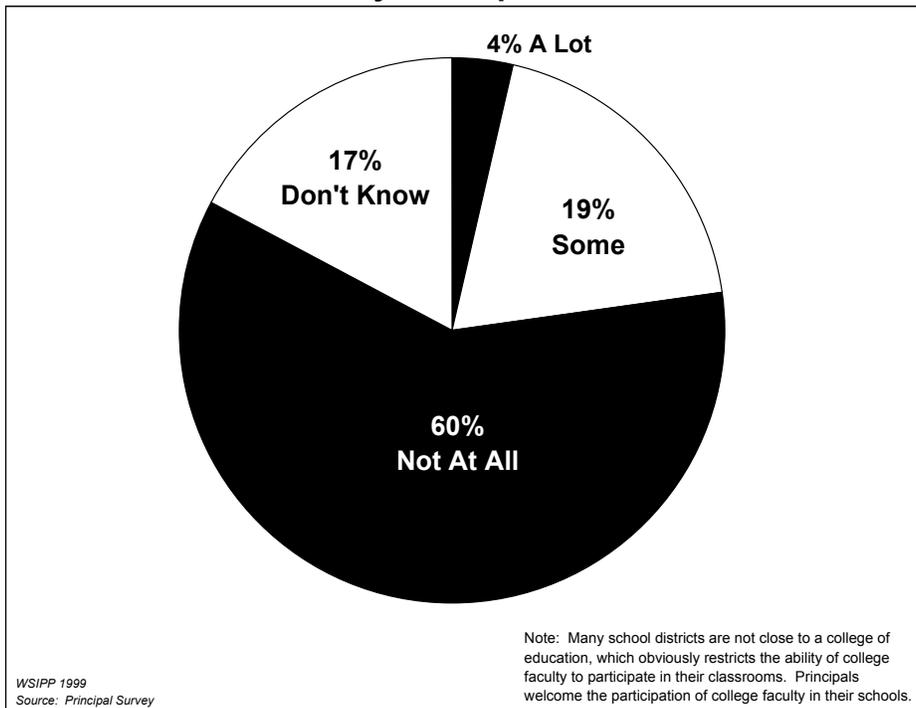
B. COLLEGE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The Institute survey asked principals about their impressions of the colleges of education preparation of their beginning teachers, the extent of the partnerships between school districts and colleges of education, and the challenges of recruiting in subject areas.

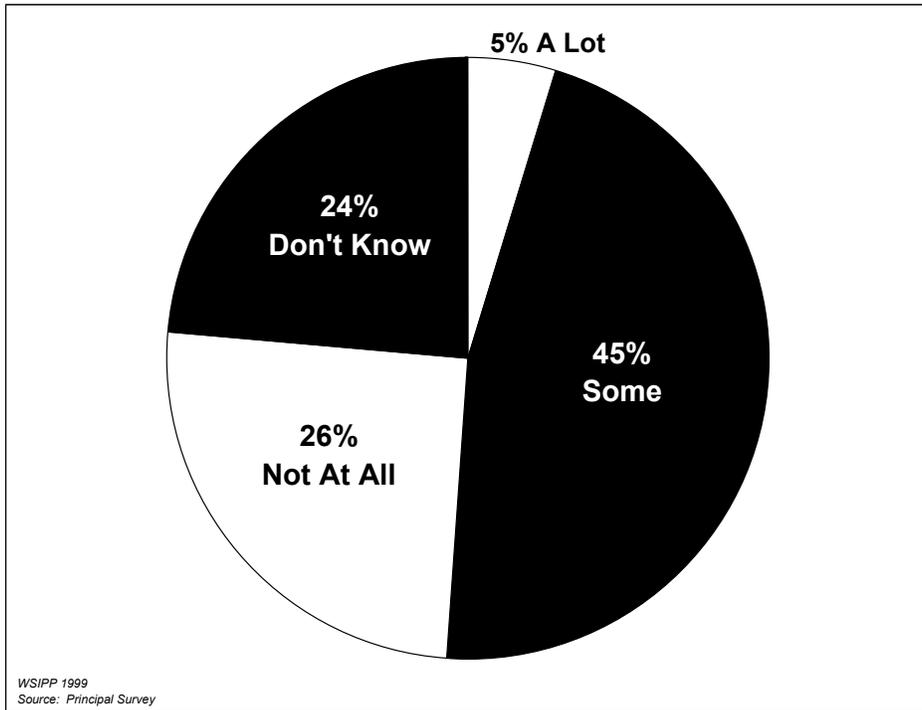
Principals Reported That Faculty Had Some Follow-up With Former Students but Little Contact With Principals



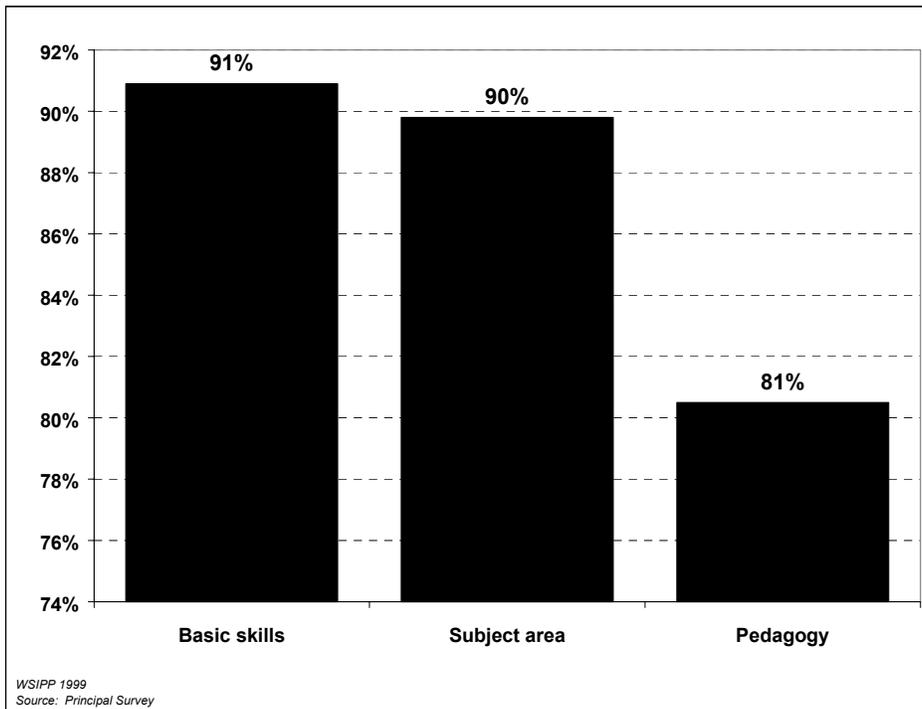
One Quarter of Principals Reported That Teacher Education Faculty Participate in Their Schools



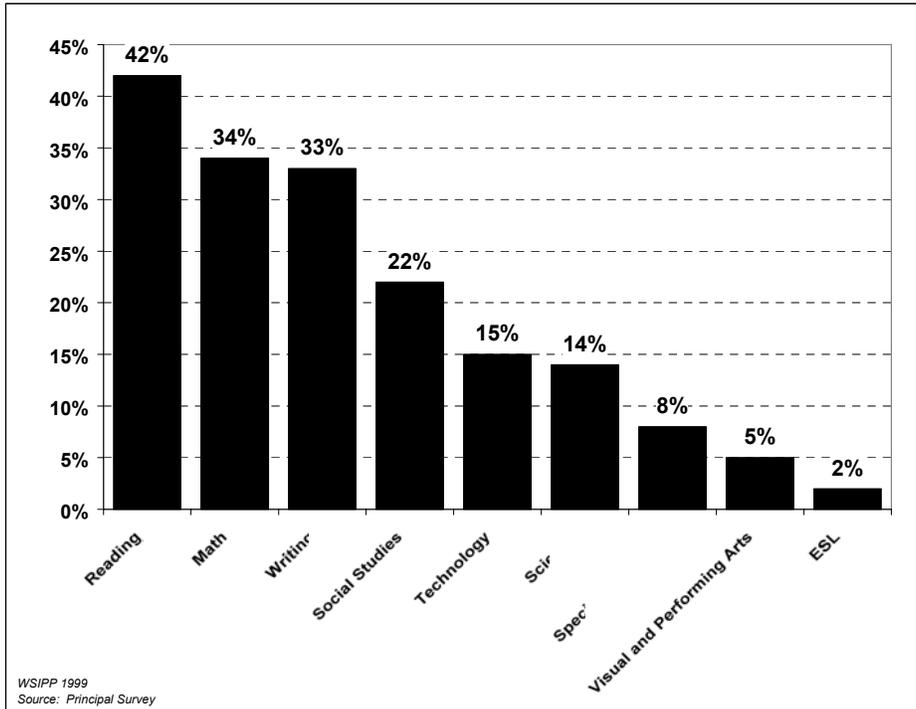
Half the Principals Reported That Their Teachers Participate Some or A Lot in College Teacher Education Programs



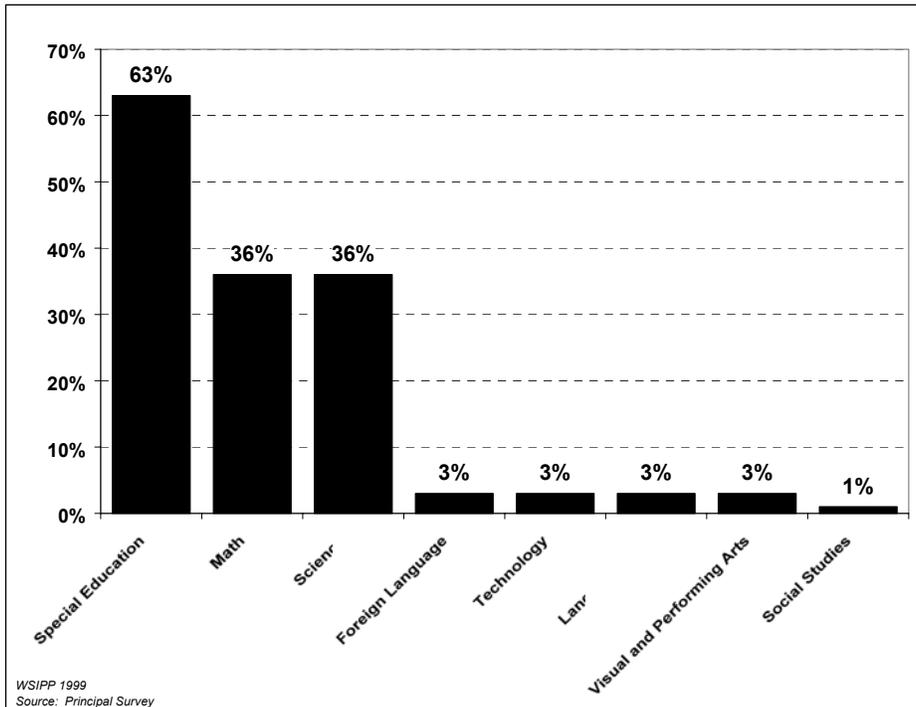
Principals Were Highly Supportive of Teacher Tests for Initial Certification



Elementary Principals Found Teachers Were Most Likely To Be Prepared in the “Basics”



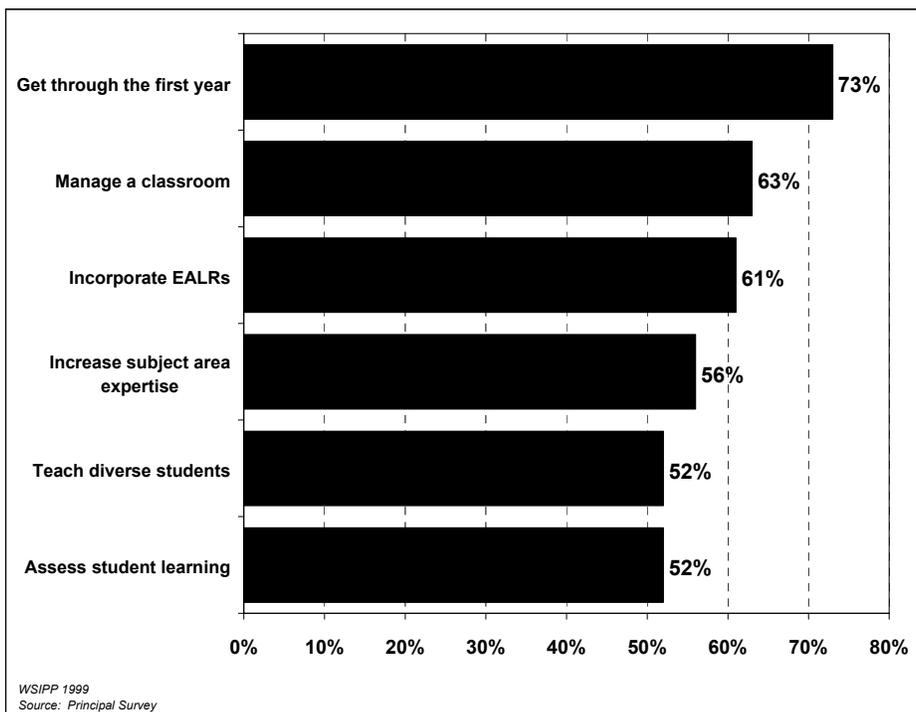
Secondary Principals Found It Difficult to Hire Qualified Teachers in Special Education, Math, and Science



C. TYPE OF ASSISTANCE FOR BEGINNING TEACHERS

The Institute survey asked principals their impressions of beginning teacher assistance programs in their school districts. Specifically, the principals provided a different perspective compared to the beginning teachers on whether these programs make a difference in improving beginning teachers' knowledge and skills.

Majority of Principals Reported Assistance Programs Improved the Effectiveness of Beginning Teachers



D: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

What Should Teacher Education Programs Do Differently in Preparing Beginning Teachers?

- ***The Institute survey asked principals what teacher education programs could do differently.***

Three top issues for principals:

- 1. More focus on all kinds of assessment, but especially performance assessment.**

“The complexity of the educational process and the standards/performance based accountability requires entry level teachers to be more proficient in assessment and understanding how to get results in the area of student achievement.”

“Emphasize assessment/instruction link. How assessment is an integral part of instruction.”

- 2. Greater classroom management skills.**

“Classroom awareness and management continues to be the main downfall of beginning teachers.”

“Better prepare new teachers to deal with classroom disruption and better manage their classrooms.”

- 3. Longer student teaching experiences. One year would be best.**

“I believe the student teaching experience has a direct and strong impact upon a candidate’s future success. This experience needs to be longer with higher and increased expectations ...”

“I really believe the student teacher experience should last one full year from start to finish. We are setting up for failure even the most enthusiastic, bright, and energetic students by expecting them to magically acquire all the skills and knowledge in a few short months.”

Additional comments from principals:

- **Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers**

“We need good teachers—it is a tough job. They need to have excellent instructional skills, communication skills, positive classroom management, and be able to manage a variety of student needs.”

“In general beginning teachers are not adequately prepared to: 1) teach EARLS, 2) use a variety of assessment techniques, 3) accommodate students with disabilities, and 4) use their subject matter as a vehicle for critical thinking, reading, writing, and communication.”

- **Stronger partnerships between teacher preparation programs and schools.**

“I don’t feel college-level personnel in the education departments do nearly enough to involve professionals in the field in their education classrooms.”

“There seems to have been a major disconnect between what colleges/universities promote and the needs of real classroom teachers.”

- **College programs are different.**

“Different schools prepare their students at different levels. There are some poor programs, but there are exceptionally strong ones as well.”

“There seems to be significant variance in the preparation of students from different programs, thus I wonder about the standards currently in effect.”

- **Support for Master in Teaching programs.**

“Our very best teachers come out of the MIT program.”

“I like the year long MIT program because of the extended time in the classrooms. However, this is not affordable for most.”

- **Support for First-Year Teachers**

“New teachers have been successful during their first year at our school partly due to the amount of support given by other teachers at that particular grade level. They meet weekly, sometimes daily basis. Several new teachers have commented to me that their success was due to hard work and the willingness of the other experienced teachers help in any way.”

“Beginning teachers need more support in their first years of teaching. They need paid time for support groups, extra district training and reduced work loads. They struggle no matter how well prepared they are.”

APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON SURVEY AND OSPI DATA SOURCES

Beginning Teacher Survey. Beginning teachers were surveyed¹ in February 1999. The purpose of the survey was to learn:

- ◆ How well beginning teachers are being prepared to help students succeed under the state's new academic standards; and
- ◆ What beginning teachers value in their teacher education programs and beginning teacher assistance programs and what changes they would recommend.

This survey was mailed to approximately 3,600 teachers who:

- ◆ Graduated from Washington teacher preparation programs;
- ◆ Received their initial teaching certificate between June 1996 and June 1998; and
- ◆ Currently work in Washington public schools.

Principal Survey. All principals in Washington public schools were surveyed in February 1999. The purposes of the survey were to learn:

- ◆ How well principals thought their beginning teachers and student teachers were trained by the colleges of education;
- ◆ If principals have difficulty recruiting teaching staff; and
- ◆ What types of beginning teacher assistance programs their districts offered.

This survey was mailed to approximately 1,800 principals.

Fifty-four percent (1,942) of the teachers and 65 percent (1,187) of the principals responded to the surveys.

Certification and School Building Employment Data. In addition to the beginning teachers survey, the Institute examined OSPI's Certification and School Building Employment data base to analyze trends on 58,800 teachers who obtained an initial certificate for teaching from 1988-1998.

¹ The Beginning Teacher and Principal surveys were conducted for the Institute by the Social and Economic Sciences Research Center at Washington State University.