

# THE QUEST *for* QUALITY

## Recruiting and Retaining Teachers in Philadelphia



The Second Annual Study of Teacher Quality in Philadelphia

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A report from *Learning from Philadelphia's School Reform*

# **THE QUEST FOR QUALITY:**

## **Recruiting and Retaining Teachers in Philadelphia**

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A report from *Learning from Philadelphia's School Reform*

This study was conducted by a group of scholars for **Research for Action** as part of *Learning from Philadelphia's School Reform*, a four-year research and public awareness project that is assessing the effectiveness of school improvement in Philadelphia. The project is examining and helping the public understand the impact of the 2001 state takeover of the Philadelphia schools, including the school management partnerships undertaken with external for-profit and nonprofit organizations; the array of policy, instructional, and management reforms initiated by the state- and city-appointed School Reform Commission members and district CEO Paul Vallas; the influence of community groups on district policy and school improvement; and key factors affecting school and student outcomes.

**Research for Action**, a non-partisan, nonprofit organization focused on providing sound research on school improvement efforts for a broad public, has followed school reform in Philadelphia since 1992. For the *Learning from Philadelphia's School Reform* project, **Research for Action** has brought together a team of well-known scholars to develop a broad-based research agenda. The project is supported with lead funding from the William Penn Foundation and additional grants from Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trusts, Surdna Foundation, the Samuel S. Fels Fund and others.

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**INTRODUCTION:** *Where We've Been and Where We Need to Go*

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Each year, the School District of Philadelphia hires a large number of new teachers. Philadelphia needs these new teachers *not* because enrollment is increasing—in fact, enrollment in the public schools has been decreasing over the past few years as a result of a declining birth rate and the growth of charter schools—but because a substantial number of teachers leave the district each year. Philadelphia faces the challenge of recruiting many new teachers to the classroom just as state and federal pressures for raising academic achievement have intensified. Further, the district confronts a looming June 2006 deadline, stipulated in the federal government's No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), by which point all teachers must have obtained the proper credentials to be considered “highly qualified” for the grade level and subjects they are teaching.

In this second report on teacher quality in Philadelphia, we update the data we presented in the 2003 report, *Once and for All: Placing a Highly Qualified Teacher in Every Philadelphia Classroom*. This new report looks at trends in staffing, with a focus on new teachers, and examines the initial efforts of School District of Philadelphia CEO Paul Vallas and his team to address three thorny problems related to school staffing: declining rates of certified teachers, high turnover among new teachers, and inequities in the assignment of qualified teachers to schools. The report also outlines the challenges that are slowing the system's progress in meeting the goal of a well-qualified teacher in each classroom.

During the past two years, the district has made considerable progress in the recruitment and retention of new teachers. More prospective teachers are applying to the School District of Philadelphia, and those who are hired are more likely to stay through their first year and return for a second year. And for the first time in several years, the city is actually gaining ground in terms of its total of certified teachers. An increased number of teachers who have emergency permits are moving quickly to obtain certification. Moreover, the district is decentralizing, modernizing, and expediting the way in which it hires teachers and places them in schools.

The management of this change process is complex, in part because influences external to the district shape its response to the problem. Office of Human Resources personnel, for example, must deal with ever-changing federal and state regulations regarding both certification and the definition of what makes veteran teachers “highly qualified.” And the district must work with its teachers' union to draw up hiring and transfer rules and to ensure mutual compliance with these contract provisions that bear directly on teacher-quality issues.

The continued momentum for change is impressive, but the task at hand remains daunting. Despite improvements, almost half of the new teachers hired in recent years have been teaching on emergency permits—a far cry from the 1980s and earlier when a high proportion of Philadelphia's new teachers were certified and when openings in areas such as high school social studies and English were few and far between. And although teacher turnover rates have improved, they continue to be high enough that large numbers of new teachers are still hired every year.

**During the past two years, the district has made considerable progress in the recruitment and retention of new teachers.**

**The district faces an enormous challenge in distributing qualified and experienced teachers equitably across all school types.**

The district's difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers stem in part from broad social changes that began decades earlier: expanded employment opportunities for women and minorities, the growth of concentrated poverty in urban neighborhoods, the lower likelihood that young professionals will remain in one career for a lifetime, and the failure of salaries and working conditions for urban teachers to keep pace with those of the surrounding suburbs. The tangle of contractual rules and bureaucratic traditions puts the district at further disadvantage in the hiring game.

The data in this report show once again that the problem of teacher quality is especially acute in the district's middle schools. New teachers are overrepresented at the middle-school level (the school type attended by two-thirds of Philadelphia's middle-grades students); fewer than half of the new teachers at middle schools are fully certified; and middle school teachers have the highest turnover rates of any school level. Approximately 600 veteran 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, most with only an elementary-level certificate, do not yet meet the new NCLB requirements for demonstrated proficiency in their subject areas. And half of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers who have attempted middle-level PRAXIS licensure tests have failed.

To fill vacancies in middle schools and in shortage areas such as special education, Philadelphia relies heavily on recruiting new teachers who are in the process of becoming certified through alternate-route certification programs. Each year, hundreds of new teachers—many of them deemed “highly qualified” because they will have met the testing and education program registration requirements of Pennsylvania's Intern certificate—will, with almost no formal preparation for the classroom, begin teaching in low-performing schools. While recruiting to the district through these programs addresses the district's desperate need for teachers—and in that sense is a step in the right direction—we argue that, in the long term, Philadelphians should not settle for allowing inexperienced and untrained teachers into its public school classrooms.

Finally, our data show that the district faces an enormous challenge in distributing qualified and experienced teachers equitably across all school types. The distribution of credentials and experience varies greatly from school to school, and follows a predictable pattern: the lower the socioeconomic background of the student body, the higher the percentage of newer and less-qualified teachers. Thus, the students who need the most support continue to be taught by those with the least preparation to help them meet high standards.

One encouraging development is the district's contract with the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT), signed in fall 2004, which provides tools to attack the problem of inequitable distribution of teachers across schools. CEO Vallas and the School Reform Commission (SRC), the governing body that replaced the board of education in the state takeover of Philadelphia's public schools in 2001, fought during contract negotiations for school-based hiring of new teachers and for restrictions on teachers' seniority-based transfer rights. The new contract accords veteran teachers priority in filling only half of the vacancies in most schools. Under the prior contract, veteran teachers exercised their seniority rights by moving to vacant positions in schools with fewer low-income students, a common pattern across the country. Under the new contract, many new teachers will get those positions and veteran teachers' chances to transfer out of high-poverty schools will diminish.

Further, for the first time, the contract allows for districtwide site selection of new teachers. They will no longer be centrally assigned to schools, but will interview with school principals and staff-selection committees as part of the hiring process. Schools serving the lowest-income students will thus be in a better position to market themselves to qualified prospective candidates.

The new contract will only partially resolve equity issues. Half of the vacancies in most schools can still be filled on a priority basis by transferring teachers. And it is possible that veteran teachers' shrinking transfer options may accelerate their departure from the district. Further, the new contract does not offer a package of strong incentives, such as smaller classes and top-notch leadership, which might improve the working conditions contributing to high teacher turnover in the most-stressed schools.

District leaders have gotten off to an impressive start in trying to meet NCLB staffing goals, demonstrating ingenuity, tenacity, and entrepreneurial spirit. To his credit, when CEO Paul Vallas arrived in Philadelphia in 2002, he quickly grasped the seriousness of the deteriorating staffing situation and the importance of compliance with NCLB rules. He chose a capable team that put in place aggressive strategies to recruit and retain able new teachers and worked to change rigid staffing policies. In this, he was supported by the five-member School Reform Commission. These steps complemented collaborative efforts with higher education institutions and other organizations that had expertise in teacher recruitment and training, such as the Philadelphia Education Fund, Teach for America, and the New Teacher Project. And the Philadelphia public has been engaged in advocating for improvement as well through such efforts as the district-sponsored Campaign for Human Capital and the Teacher Equity Campaign undertaken by advocacy groups.

We conclude, however, that given the difficulties of the task, the race to meeting the NCLB 2006 deadline for qualified teachers will of necessity be only the first leg of a marathon.

### **Organization of this report**

In the first section, "Trends in Teacher Credentials and Retention," we use large, multi-year databases obtained from the School District of Philadelphia's Office of Human Resources to characterize the credentials and retention rates of teachers in the district. Some of our analyses extend the trend lines from *Once and For All* for an additional year. Other analyses are new, training a different lens on the challenges that Philadelphia faces in creating stable school staffing arrangements and in providing a well-qualified teacher for each classroom.

In the second section, "Trends in Equitable Placement and Distribution of Teachers," using the same databases, we outline trends in the equitable placement and distribution of teachers. We demonstrate the continuing inequities and examine how the new teachers' contract might reduce them.

"Improving Recruitment and Retention of Teachers," the final section, draws on data from teacher surveys, interviews, focus groups, and observations to describe and evaluate the district's efforts to recruit and retain teachers, particularly teachers who are new to the profession.

**The race to meeting the NCLB 2006 deadline for qualified teachers will of necessity be only the first leg of a marathon.**

## Data and Methods

The findings in this report draw on several sources:

**1)** A data set on selected teacher characteristics of the district's entire teacher work force for the years October 1999 through June 2004. These data, provided by the School District of Philadelphia, include teachers' school placement, date of hire, certification status and college or university where certification was earned, subjects taught, age, race/ethnicity, and sex.

**2)** A New Teacher Survey administered by a Research for Action team in December 2003 (and through March 2004 to late responders) at the after-school induction sessions for new teachers (or hand-delivered by their New Teacher Coaches). A total of 454 new teachers—about 45 percent of those hired by the end of December—completed the survey.

**3)** Eight focus groups conducted with 58 of the 61 New Teacher Coaches in May 2004 by Research for Action and evaluators from the school district's Office of Research and Evaluation.

**4)** A short survey of a sample of new teachers conducted by the district in May 2004 asking them to evaluate their satisfaction with their New Teacher Coaches, the New Teacher Academy induction sessions, and assistance from school-based colleague mentors. A sample of 314 new teachers, selected through a random sample stratified by school level from a population of 889 new teachers (specialists were not included), filled out the survey.

**5)** Interviews in June 2004 with 20 new teachers who taught in grades 5-9. The sample was drawn from those responding to the December 2004 New Teacher Survey who agreed to be contacted again and who provided their e-mail addresses. A pool of 40 new teachers in the middle grades, stratified by certification program status, was identified by the Research for Action team. Half of them completed the 30-to 60-minute telephone interviews.

**6)** Participant observation of several types of school district meetings: University Partners (quarterly), Induction Council (monthly), and Campaign for Human Capital (annually).

**7)** Observations of the twice-monthly meetings of the School Reform Commission.

**8)** Interviews with five key personnel in the Office of Human Resources and in the Office of Recruitment and Retention during fall 2004.

## TRENDS IN TEACHER CREDENTIALS AND RETENTION

### Teacher credentials

For the first time in several years, from the 2002-03 school year to 2003-04, the overall percentage of teachers in the district who were certified to teach<sup>1</sup> increased (Table 1). This increase occurred at elementary, middle, and high schools. K-8<sup>th</sup> grade schools and other types of schools (such as disciplinary schools), however, declined to their lowest levels in the five years for which we have data.

For comparison's sake, Table 1 shows data on certification rates over multiple years for the district as a whole and for schools serving different grade levels. Since certification rates can vary throughout the school year, the data are “snapshots” of the teaching force taken on the same day of each school year (October 1).

**Table 1**

<b>Certified teachers* as a percentage of all teachers, for all teachers in the district and by school type</b>						
<b>School Type</b>	<b>N (03-04)</b>	<b>1999-00</b>	<b>2000-01</b>	<b>2001-02</b>	<b>2002-03</b>	<b>2003-04</b>
Elementary	4,281	94.8%	92.0%	90.1%	88.7%	90.1%
K-8	2,035	96.2%	93.7%	92.0%	91.7%	90.2%
Middle	2,066	87.1%	83.5%	83.6%	83.3%	86.1%
High School	3,064	93.2%	91.2%	90.7%	89.4%	90.3%
Other	590	97.4%	93.2%	90.0%	92.2%	89.5%
<b>Entire District</b>	<b>12,366</b>	<b>93.3%</b>	<b>90.6%</b>	<b>89.4%</b>	<b>88.5%</b>	<b>89.6%</b>

\*Teachers who are intern certified are counted as certified in this table. Intern-certified teachers have passed their PRAXIS licensing exams but have not completed all of their coursework for certification. However, intern-certified teachers are reported as “highly qualified” under Pennsylvania regulations.

**For the first time in several years, from the 2002-03 school year to 2003-04, the overall percentage of teachers in the district who were certified to teach increased.**

In any given year, a large percentage of the uncertified teachers are “new teachers”—that is, they have taught in Philadelphia public schools for less than one full school year.<sup>2</sup> In October 2003, for example, 40 percent of the uncertified teachers had not been teaching in the district during the previous October.<sup>3</sup> During the past several years, only about 50 percent of the new teachers have been fully certified in the autumn of their first year in the district (Table 2).<sup>4</sup> Table 2 also indicates that while it is more difficult to staff middle and high schools with fully

certified teachers, at each school level and during each year for which we have data, a substantial percentage of the new teachers had not completed all of the course work and licensing exams required for full certification.

**More new teachers in the school system have proven their mastery of the academic skills and content they are expected to teach.**

**Table 2**

<b>Percentage of new teachers who were fully certified to teach, 2000-01 to 2003-04, by school level</b>				
<b>School Type</b>	<b>Percentage of new teachers certified in October 2000</b>	<b>Percentage of new teachers certified in October 2001</b>	<b>Percentage of new teachers certified in October 2002</b>	<b>Percentage of new teachers certified in October 2003</b>
Elementary	60.0%	51.5%	55.8%	61.1%
K-8	62.0%	42.9%	57.3%	61.8%
Middle	45.1%	38.5%	50.4%	47.7%
High School	48.7%	48.4%	50.6%	47.2%
Entire District	54.2%	46.2%	54.6%	56.7%
Total number of new teachers	1,157	926	1,164	1,451

Some teachers who arrive not fully certified during the fall of their first year in the district are able to complete their certification requirements during the school year. The data indicate that there has been some improvement in the rate of teachers becoming fully certified during the school year. In June 2003, 25 percent of the uncertified new teachers who were employed by the district during the previous October had completed their certification; in June 2004, the comparable figure was 34 percent.

Further, among the new teachers who are not fully certified, fewer are teaching on emergency permits and more have an intermediate status known as intern certification than in the past. The state and district began to require the little-used intern certificate for new teachers beginning in 2003-04, as a result of the pressure of NCLB and state concerns about upgrading its teacher workforce. While intern-certified teachers have not completed all coursework required for full certification, they have passed the PRAXIS I basic skills tests in reading, mathematics, and writing and a test in their content area(s). A teacher with an emergency permit has not necessarily passed these exams. The significance of this increase in intern-certified teachers is that more new teachers in the school system have proven their mastery of the academic skills and content they are expected to teach.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 3**

<b>Certification types among new middle school teachers, 2000-01 to 2003-04</b>				
	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Fully certified	45.1%	38.5%	50.4%	47.7%
Intern certified	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	23.4%
Emergency permit	54.6%	61.5%	49.6%	28.9%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total number of new middle school teachers	293	179	260	308

**Prior to the stricter NCLB guidelines, elementary-level certified teachers were permitted to teach any academic subject, while secondary-level certified teachers were restricted to the specific subject in which they were certified.**

The decrease in emergency-permit teachers (and the associated increase in intern-certified teachers) is particularly apparent at the middle-school level, which historically has had the greatest difficulty attracting and retaining certified teachers. Table 3 shows the change in types of certification for *new* middle school teachers from 2000-01 to 2003-04. Although the percentage of new middle school teachers who were fully certified decreased slightly from 2002-03 to 2003-04, the number of emergency-permit teachers fell by more than 40 percent. The dramatic change is due in large part to the placement of Teach for America recruits—the great majority of whom are intern certified—in the middle schools.

### **Subject-area certification in the middle grades**

In Pennsylvania, teachers certified in elementary education are permitted to teach grades kindergarten through 6. Under certain circumstances—namely if the school at which they are teaching includes 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades (such as a grades 6-8 middle school or a K-8 school)—elementary-level certified teachers are also permitted to teach 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. At the same time, teachers who are certified in a secondary-level subject in Pennsylvania are permitted to instruct students in grades 7 through 12. As a result of these overlapping credentials, schools with middle grades in Philadelphia are staffed by teachers with a hodgepodge of certifications.

In Table 4, we present the types of certifications held by teachers in middle schools, the school type attended by 71 percent of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders in the system in 2003-04. The modal type of certification for middle school teachers is elementary-level certification. Principals in schools with middle grades have long preferred to staff their schools with elementary-level certified teachers because of the scheduling flexibility associated with that credential. Prior to the stricter NCLB guidelines (described later), elementary-level certified teachers were permitted to teach any academic subject, while secondary-level certified teachers were restricted to the specific subject in which they were certified.

**There are relatively few secondary-level certified math, social studies, English, or science teachers in the middle schools.**

Some of the elementary-level certified teachers in middle schools have an additional certification, most commonly in reading or special education. Just over one-quarter of the middle school teachers are certified *only* in a non-elementary-level field; the most typical certifications among this group of teachers are special education, health and physical education, and art. It is important to note that there are relatively few secondary-level certified math, social studies, English, or science teachers in the middle schools. Certification patterns for new middle school teachers largely mimic the patterns for all middle school teachers, except for the much larger percentage of new teachers who are not certified to begin with.

**Table 4**

<b>Certification areas for all middle school teachers and new middle school teachers, 2003-04</b>		
	<b>Percent of all middle school teachers with certification of this type</b>	<b>Percent of new middle school teachers with certification of this type</b>
Elementary-level certification only	43.0%	27.0%
Elementary-level plus another type of certification	10.0%	3.0%
Certification only in an area other than elementary level	28.0%	14.0%
No certification	19.0%	56.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Total number of teachers	2,066	308

The specific type of certification held by 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers has become an area of serious concern for Philadelphia district officials because of the No Child Left Behind requirement that all core academic subject-area<sup>6</sup> teachers of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders have appropriate content certifications by June 2006. The purpose of this requirement is sensible: early adolescents, who should be gearing up for the more advanced academic content of high school, deserve teachers who have themselves mastered the content they are assigned to teach. According to the rules that Pennsylvania developed in response to the NCLB mandate, teachers who have a secondary-level certification in a content area are, by definition, qualified to teach that subject in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. However, given the large percentages of elementary-certified teachers in Philadelphia’s middle-grades schools, the vast majority of its teachers will need to demonstrate their mastery of content either by passing a licensing exam in middle-grades content or by enrolling in Pennsylvania’s “bridge

certificate” program.<sup>7</sup> District officials estimate that this requirement could affect as many as 600 middle school teachers.

The district has made strenuous efforts to bring 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers into compliance with Pennsylvania’s new regulations. However, the pass rates on the content-area licensing exams for veteran Philadelphia teachers in these grades are discouraging. Overall, according to data obtained by *The Philadelphia Inquirer* from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, 50 percent of the 690 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers from Philadelphia who took the middle-level PRAXIS content-area tests in September and November 2003 did not earn a passing score. Almost two-thirds of Philadelphia’s teachers who took the math test failed; more than half failed the science test; 43 percent failed the English test; and 34 percent failed the social studies test. Statewide, for districts excluding Philadelphia, the overall failure rate was 23 percent.<sup>8</sup>

Further, new teachers will not be able to participate in the bridge certificate program, which is designed only for already-certified teachers who had been teaching a particular academic subject in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade before the new certification requirements went into effect. Instead, new teachers must either have passed the middle-grades content-area exam or have a college major or its equivalent in the subject they are assigned to teach.<sup>9</sup>

Given Philadelphia’s difficulties in attracting and retaining 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers who have *any* type of certification, we are skeptical that Philadelphia will be able to meet NCLB requirements for “highly qualified” teachers in the middle grades, *despite the district’s evident will to comply with the letter and spirit of the legislation*. Even if, by some miracle, all of Philadelphia’s 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers were deemed “highly qualified” in June 2006, the annual turnover of middle school teachers would render it unlikely that the district could maintain that status into the following school year.

It is possible that the middle-grades staffing situation will improve as the district gradually converts the majority of its middle schools to K-8 schools (or to schools with other sorts of grade configurations). Elementary-level certified teachers generally prefer to work in the more nurturing environments of K-8 schools rather than in the more impersonal middle schools.

### Certification in special education

Special education certification represents another thorny issue for the district as it seeks to comply with NCLB requirements—and indeed, even to comply with the less-stringent state requirements that preceded NCLB. Like almost every other large-city school district in the country, Philadelphia faces a shortage of qualified special education teachers.<sup>10</sup> Pennsylvania regulations have long required that special education teachers have certification in special education. But in response to NCLB legislation, Pennsylvania has added the requirement that special education teachers who are teaching content deemed to be at the 7<sup>th</sup> grade level or above be certified in each of the academic content areas they teach.

**Fifty percent of the Philadelphia 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers who took the middle-level PRAXIS content-area tests in September and November 2003 did not earn a passing score.**

**Finding ways to hire and keep special education teachers is one of the toughest challenges Philadelphia faces.**

During 2003-04, 81 percent of the district’s special education teachers were fully certified to teach special education, a dramatic drop from a high of 91 percent in 1999-2000. One of the reasons why this decline seems to be taking place is that the special education teachers who leave the district are considerably more likely to be certified than those who take their place. Among the 234 special education teachers who were new to the district in October 2003, only about 30 percent were certified in special education, while 78 percent of those whose places they were taking were certified in special education.

Special education teachers who are not certified are disproportionately assigned to the highest-poverty schools. In October 2003, 73 percent of the uncertified special education teachers were in schools at which 80 percent or more of the students were low-income, while just 58 percent of the certified special education teachers could be found in these schools. Uncertified special education teachers are also twice as likely as certified teachers to be placed in middle schools (Table 5). To make matters worse, one-third of the uncertified special education teachers were in their first year in the district, and four-fifths had no more than three years of prior experience teaching *any subject* in the district.

**Table 5**

School Type	School assignments for certified and non-certified special education teachers, October 2003	
	Distribution of teaching assignments for special education teachers who are certified to teach special education	Distribution of teaching assignments for special education teachers who are NOT certified to teach special education
Elementary	29.6%	28.43%
K-8	16.8%	15.5%
Middle	16.6%	30.7%
High School	30.5%	18.2%
Other	6.5%	7.3%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%
Total number of teachers	1,539	303

When special education works the way it is supposed to, students receive instruction from teachers who are knowledgeable in the particular type of physical, cognitive, and/or emotional challenge(s) the students face and who know how to organize curriculum, instruction, and the classroom environment to help children reach their potential. However, a substantial minority of Philadelphia’s special education stu-

dents have teachers who are not expert in *any* classroom situation, let alone a classroom situation in which students have challenging and often perplexing conditions and behaviors. Even die-hard foes of teacher certification—that is, individuals who believe that a major in an academic subject is sufficient qualification for public school teaching—would have a hard time arguing that academic skills plus energy and enthusiasm are all that a new teacher requires to succeed in a special education classroom.

Finding ways to hire and keep qualified special education teachers is one of the toughest challenges Philadelphia faces in its efforts to develop a strong teacher work force. Nationally, special education teachers leave their jobs at much higher rates than regular teachers,<sup>11</sup> citing difficult working conditions such as a lack of time, lack of resources, and excessive paperwork and meetings.<sup>12</sup> To staff its special education classrooms, Philadelphia may need to provide extra incentives to special education teachers, such as reduced class sizes and teacher-student assignments organized so that teachers' knowledge and skills (e.g. providing educational environments for autistic children) are appropriately matched to student needs.

### Teacher turnover

In recent years, the district annually has hired a large number of teachers. More than 1,400 were hired at some point during the school year 2003-04. As of January 2005, the district had hired 1,169 new teachers for 2004-05. One of the key reasons for the necessity of so many new recruits is that Philadelphia loses an enormous percentage of its new teachers within a few years after they begin to teach.

Figure 1 shows the retention rates for a cohort of teachers who were new to the district during 1999-2000. Four years after they began teaching in Philadelphia, just over 40 percent of the 919 new teachers remained in the district. And by that point, an even smaller percentage—less than 30 percent—were still in the district *and* teaching at the same school where they had started. The most dramatic losses occurred in the first two years after they were hired, when 27 percent and 15 percent, respectively, of the original cohort of new recruits departed the school system.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, only another six percent of the original cohort left the system between their third and fourth years.

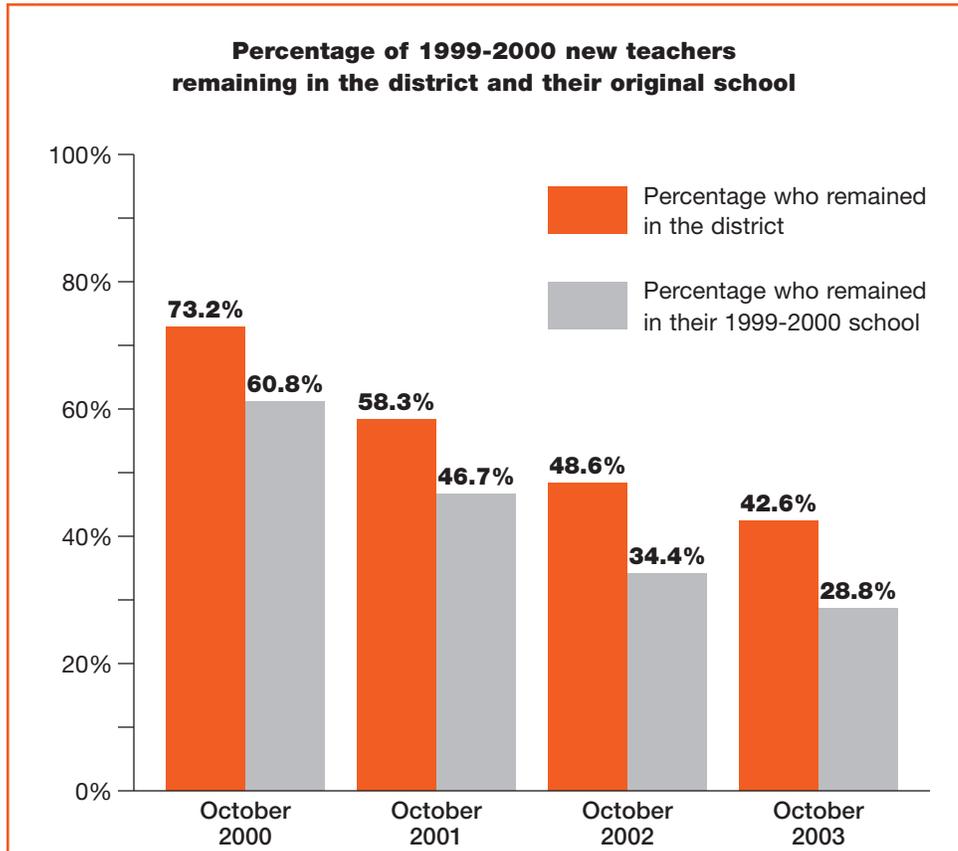
National research indicates that new teachers leave their districts due to poor working conditions (for example, lack of student discipline and weak administrative support) and lack of support in making the transition to teaching.<sup>14</sup> No study has yet examined what particular combination of individual and school-level factors increases the likelihood of a new Philadelphia teacher leaving the district.

Nonetheless, it is clear that new teachers in the 1999-2000 cohort we have been following who were assigned to middle schools were more likely to leave the district after their first year than teachers assigned to any other school type (Table 6), and new teachers at middle schools in high-poverty areas were more likely to leave than those at middle schools in low-poverty areas.<sup>15</sup> Notably, however, at elementary, K-8, and high schools, departures of new teachers after the first year did *not* rise (or rise substantially) with increased levels of student poverty.

**Even die-hard foes of teacher certification would have a hard time arguing that academic skills plus energy and enthusiasm are all that a new teacher requires to succeed in a special education classroom.**

**Historically, Philadelphia public schools have hemorrhaged new teachers at every school level.**

**Figure 1**



Despite some variation in departure rates by school level and by degree of student poverty, the main message of Table 6 is that, historically, *Philadelphia public schools have hemorrhaged new teachers at every school level.*

**Table 6**

**Percentage of new teachers in 1999-2000 leaving the district after their first year, by school level and percentage of low-income students**

School type	All new teachers at this type of school	New teachers at schools with less than 80% low-income students	New teachers at schools with 80-90% low-income students	New teachers at schools with 90% or more low-income students
Elementary	21.1%	33.3%	18.3%	19.0%
K-8	28.6%	26.1%	31.2%	29.6%
Middle	34.2%	29.2%	34.9%	40.0%
High School	26.3%	30.2%	20.8%	n/a

Philadelphia’s turnover statistics fit the pattern of other large, urban school systems. For example, an estimated 19 to 25 percent of New York City’s new teachers leave the system after their first year of teaching,<sup>16</sup> and Chicago and Milwaukee both report losing approximately 40 percent of their new teachers within five years.<sup>17</sup>

Such data have caused Philadelphia to invest heavily in new-teacher induction and coaching, and there are early indications that these efforts had a positive effect on new teachers’ sense of competence and willingness to continue to teach in the district (see discussion beginning on page 34 for more detail). According to district officials, 91 percent of first-year teachers during 2003-04 remained on the job through the end of the school year, compared with 73 percent of the new teachers during 2002-03. Further, 85 percent of the first-year teachers from 2003-04 returned to teaching in Philadelphia for a second year, substantially more than the 77 percent who returned to the district the previous year (Table 7).

**According to district officials, 91 percent of first-year teachers during 2003-04 remained on the job through the end of the school year, compared with 73 percent of the new teachers during 2002-03.**

**Table 7**

<b>First-year teacher retention</b>		
<b>New Teachers</b>	<b>Hired in 2002-03</b>	<b>Hired in 2003-04</b>
Remaining through the first year*	73%*	91%*
Returning for a second year	77%**	85%***

\*Figures reported by the district. The calculation includes all new teachers ever hired during the school year, even if they only worked for one day.  
 \*\*This percentage is derived by calculating the number of teachers new to the district on October 1, 2002 (that is, who were not teaching in the district on October 1, 2001) and determining the percentage who were still teaching in the district on October 1, 2003.  
 \*\*\*Figure reported by the district.

Data on the number of teacher vacancies also show encouraging trends. When school opened in September 2003, 95 vacancies existed, down from 138 a year earlier. In September 2004, the number was up to 143, because the district had to fill about 400 more positions at the beginning of the school year than it had the previous year. The increase in the number of positions to fill reflected an increase in retirements resulting from a retirement incentive for teachers,<sup>18</sup> and expanded efforts to reduce class size in grades K-3. The resignations of 157 teachers in late August and early September 2004 added to the problem.<sup>19</sup> But by January 2005, only 40 vacancies existed, a vacancy rate of less than half a percent.

Finally, we turn to the question of teacher retention at the 70 low-performing schools that were subject to radical interventions after the state’s 2001 takeover of the district. These changes began in the 2002-03 school year. The interventions included management by a for-profit or nonprofit organization or university, conversion to charter school, or being “restructured” under district direction. We reported last year that these changes in governance had increased teacher turnover at some of these schools over what it had been in the previous two years, particularly at those schools managed by Edison Schools, Inc. and those converted to charters. Table 8

reproduces the earlier data and extends it for an additional year (2003-04).<sup>20</sup> The numbers for each year indicate the percentage of teachers in schools managed or assisted by external entities who returned to the same school the following year.

**Table 8**

**Teacher-retention rates for many external managers/partners show uneven patterns from 1999-2000 to 2003-04.**

<b>Percentage of teachers remaining at their school from year to year, by external provider</b>					
Manager/ Partner	N (2002-2003)	Prior to assignment to external managers		After assignment to external managers	
		1999-2000 to 2000-2001	2000-2001 to 2001-2002	2001-2002 to 2002-2003	2002-2003 to 2003-2004
Charter conversion school	157	84.2%	83.4%	58.6%	77.1%
Edison	803	78.4%	82.2%	68.3%	70.7%
Foundations	166	73.5%	87.7%	80.9%	78.3%
Penn	110	80.0%	87.7%	81.4%	80.0%
Restructured	785	82.7%	85.9%	78.3%	74.1%
Temple	145	81.6%	88.4%	76.3%	73.1%
Universal	49	71.4%	88.9%	71.7%	81.6%
Victory	200	71.8%	85.6%	70.6%	80.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,415</b>	<b>79.3%</b>	<b>84.7%</b>	<b>72.9%</b>	<b>74.3%</b>

The teacher-retention rates for many of the external managers/partners show uneven patterns over the four years for which we have data. Retention rates bounced back somewhat among schools managed by three of the providers (including Edison) and among those that were converted to charter status, although the rates were still not back up to where they were prior to the “takeover” of those schools. For other school categories, retention fluctuated modestly in either an up or down direction. There were no dramatic drops in retention that mirrored those that occurred in the first year, suggesting that substantial changes in turnover were a first-year phenomenon. Yet, two years after the inception of these interventions, the schools’ ability to hold on to their teachers was still somewhat diminished.

## TRENDS IN EQUITABLE PLACEMENT AND DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS

New teachers in the School District of Philadelphia constitute about 10 percent of the teaching corps in the city’s public schools in any given year. But new teachers are not distributed evenly among the district’s schools: Some schools have many new teachers, while others have only a few.

During 2003-04, teachers new to the system were about as likely as other teachers to be teaching at elementary and K-8th grade schools; more likely to be teaching at middle schools; and less likely to be teaching at high schools (Table 9). In addition, new teachers were disproportionately concentrated at schools in high-poverty areas.

**Table 9**

<b>School placements of novice and veteran teachers, by school level, 2003-04</b>		
	<b>Teachers new to the district</b>	<b>Teachers not new to the district</b>
Elementary	39.0%	37.0%
K-8	19.4%	17.5%
Middle	22.9%	17.3%
High School	18.8%	28.3%
Total	100.0%*	100.0%*

Table 10 shows the percentage of low-income students at the schools to which new teachers versus their more senior colleagues were assigned in 2003-04. New teachers had almost a 60 percent chance of being assigned to schools at which 80 percent or more of the students were low income. In contrast, about 45 percent of teachers who had at least one year of previous experience were assigned to such schools.

**Teachers new to the system were about as likely as other teachers to be teaching at elementary and K-8th grade schools; more likely to be teaching at middle schools; and less likely to be teaching at high schools.**

**More than one-quarter of the teachers at the lowest-income schools were in their first or second year of teaching in the district.**

**Table 10**

<b>School placements of novice and veteran teachers, by percentage of low-income students, 2003-04</b>		
	Teachers new to the district	Teachers not new to the district
Less than 80% low income	40.6%	53.7%
80% - 89% low income	38.4%	32.6%
90% or higher low income	21.0%	13.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

This uneven distribution of teachers across schools has resulted, in part, from prior contractual agreements that guaranteed senior teachers the first pick of available openings. An exception to this process existed at schools whose faculties had voted for full site selection (12 percent of the schools during 2003-04), which enabled these faculty to select new staff from among both new and transferring teachers simultaneously.

The teachers' contract negotiated in fall 2004—a watershed agreement—greatly expands site selection and limits the extent to which positions can be filled on the basis of seniority. Our data on new-teacher assignments during 2003-04, therefore, are to a certain extent, “history.” Nevertheless, we present a detailed analysis of new-teacher placements because they serve as a baseline for comparison with placements under the new rules. In addition, our analysis of the number of openings in 2003-04, where they occurred, and which teachers filled those openings, illuminates the extent to which the new placement system may be expected to affect staff experience and certification levels.

Table 11 shows how teachers with varying degrees of experience in the system were distributed across schools serving different income levels during the 2003-04 school year. At schools where 90 percent or more of the students were classified as low income, approximately 40 percent of the teachers had three or fewer years of experience in the district, compared with less than 25 percent at schools with less than 80 percent low-income students. More than one-quarter of the teachers at the lowest-income schools were in their first or second year of teaching in the district, compared with just 15 percent of the teachers at the schools with the fewest low-income students.

The relatively small percentage of new teachers who were placed at high schools and at schools with fewer low-income students does *not* imply that there were no openings at these types of schools. Table 12 shows the overall number of open teaching positions in the district for 2003-04, the number of openings by school level, and the percentage of openings filled by new teachers at various types of schools.<sup>21</sup> Across the district, more than 2,500 teaching positions opened between October 1, 2002, and October 1, 2003. About one-third of these positions were at elementary schools,

**Table 11**

	Less than 80% low income	80% - 89% low income	90%+ low income
New teacher	9.2%	13.6%	17.0%
1 year experience	5.8%	8.7%	9.5%
2 years experience	4.1%	5.3%	6.6%
3 years experience	4.0%	5.8%	7.9%
4 or more years experience	77.0%	67.0%	59.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Teachers with some seniority in the district were inclined to transfer from higher-poverty-area to lower-poverty-area schools and from middle schools to either elementary or high schools.**

one-third at K-8 or middle schools, and one-quarter were at high schools. The rest were at alternative and other types of schools.

Under the terms of the teachers’ contract prior to September 2004, new teachers were assigned to schools only after more senior teachers who wished to transfer from one school to another had made their choices. The result has been considerable inequality between schools in the experience level and credentials of teachers. Teachers with some seniority in the district were inclined to transfer from higher-poverty-area to lower-poverty-area schools and from middle schools to either elementary or high schools.<sup>22</sup>

Tables 12 and 13 demonstrate that the percentage of open positions filled by new teachers varied rather dramatically by school level and percentage of low-income students. New teachers filled only 40 percent of the positions at the high schools, for example, meaning that when the time came for the assignment of new teachers, veteran teachers transferring from other schools had already taken 60 percent of the high school openings.

At some high schools, veteran teachers filled more than 60 percent of the available positions. At Girls’ High School, for example, 10 of the 12 openings were taken by teachers already in the district; at Northeast High, 26 of 32 openings went to veteran teachers; and at Edison High School (considered desirable in part because of its off-street parking and relatively new physical plant), 11 of 16 openings were filled by veteran teachers.

At middle schools, the situation was reversed. Teachers with some experience in the district took just 34 percent of the open positions, leaving 66 percent to new teachers. At some middle schools, new teachers filled all or almost all of the openings. At Vare Middle, for example, all 20 openings went to new teachers; at Turner and Gillespie, new teachers filled 13 of 14 openings; and at Clemente, 19 of 21 openings went to new teachers.

**Table 12**

<b>Data on teaching positions open between October 1, 2002 and October 1, 2003</b>	
Overall number of open positions	2,612
<b>Number of open positions, by school level*</b>	
Elementary	886
K-8	425
Middle	468
High school	633
<b>Percentage of open positions filled by new teachers, by school level</b>	
Elementary	59%
K-8	62%
Middle	66%
High school	40%
<b>Percentage of open positions filled by new teachers, by percentage of low-income students</b>	
<80% low income	47%
80-89% low income	63%
90%+ low income	70%
*Numbers do not sum to 2,612 because some openings were at other types of schools.	

In addition, less than 50 percent of the openings at schools with the fewest low-income students went to new teachers, compared with 70 percent of the openings at schools where 90 percent or more of the students were low income. This association holds within each school level (Table 13). At elementary, K-8, middle, and high schools alike, new teachers were more likely than teachers with some experience in the district to fill open positions at the schools with highest levels of low-income student populations (90 percent and above) and less likely to fill positions at schools with the lowest levels of low-income students (less than 80 percent).

**Table 13**

<b>Percentage of open positions from October 1, 2002 to October 1, 2003 filled by new teachers, by school type and percentage of low-income students</b>	
<b>Elementary schools</b>	
<80% low income	46%
80-89%	63%
90%+	67%
<b>K-8 schools</b>	
<80% low income	60%
80-89%	58%
90%+	78%
<b>Middle schools</b>	
<80% low income	53%
80-89%	74%
90%+	65%
<b>High schools</b>	
<80% low income	39%
80-89%	48%
90%+	n/a

**The new contract between the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers and the school district includes a provision that only half of the openings at most schools can be filled on the basis of seniority.**

The new contract between the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers and the school district includes a provision that only half of the openings at most schools can be filled on the basis of seniority. The above analysis suggests that there is potential for the new contract to affect staffing configurations at each school level and at schools with different levels of student poverty.

With new limits on seniority-based transfers of teachers already employed by the district, there may be less movement from school to school in coming years (meaning there may not be as many openings as before). However, even at schools that teachers have historically considered highly desirable, new staffing patterns may emerge simply through attrition. For example, between October 1, 2002, and October 1, 2003, almost 300 high school teachers left the district entirely. A large percentage

**Research suggests that the introduction of more novice teachers into such schools will energize staff culture to the benefit of teachers and students alike.**

of the teachers who left the district—many of whom, presumably, retired—had been teaching at high schools with fewer low-income students.

At the minimum, we expect to see a different mix of novice and veteran teachers at schools with fewer low-income students, particularly at the high-school level. Research suggests that the introduction of more novice teachers into such schools, which for years have been top-heavy with senior career teachers, will energize staff culture to the benefit of teachers and students alike.<sup>23</sup> However, we do not expect that this teachers' contract—or any contract that we can imagine—will result in a completely equitable distribution of experience and credentials across the district's schools. The preference of many teachers for working in schools with higher-achieving and higher-income students has been documented for at least half a century.<sup>24</sup>

Unfortunately, the new contract did not include robust incentives to attract and retain teachers at traditionally hard-to-staff schools. The Teacher Equity Campaign, run by a coalition of civic and student groups, had urged, among other things, the adoption of incentives such as smaller classes or reduced course loads, additional funds for such schools to use flexibly to pay for support staff, and the assignment of strong administrators. None of these incentives won approval.<sup>25</sup>

**Major Provisions in the Contract Between the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers and the School District of Philadelphia Regarding Teacher Hiring (2004 to 2008)**

- All new teachers will be hired through a school-based (site-selection) process.
- A staff-selection committee at each school, comprised of two teachers, a parent, an assistant principal (where applicable), and the principal, will screen and recommend candidates. The principal will make the final selection.
- Schools can still choose (through a two-thirds vote supervised by the PFT) to become site-selection schools, filling all their vacancies through a school-based interview process with no preference to transferring teachers. For 2004-05, 40 schools have done so. All vacancies at three “demonstration schools” and 10 of the 25 schools designated as “incentive schools” will also be filled through site selection, along with all vacancies in “transition schools” that are adding new grades. A five- or six-member personnel committee will screen and recommend candidates.
- Half of the vacancies in schools that are not otherwise designated as site-selection schools can be filled through the seniority process with transferring veteran teachers. The other half must be filled by new teachers.
- Principals at new high schools can hire all of the teachers for the first two years; thereafter, half of the vacant positions can be filled through the seniority-transfer process.

## **IMPROVING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF TEACHERS**

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The School District of Philadelphia faces a number of looming challenges as it strives to hire and place qualified teachers in all classrooms. However, the district has made some headway on the issues of teacher recruitment and retention through new initiatives and partnerships. Tomás Hanna has led the way in these efforts, first as a special assistant to CEO Vallas and, more recently, as the senior vice president for human resources.

### **Recruitment initiatives**

Since 2002, the district has pursued an impressive and ever-expanding number of avenues to increase the number of prospective teachers applying to Philadelphia schools—with good initial results. Applications rose 44 percent between the hiring seasons of 2002 and 2004.<sup>26</sup>

As in the past, the pool of applicants for jobs in elementary education was relatively large, reflecting the continued oversupply of new elementary-level teachers across the state.<sup>27</sup> For fall 2004, the hardest-to-fill vacancies included those in special education, physical education, bilingual education, math, science, Spanish, and computer science. In 2003-04, the district had to hire 234 new teachers in special education alone, the majority of whom were not certified in that field.

### **Reasons for teaching in Philadelphia**

In a December 2003 survey, new teachers reported that they were drawn to Philadelphia for a variety of reasons, particularly the relatively high availability of jobs, the good benefits package, and the desire to teach urban students (Table 14). About one-third of the new hires had had either a positive student teaching or Literacy Intern experience in the district. One-third said Philadelphia was their *first* choice, and one-third said it was their *only* choice (meaning that they had had no other offers or did not look elsewhere).

**The district has pursued an impressive and ever-expanding number of avenues to increase the number of prospective teachers.**

**Table 14**

<b>Reasons given by new teachers for applying to the School District of Philadelphia for fall 2003*</b>		
	Highest importance	Lowest importance
Wanted to teach urban students	33%	23%
Philadelphia is my hometown	25%	42%
Commute is easy	24%	29%
District offers high-quality professional development	11%	29%
A job seemed likely in Philadelphia	42%	9%
Good benefits	39%	7%
Good incentives	25%	13%

\*454 new teachers completed this survey during the 2003-04 school year, about 45 percent of the new teachers hired at the time of the distribution of the survey (December 2003).

Nearly all of the new hires (93 percent) applied elsewhere for a teaching position, with the largest percentage applying to suburban districts in the Philadelphia area. The breakdown of other types of schools and districts to which Philadelphia’s new teachers applied is as follows:

- Public charter schools in the Philadelphia area: 21 percent
- Suburban districts in the Philadelphia area: 30 percent
- Private schools in the Philadelphia area: 7 percent
- Schools in other parts of the country: 22 percent
- Schools in a foreign country: 4 percent.

**Marketing and outreach**

The district’s efforts to expand the pool of new recruits has featured a marketing campaign, including: billboards and other branding activities; greater responsiveness by the human resources staff to applicants; introduction of an electronic application; refinement of a user-friendly Web site with a daily listing of vacancies; and a “teacher ambassador” program that compensates veteran teachers for finding new teachers in high-need subjects. A “Teacher Welcome Center” in the Office of Human Resources has facilitated the employment process. During 2002-03, human resources staff conducted three open houses for prospects and utilized cultivation strategies (frequent contact and follow-up) for prospective teachers in high-need fields.

## Recruiting and Retaining Teachers in Philadelphia

Further, officials at the district's Office of Teacher Retention and Recruitment and Office of Human Resources strengthened relationships with education program directors and deans at colleges and universities.<sup>28</sup> These efforts included "Roll Out the Red Carpet" days when undergraduate education majors and their deans and professors visited the district to learn about living and teaching in Philadelphia. Use of outreach methods, along with the promise of stipends (up to \$1,100) for student teachers, appear to have had an impact. In 2002-03, there were 400 student teachers in the district, but in 2004-05, that number doubled.<sup>29</sup> The district hopes that a positive student teaching experience in Philadelphia will encourage newly certified teachers to seek a job in the city's public schools.

### Financial incentives

The district also has used financial incentives to recruit new teachers. It introduced tuition reimbursement of up to \$1,000 a year for advanced coursework during 2003-04,<sup>30</sup> and it continued its use of a hiring bonus of \$4,500 paid in two installments over a three-year period.<sup>31</sup> In the December 2003 survey of new teachers, one-quarter of the respondents indicated that these financial incentives were important in their decision to apply to the district.

**The district has relied heavily on promoting recruitment through alternative routes to certification.**

### Financial Incentives for Recruitment and Retention of Teachers: 2004-05

Hiring bonus	\$4,500 (\$1,500 after five months; \$3,000 after 37 months)
Tuition reimbursement	\$1,000 per year (following one year of teaching; to be applied to coursework needed for Level II certification)
Student teaching scholarships	\$600 for participating in three days of training for student teachers run by the Philadelphia Education Fund
Student teaching stipend	\$500 if student teachers accept employment as full-time teachers in the district
Incentives for teachers in "incentive schools"	Up to \$2,400 per year for tuition reimbursement in 25 hard-to-staff schools

### Alternate-route certification programs: a prime recruitment strategy

The district has relied heavily on promoting recruitment through alternate routes to certification. Officials have worked with colleges and universities to develop programs that allow less-than-fully-certified teachers to work in schools while pursuing coursework for certification, usually on an accelerated time frame.

Participants in such programs are expected to become intern certified—that is, to have passed all of their PRAXIS exams and to have enrolled in a teacher-certification program—before the beginning of their employment with the district.

**Intern-certified teachers are considered "highly qualified" even though they are not yet fully certified.**

According to provisions in the 2001 federal No Child Left Behind legislation and Pennsylvania regulations, intern-certified teachers are considered "highly qualified" even though they are not yet fully certified. While there is merit to the claim by critics that such teachers are not truly "highly qualified,"<sup>32</sup> the push to hire intern-certified teachers is an improvement over the district's long-term practice of hiring, on emergency permits, large numbers of apprentice teachers who had not passed (or even taken) the PRAXIS exams. However, it is important to note that many such emergency-permit teachers—245 in fall 2004—are still being hired.

Through its use of alternate-route programs, Philadelphia has launched or participated in several efforts designed to attract new recruits to hard-to-staff schools and subject areas (see box, next page). Beginning in 2003-04, the city began a partnership with Teach for America that has brought to the Philadelphia public schools about 200 carefully selected teachers with strong academic records. These teachers have been placed in middle schools and in secondary-level subject areas where shortages exist. A teaching fellows program, developed by the national New Teacher Project, brought in a selective group of 61 intern-certified recruits in January 2005 to fill vacancies that inevitably occur during the year in high-need areas. Other initiatives include federally funded Transition to Teaching Programs and a state-funded Accelerated Certification for Teachers program.

The Literacy Intern program—Philadelphia's largest and oldest alternate-route supplier of new teachers—and the "Middle Grades Transition Support Tutor Program" (new in 2004) also have produced many well-trained recruits for regular positions. As trainees, they are not considered "teachers of record" in a classroom, but they receive close to a full-time salary and full benefits. The nonprofit Philadelphia Education Fund coordinates both programs.

About 500 of the system's new hires for both 2003-04 and 2004-05 either were enrolled in these formal alternate-route programs or, in the case of Literacy Interns, were moving directly into the position of regularly appointed teacher. Alternate-route programs have helped the district increase the number of recruits in mathematics, science, special education, and Spanish, areas typically short of applicants.

### Alternate-Route Certification Programs

Beginning in 2003-04, the School District of Philadelphia hired many more teachers gaining certification through non-traditional teacher-preparation programs. These programs, aimed primarily at filling positions in hard-to-staff schools and in shortage subject areas, included:

**Teach for America (TFA):** The district contracted with Teach for America, a highly selective national program for new college graduates, to place 128 participants in high-need schools, especially middle schools, for a two-year period. Of those, 118 followed through with the placement, and 100 (85 percent) completed the school year and returned in fall 2004.<sup>32</sup> The district has hired an additional 97 participants for 2004-05. TFA teachers quickly gained intern certificates, making them “highly qualified,” because they passed required PRAXIS certification exams without difficulty.

**Transition to Teaching:** These federally funded programs at Drexel University and the Philadelphia Education Fund (PEF) (and affiliated universities) supplied 74 math and science teachers to middle and high schools during 2003-04. The teachers receiving certification through the program make a three-year commitment to employment in the district. Drexel’s program (which makes use of distance learning) took in a new cohort of 25 teachers in math, chemistry, and physics in fall 2004, who will become fully certified by June 2005. Transition to Teaching participants receive intensive training in the summer prior to teaching and take coursework throughout the school year.

**Accelerated Certification for Teachers:** This state-funded program (drawing on federal grants) paid for 97 uncertified Philadelphia teachers during 2003-04 to pursue accelerated certification at one of five local colleges and universities. The program, which will enroll additional teachers every year, is open only to teachers in subjects where there is a teaching shortage (particularly special education) and is targeted to members of minorities and career changers. A majority of the participants during 2003-04 were teachers working on emergency permits who were already teaching in the district prior to the start of the ACT program. The rest were new recruits. Survey data indicate that a relatively high percentage of this group intend to stay in the district long-term.<sup>33</sup>

**International Recruitment:** The district currently employs 42 math and science teachers who were recruited during previous years from India and Kenya. Recruitment from those countries has ended, however, because of federal restrictions on the number of visas allowed for that purpose. The Office of Human Resources reports that these teachers, after a predictably rocky start, have high rates of retention in the system. A small number of Spanish teachers—five for 2004-05—continue to be recruited from Spain.

**Alternate-Route Certification Programs**

**Literacy Intern Program:** Since 1999-2000, this has been the district's largest source of alternate-route candidates for certification and employment. The program is run as a partnership between the district (the funder) and the Philadelphia Education Fund. Participants in the program—more than 1,700 since its inception—co-teach in a primary-grades classroom with a veteran teacher for two to three years, participate in intensive and sustained professional development in literacy offered by PEF, take courses toward their certification, and get special mentoring from an adjunct (often retired) teacher coach. The district hired 274 “graduates” from this program for regular teaching positions in fall 2003, and another 347 in fall 2004. Only 37 percent of these '04 hires were fully certified, a big disappointment for human resources officials. Still, the district decided to give them preference in hiring because former Literacy Interns tend to have high rates of retention in the system, and are already familiar with the students and with system policies and curriculum. Moreover, Philadelphia has invested heavily in their training.

Data from the 2003-04 New Teacher Survey conducted by Research for Action indicated that current or former Literacy Interns were more likely than other new teachers to plan a longer teaching stint in Philadelphia schools. Only 38 percent of the interns planned to stay in the system three years or less, compared with 53 percent of other new teachers.

**Middle Grades Transition Support Tutors:** To help develop effective interventions for low-achieving 8<sup>th</sup> graders, the district and the Philadelphia Education Fund launched a program in February 2004 to train and employ 65 of these tutors to work with these students in small groups during their literacy and/or math blocks. These non-certified college graduates work four days per week in the schools and on the fifth day take coursework for certification at either Arcadia University or St. Joseph's University. The district pays for 15 graduate hours per year. Participants are expected to become certified in 2006, then commit to teaching for at least two years in the district. An additional 40 tutors were hired for fall 2004. The program is a replication of the Literacy Intern effort with two differences. Participants work in the middle grades and are paid less, in exchange for having one full day a week for coursework.

**Philadelphia Teaching Fellows:** Philadelphia is piloting an initiative of the New Teacher Project, based in New York City, whereby 61 new teachers were hired in January 2005 to fill mid-year vacancies in special education, bilingual education, chemistry, physics, math, computer science, Spanish, and physical education. The program, whose selection model replicates that of Teach for America, attracts high-achieving, new college graduates and career changers, mostly from the Philadelphia area. These intern-certified participants received a month of intensive training in January, followed by placement in full-time teaching positions in February. They take course work for certification and/or a master's degree at Temple University. The district and the Wachovia Foundation fund the program.

## Re-engineering hiring, selection, and school placement: the next wave of change

In line with urban districts across the country, Philadelphia is decentralizing, expediting, and modernizing the way it hires and assigns teachers. As a result of new provisions in the district's 2004 contract with the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT), the old centralized system of assigning new teachers to schools and of giving veteran teachers the right to transfer to other schools prior to the hiring of new teachers is being dismantled. Beginning in spring 2005, all new recruits will participate in a school-based interview and selection process simultaneous with the teacher-transfer process. The School Reform Commission and the Vallas administration—supported by a wide array of advocacy and student groups as well as business leaders—pressed hard to bring about these staffing reforms during the renegotiation of the contract in fall 2004. Since the signing of the contract, PFT officials have worked closely with human resource administrators in drawing up the implementation guidelines for hiring and school placement, signaling a new atmosphere of enhanced cooperation between the teachers' union and the district.

The importance of introducing districtwide, site-based hiring for new teachers and of trimming veteran teachers' seniority-transfer rights cannot be exaggerated. Over the years, Philadelphia's bureaucratic, sluggish, and impersonal methods had contributed to a smaller teacher-recruitment pool, to higher rates of new-teacher turnover, and to heightened inequities in the distribution of teachers across schools.<sup>35</sup> In short, any hope of real progress in reaching NCLB's 2006 highly qualified teachers goal depended on changing those processes. Moreover, CEO Vallas and his team have installed new managers to run the Office of Human Resources and to implement the recommendations of external consultants for changing its operations.

The introduction of districtwide, school-based hiring means that new teachers will be much better informed about their schools. In the past, unless teachers were hired at a school that had voted for site selection—12 percent of the schools for fall 2003 and 16 percent for fall 2004—they were not offered the opportunity of an interview with school administrators. Our survey data from 2003-04 (Table 15) showed that more than three-fourths of the new teachers were unaware of their school's educational approach, were unfamiliar with special programs at the school, did not know the principal's reputation, and did not know how well staff members worked together. An "information-poor" hiring process such as this increases turnover of new teachers.<sup>36</sup>

The district has not only signed on to a site-based process, but has also committed itself to hiring the bulk of new teachers earlier in the hiring season as opposed to late July or thereafter, as has typically been the case. The reduced flow of transferring teachers, a result of the new contract, should speed the employment of new teachers. Further, the plan to coordinate and expedite the school and district budgeting processes and to install an automated applicant-tracking system will also expedite hiring.

**The old centralized system of giving veteran teachers the right to transfer to other schools prior to hiring new teachers is being dismantled.**

**Table 15**

<b>Percentage of 2003-04 new teachers' reporting prior knowledge of their school: site-selected teachers vs. centrally assigned teachers</b>		
<b>New teachers' knowledge of:</b>	<b>Site-selected</b>	<b>Centrally assigned</b>
Student demographics	83%	59%
Principal's reputation	66%	21%
Special programs/projects	61%	16%
Staff collegiality	53%	14%
Educational approach	53%	14%
N=454		

Delayed hiring in the past depleted the hiring pool, particularly of its stellar candidates,<sup>37</sup> and it meant that new teachers began their employment ill-prepared for their classrooms. Of the first-year teachers we surveyed during 2003-04, 24 percent said they had been hired by the district after the school year had begun and another 14 percent indicated they were hired a week before school started. More than half (55 percent) found out about their school assignment either one week before school opened or after it opened. Further, more than two-thirds (69 percent) found out what *grade or courses* they would be teaching either one week before or after school started.

It is not yet clear, of course, how well the re-engineered processes that start rolling out in the spring of 2005 will work and what the actual impact on recruitment and retention will be. An optimistic forecast is that up to 75 or 80 percent of teacher vacancies will be filled through a comparatively smooth and speedy site-selection process, enabling a better-informed employment match between teacher and school and, ultimately, a higher rate of retention.

But the flurry of new policies could complicate and slow the hiring process, and prove fertile ground for district-union disputes.<sup>38</sup> The Office of Human Resources might not have the resources to execute the changes efficiently, and budget and enrollment projects might still be delayed. Furthermore, we simply do not know the degree to which the prospect of transferring to a more desirable school has operated as an incentive for teachers to remain in the district. It is possible that more of them will leave since the number of slots open for seniority-based transfers will decline.

District officials are well aware that, in the last analysis, the skill of school building administrators in conducting teacher selection will determine the success of the new policies. Savvy principals will doubtless jump at the chance to build cohesive school staffs by reviewing candidates carefully in a way that makes maximal use of school-based hiring committees.<sup>39</sup> Less-able principals may not take the hiring process seriously, may resent the time it consumes, or may exclude their staff from meaningful involvement in reviewing applicants. To its credit, the district has committed itself to a set of leadership-development initiatives related to personnel issues and aimed at school administrators.

### Retention efforts: supports for new teachers

While Philadelphia officials are heavily focused on doing a better job of getting new teachers into the classroom, they understand that the district's underlying problem is teacher retention. For this reason, they launched an ambitious set of major initiatives for 2003-04 to retain teachers new to the system. (Teachers leave the district at a greater rate during their first year than any subsequent year.) The initiatives have continued into 2004-05.

- Principals were trained in methods of retaining new teachers.
- A new cadre of 61 new-teacher coaches traveled among schools to provide support to the new teachers at the school site.
- The district introduced a new core curriculum in literacy and math in grades K-9, with one objective being to offer more instructional guidance for new teachers.
- The district held a two-week, paid summer orientation for all new teachers and added an additional two weeks for new teachers who were not fully certified.
- New teachers attended a new year-long, after-school New Teacher Academy at Teachers College, Columbia University.

Other efforts to retain new—and veteran—teachers have included a **reduction in class size** in grades K-3, an extensive **facilities improvement program**, and a tightening of **disciplinary policies**, such as the transfer of seriously disruptive pupils to an expanding network of alternative schools.

**New teachers in fall 2003 were more likely to report that they had received basic information and support during their first week in the school than had new teachers in fall 2002.**

**The effectiveness of the new supports**

**Principals' greater focus on teacher retention**

During summer 2003, more than 250 principals participated in three days of district-sponsored training to improve their support of new and veteran teachers, which involved crafting a retention plan for their school. Their subsequent performance appraisals by a regional superintendent included assessment of their skill in reducing attrition.

As a result, new teachers in fall 2003 were more likely to report that they had received basic information and support—copies of the core curriculum, a mailbox, student forms such as hall passes, a staff handbook—during their first week in the school than had teachers who were new in fall 2002 (Table 16).

**Table 16**

Percentage of new teachers who said they were given basic supports during their first week on the job: 2002-03 and 2003-04		
During your first week on the job, were you:	Percentage 2002-03 N=366*	Percentage 2003-04 N=454
Given curriculum scope and sequence?	32%	67%
Given student forms?	28%	58%
Given staff handbook?	64%	80%
Told name of PFT building representative?	50%	70%
Given a mailbox?	73%	97%

\*366 out of 598 new teachers (61%) filled out the survey in October 2002 at a district induction session.

New teachers who responded to the survey in winter 2003-04 also gave reasonably favorable assessments of their treatment by principals (Table 17), although clearly there is room for improvement.

The district is adding other important components to leadership development. In 2004, the system began a well-received Leadership Academy aimed at preparing new principals for their duties. This and other comparable efforts are being expanded with the assistance of a \$4 million grant from the Broad Foundation awarded in 2005.

**Table 17**

<b>New teachers' assessments of support from principals: 2003-04</b>	
Did your principal:	Percentage "yes"
Seem generally welcoming?	82%
Seem genuinely interested in what you were doing in the classroom?	66%
Offer to make time to meet about your concerns?	64%
Seem sensitive to the added pressures of being a new teacher in the district?	61%
Act helpful in introducing you to fellow teachers?	56%
Help you in locating supplies?	52%
N=454	

**While just 77 percent of the new teachers in 2002-03 returned for a second year of teaching in the district, 85 percent of the 2003-04 new teachers came back for a second year.**

**New Teacher Coaches**

The creation of a new type of in-school support—New Teacher Coaches—also appears to have contributed to the higher retention rate of new teachers in 2003-04. While just 77 percent of the new teachers in 2002-03 returned for a second year of teaching in the district, 85 percent of the 2003-04 new teachers came back for a second year. In contrast to the district’s traditional “Colleague Mentor Teacher Program,”<sup>40</sup> in which selected classroom teachers mentor their new colleagues in the same building, the 61 New Teacher Coaches (all teachers on special assignment) do not have classroom teaching responsibilities. Although each coach was originally supposed to supervise 10 new teachers, the coaches ended up, on average, mentoring nearly 20 teachers in approximately eight different schools, a caseload that somewhat reduced their impact.<sup>41</sup>

Evidence from a survey of new teachers and from interviews with a small sample of new middle-grades teachers points to the effectiveness of the coaches’ work.<sup>42</sup> Of the 314 new teachers responding to the district’s May 2004 sample survey, more than 80 percent—and often more than 90 percent—indicated that the coaches had supported them in nearly a dozen different areas of their work (e.g. pedagogy, classroom management, materials, content knowledge, and classroom routines). Such an overwhelmingly positive response among teachers at all school levels is rarely found in this sort of research in Philadelphia. Similarly, half of the 20 new middle-grades teachers we interviewed, generally located in the most challenging schools, said that their New Teacher Coach was *very* helpful and another quarter felt they had been somewhat helpful.<sup>43</sup>

**In August 2003, the district's orientation for teachers new to the district became mandatory.**

### **Core curricula in literacy and math**

In 2003-04, the School District of Philadelphia introduced new common core curricula for grades kindergarten through 9 in literacy and in mathematics. Additional subjects and grades were added in 2004-05.<sup>44</sup> The curriculum guides not only supplied objectives and sequence and scope of topics, but also provided suggested lesson plans and resources for teaching the topics, and came with textbooks and other materials. One of the rationales for the curricula was that they would be a special boon for new teachers.

While systematic data on teachers' evaluations of the new curricula are lacking, our interviews with 20 new middle-grades teachers at the end of 2003-04 support the expectation that new teachers would appreciate the structure and resources provided by the core curricula. New teachers in core subject areas in schools that were using the new curricula<sup>45</sup> made the following observations:

*The core curriculum was important to me. I wasn't overwhelmed with developing lesson plans. This year would have been much tougher without the core curriculum.*

*I liked the core curriculum. I can see why veteran teachers might not like it but I needed it.*

*It is good that the kids are doing the same thing across the board. I had a lot of kids going in and out [of my class], being switched around. So it is good to have everyone at the same spot. In the beginning, I thought it was the most uncreative thing, but the more I got used to it, I viewed it as a thematic unit and added fun stuff to it....My kids' test scores went up with Holt readers. We had a workbook with the textbook and that helped their reading level.*

### **Pre-service summer training**

Prior to the 2003-04 school year, the district offered several optional orientation days for new teachers. However, in August 2003, the district's orientation for teachers new to the district became mandatory. Eight hundred new teachers—the great majority of those hired by that time—attended at least two weeks of paid sessions in 2003, in contrast to just 360 the previous year.<sup>46</sup> During summer 2004, 563 new teachers attended.

New teachers' appraisals of the 2003 orientation were mixed, reflecting in part the difficulty of tailoring the content to a group with sharply varying degrees of prior training. Data from the New Teacher Survey and interviews with middle-grades teachers showed that the participants liked the overall introduction to the district and the opportunities to network, but many pointed to the need for more training in curriculum content, district policies, and assessment. Teachers assigned to special education and classes for English-language learners were concerned that the training shortchanged their particular needs. The orientation was revised for summer 2004 and included two days for new teachers to become familiar with their schools.

### **New Teacher Academy**

Professional development for new teachers continued during the year in 18 after-school sessions called the New Teacher Academy, run by a group from Teachers College, Columbia University.<sup>47</sup> State law mandates that new teachers participate

in such an induction program. Approximately half of the new teachers attended the two-hour sessions during 2003-04. The remaining half of the cohort is participating in a redesigned induction process during their second year on the job in 2004-05.<sup>48</sup> The district reduced the number of sessions from 18 to 12 for 2004-05, partly in response to the time pressures experienced by new teachers, particularly those taking courses in alternate-route certification programs.

Data from a sample survey of 314 new teachers conducted by the district in May 2004 and from interviews with 20 new middle-grades teachers by Research for Action reveal mixed assessments of the program. Solid majorities of the new teachers, particularly those at the elementary level, agreed that the induction sessions were helpful across a wide variety of topics such as classroom management, classroom routines and procedures, multi-cultural education, and lesson planning. Most felt that the content was relevant to their classroom practice and work. The 20 new middle-grades teachers interviewed for this study, like those surveyed by the district, were somewhat less likely than elementary-level teachers to feel that the sessions were useful, although they liked the opportunity to interact with other teachers and to have informal discussions about developments in their classroom.<sup>49</sup>

### Challenges to teacher retention efforts

While the district's new supports for novice teachers have improved retention of new teachers, continuing problems bedevil attempts to keep these new teachers as well as certain categories of existing teachers in Philadelphia's public school system.

#### School and classroom climate

The working conditions in some schools, particularly lack of student discipline, undermine teachers' commitment. New Teacher Coaches noted in our focus groups the difficulties for some new teachers caused by dysfunctional school climates. The coaches' observations about "out-of-control" buildings and new teachers' desire to leave them dovetail with the accounts given by the new middle-grades teachers interviewed for this study. National studies have cited student behavior and school climate issues as a major factor in turnover among teachers in low-income, urban districts.<sup>50</sup>

#### Assignment of underprepared teachers to special education classes

Some new teachers are still assigned to teach subjects for which they have almost no preparation. Data presented earlier in this report show that this is most common in special education, the subject area where the teacher shortage is critical. Many teachers on emergency permits who have little or no prior training in special education are teaching those classes, particularly in middle schools. Our in-depth interviews with seven middle-grades, special education, intern-certified teachers indicate that their transition to teaching was especially rocky.

#### Enforcement of NCLB certification rules for 7th and 8th grade teachers

Attrition of elementary-level certified 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers—both new and experienced—may increase if they cannot meet new NCLB content proficiency requirements for those grades as of June 2006. These requirements can be met by passing middle-level, content-area PRAXIS exams or through a bridge certificate that allows middle-level certification for already-certified teachers through a

**While new supports have improved retention of novice teachers, continuing problems bedevil attempts to keep new teachers as well as certain categories of existing teachers in Philadelphia's public school system.**

**Philadelphia has only recently begun directing its attention to upgrading the qualifications of the existing teacher workforce in line with NCLB requirements.**

combination of experience and professional development and/or coursework credits. The district has developed several large-scale efforts to prepare the 600 elementary-level certified teachers for the PRAXIS exams.<sup>51</sup> As noted earlier, Philadelphia middle-grades teachers had relatively high rates of failure on these examinations during 2003. And despite the publicity given to the new credentialing requirements, the majority of principals in the district's middle-grades schools continue to request elementary-level certified teachers for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade openings.

Like other school systems around the country, Philadelphia's has only recently begun directing its attention to upgrading the qualifications of the *existing* teacher workforce in line with NCLB requirements—particularly those teaching 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade, special education, and English-language learners, and employed by alternative schools. State and federal regulations for these groups are undergoing change, and in some cases, the problems of compliance with the regulations are manifold. Moreover, the political will to impose new requirements on veteran teachers appears to be lacking in states nationwide. Federal regulators seem to be focused on enforcing higher standards for new teachers rather than for the existing teacher workforce.<sup>52</sup>

**Dismissal of teachers on emergency permits who do not become highly qualified**

A certain amount of teacher turnover in Philadelphia can be attributed to the district's growing enforcement of state and federal NCLB regulations that require existing teachers to be highly qualified. The district dismissed 163 teachers who were teaching on emergency permits during 2003-04 because they had not completed required coursework and/or passed PRAXIS tests. An additional 370 (now in their second year of teaching) have been warned that they will be let go at the end of 2004-05 unless they fulfill the credentialing requirements. According to human resources officials, some of these emergency-permit teachers do not believe the district is serious and thus are making little effort to complete the requirements. Perhaps their skepticism is due in part to their awareness that teachers on emergency permits are still being hired in large numbers to take their place. These new hires will face the same hurdle of passing the PRAXIS exams as those who were dismissed previously.

**New teachers' inclination to try teaching in other settings or to try other careers**

According to data from this research project and from national studies,<sup>53</sup> a high percentage of today's young new teachers do not intend to teach in one school or district for a lengthy period of time or, indeed, to stay in teaching at all. The Research for Action 2003 New Teacher Survey found that half of the new teachers (51 percent) planned to stay in Philadelphia public schools for no more than three years. The age of the new teachers was strongly correlated with future plans (Table 18), similar to national trends.<sup>54</sup> Seventy percent of Philadelphia's new teachers aged 25 and under planned to leave after three or fewer years, as did 60 percent of those aged 26 to 30, while those over 30 were substantially more likely to say they wanted to stay more than three years.

**Table 18**

<b>New teachers' plans to stay in Philadelphia, by age</b>	
<b>Age range</b>	<b>Percentage planning to teach only 1-3 years in Philadelphia</b>
21-25	70%
26-30	60%
31-35	35%
36-45	30%
46+	25%
N=454	

**In the face of the continuing inadequate financial resources district officials and civic backers must have the political will to maintain essential funding levels.**

Among participants in formal alternate-route certification programs, attrition from the district (and perhaps from teaching) is likely to be comparatively high for participants in Teach For America, most of whom come to the district from other parts of the country for a minimum two-year stint in the classroom.<sup>55</sup> Such high-achieving young teachers have long had a higher probability of leaving teaching to pursue other employment options.<sup>56</sup> Support for the program should not rest on any contribution to staffing stability, but rather on the combination of strengths that TFA participants bring to their schools and classrooms during their time on the job—strong academic backgrounds, problem-solving and analytic skills, energy, and commitment to work in the field of education.<sup>57</sup>

**Expense of retention initiatives**

Effective interventions are not cheap and must be maintained indefinitely. The district spent nearly \$7 million during 2003-04 to pay for New Teacher Coaches, the New Teacher Academy, the summer orientation, and selected financial incentives such as tuition reimbursement. The Literacy Intern program alone (the alternate-route certification program that supplies the most new recruits) costs about \$93,000 per participant for salary, benefits, and training over a two-year period. Particularly in the face of the continuing inadequate financial resources provided to the system by the state, district officials and civic backers must have the political will to maintain those essential funding levels.

## CONCLUSION

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**Given the obstacles, the race to full compliance looks more and more like a marathon than a sprint.**

The teacher recruitment and retention initiatives launched by the School District of Philadelphia since 2002 have already produced heartening results in the recruitment and retention of new teachers: recruitment numbers are up, the downward slide in the percentage of certified teachers has been reversed, and turnover has been reduced. District officials, led by CEO Vallas and the School Reform Commission, have continued to refine and expand a range of initiatives designed to improve teacher quality. In doing so, they have enthusiastically drawn on the expertise of dozens of external organizations, including many of the local institutions of higher education.

Philadelphia's energetic effort to hire and retain highly qualified teachers—a phenomenon that surprised us in its breadth and intensity when we began this study in 2002—is gaining momentum as the district gears up to meet federal and state requirements for student performance and teacher quality. Important new components are being added: the introduction of districtwide site selection of new teachers, a shortened hiring timeline, a reorganization of the Office of Human Resources, the automation of the employment process, and leadership development programs for principals.

However, turnover among new and veteran teachers remains high, and the most-stressed schools have the highest proportion of minimally qualified teachers. The district's tools for attracting qualified teachers to the hardest-to-staff schools are still limited, a result in part of the inadequate financial resources available to the system from the state.<sup>58</sup> Further, the hundreds of new teachers who are still working with emergency permits do not meet the state's definition of "highly qualified," and many of those who *are* "highly qualified" by reason of being intern certified still enter the classroom with thin instructional credentials. This problem is especially acute among new special education teachers and middle school teachers.

Despite the district's vigorous and comprehensive initiatives to upgrade its teacher workforce, it appears unlikely to be in full compliance with the NCLB-imposed June 2006 deadline that all its teachers meet the designation of "highly qualified." Given the obstacles—tough working conditions, modest pay, shortages of teachers in selected fields, and long-term social forces that encourage young people to choose other occupations—the race to full compliance looks more and more like a marathon rather than a sprint. District officials are to be applauded for doing so well in the first leg of this marathon, and we hypothesize that the continuing rollout of new initiatives is likely to result in substantial progress toward meeting the "highly qualified" teacher goal. But Philadelphia's school leaders and their partner groups and civic supporters will have to maintain aggressive efforts over a period of years to fulfill this commitment to the system's young people and their families.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Table 1 indicates the percentage of teachers who were certified to teach at least one subject area. These percentages do not indicate whether the teachers were properly certified for the particular grade level(s) and subject area(s) they were teaching.

<sup>2</sup> Some of these “new teachers” may have taught previously in other districts or in the private school sector, but our data set provides no way of determining previous teaching experience outside of the district.

<sup>3</sup> Philadelphia teachers are not permitted to remain uncertified indefinitely. According to state regulations, uncertified teachers who wish to continue teaching in their grade level and subject area have two to three years to complete their requirements for certification. Each year, the district dismisses teachers who have exceeded their time limit for earning full certification.

<sup>4</sup> A “new teacher” for a given year is defined as someone who was teaching in the district on October 1 of that year but was not teaching in the district on October 1 of the previous year.

<sup>5</sup> The district reports that the percentage of new teachers who are fully certified or intern certified in the 2004-05 school year, while no lower than that for the 2003-04 school year, is not as high as had been anticipated. The district took a calculated gamble by hiring a large number of new teachers from its “Literacy Intern” program, many of whom had finished coursework for certification but had not taken their PRAXIS exams. In addition to having experience in the district’s classrooms, former Literacy Interns have a higher new-teacher retention rate, according to the district. Of the 347 former Literacy Interns hired, 219 were not certified: Of these, 134 had completed their course work but not their PRAXIS exams, and 84 had finished neither coursework nor PRAXIS exams.

<sup>6</sup> These academic subjects include mathematics, English, social studies, and science.

<sup>7</sup> In lieu of taking a licensing exam, current certified teachers who have been teaching a particular subject in the middle grades can enroll in a three-year bridge certificate program if they are deemed to have enough experience and academic background in the subject. Eligibility is determined through a combination of number of years teaching, professional development hours, and coursework in the subject area. At the end of three years, teachers with bridge certificates must have completed additional requirements to earn their Instructional I certification in the subject area. See <http://www.teaching.state.pa.us/teaching/lib/teaching/BridgeGuidelinesandProcedures.pdf> for more detail.

<sup>8</sup> S. Snyder & D. Mezzacappa. (2004, March 23). Teachers come up short in testing; half of Philadelphia’s middle school teachers failed to gain required certification as highly qualified. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, A1.

<sup>9</sup> Pennsylvania is designing a middle-grades certificate that would have two academic content-area concentrations equivalent to minors in a subject.

<sup>10</sup> Fideler, Foster, & Schwartz (2000).

<sup>11</sup> Boe, Bobbitt, & Cook (1997).

<sup>12</sup> Billingsley, Bodkins, & Hendricks (1993).

<sup>13</sup> Analyses for subsequent cohorts of new teachers show a considerable level of stability in this pattern. Among the 2000-01, 2001-02, and 2002-03 new teacher cohorts, 21 percent, 22 percent, and 23 percent, respectively, left after their first year in the district. Likewise, an additional 16 percent and 14 percent of the 2000-01 and 2001-02 cohorts, respectively, left after their second year.

<sup>14</sup> Ingersoll (2001).

<sup>15</sup> Our analyses use the percentage of low-income students for the 1999-2000 school year. We made the choice to use 1999-2000 data rather than data for each separate school year for two reasons. First, in the broad scheme of things, the percentage of low-income students is relatively stable from year to year in Philadelphia's schools. Second, this strategy helps to avoid the statistical jumps and dips that could result from borderline schools falling into a higher category one year and a lower category the next, or vice versa. Keeping the schools in the same income category in multi-year analyses provides assurance that any observed trends are not artifacts of the movement of borderline schools from one category to another. While this particular analysis does not use multi-year data, we apply this strategy so that our estimate will be consistent with previous and anticipated multi-year analysis.

<sup>16</sup> New York City Council Investigation Division (2004).

<sup>17</sup> Chicago Public Schools, (2004); Dede, Nelson, & Spicer, (n.d.).

<sup>18</sup> Nearly 400 teachers with at least 34 years of service took advantage of a special retirement incentive of \$25,000 spread over five years. An additional 500 teachers who were ineligible for that incentive retired as well. Overall, about 400 more teachers retired than was the case the previous year.

<sup>19</sup> Administrators believed that many of these resignations happened because of the uncertainty about the teachers' union contract which was still under negotiation when school opened. The contract expired on August 31, 2004, but was extended until a new agreement was reached in October 2004.

<sup>20</sup> The trend line for Chancellor Beacon schools was excluded from this table because the district cancelled Chancellor Beacon's contract in spring 2002.

<sup>21</sup> To estimate the number of openings for 2003-04, we calculated the number of open positions in each school on October 1, 2003, held by: 1) new teachers or 2) teachers who had not been at the school on October 1, 2002. Therefore, where a single teaching position was held by two or more people between October 1, 2002, and October 1, 2003, we would count that as one opening.

<sup>22</sup> Chester, Offenber, & Xu (2001).

<sup>23</sup> Johnson & Kardos (2004).

<sup>24</sup> Becker (1952).

<sup>25</sup> The following incentives for teaching in 25 “incentive schools” (to be named by a joint district/PFT committee) are included in the October 2004 contract: tuition reimbursement of no more than six credits per year at a rate of \$400 per credit up to a maximum of \$2,400 a year; three additional personal leave days a year for teachers who have an M.A. plus 30 credits and have not taken the tuition reimbursement option; professional development in managing disruptive pupils; no loss of building seniority for teachers transferring into such schools; and the chance to remain at the school, contingent on the principal’s approval, for Literacy Interns and “transition support tutors” when they become appointed teachers. The contract specifies that the district’s *goal* is to reduce class size in these schools below the district’s average class size in comparable school-level buildings, should the funding become available. [www.pft.org](http://www.pft.org). For an analysis of these incentives, see Sheila Simmons, “Teacher contract called ‘disappointing’ for lacking real incentives.” *Philadelphia Public School Notebook NEWSFLASH*. November 2004. [www.thenotebook.org](http://www.thenotebook.org)

<sup>26</sup> According to district figures, the number of new teachers applying for jobs jumped to 4,116 for fall 2004, up from 3,322 for fall 2003, and from 2,847 for fall 2002. The applicant tracking year is from September 1 and to August 31 of any given year.

<sup>27</sup> Philadelphia now fills its elementary-level vacancies with certified teachers or with Literacy Intern graduates who are close to achieving certification. Pennsylvania has an oversupply of elementary-level teachers. Overall, less than a third of new teachers who are certified by Pennsylvania are hired to teach in the state: Pennsylvania has long been a net exporter of teachers to other states. The number of teachers certified by the state grew significantly during 2003-04 but final numbers are not yet verified.

<sup>28</sup> District efforts to reach out to area colleges and universities included one-on-one meetings in addition to quarterly University Partners meetings. Since 2002, that forum, attended by about 30 to 40 representatives from higher education institutions, has emerged as a useful vehicle for the exchange of information between these institutions and the district.

<sup>29</sup> Beginning in 2003-04, student teachers were to receive \$500 for student teaching and an additional \$500 if they accepted employment in the district. In 2004-05, student teachers were paid \$600 by the Philadelphia Education Fund for participating in three days of training, and were scheduled to receive an additional \$500 if they took jobs with the system. Cooperating teachers in the schools are scheduled to receive \$500 for supervising a student teacher and an additional \$500 if that student teacher accepts a teaching job in Philadelphia. Payments for 2003-04 for both student teachers and cooperating teachers were still being processed in fall 2004. Student teachers who become appointed teachers in the district are also eligible for reimbursement of a portion of the fees required for the PRAXIS tests.

The number of student teachers jumped to almost 800 in 2004-05 from 400 in 2002-03. About 25 percent of the student teachers have accepted jobs in Philadelphia, a percentage the district hopes to increase with these incentives.

<sup>30</sup> Certified teachers with an Instructional I certificate receive up to \$1,000 a year in tuition reimbursement (after completing one year as a regularly appointed teacher) in order to pay for coursework needed for Level II certification.

<sup>31</sup> New teachers receive \$1,500 of the bonus after their fifth month on the job; the remaining \$3,000 is paid after their 37<sup>th</sup> month of employment with the district. This bonus was introduced in 1999 during the administration of Superintendent David W. Hornbeck (1994-2000).

<sup>32</sup> Emerick, Hirsch, & Berry (2004); Southeast Center for Teaching Quality (2004).

<sup>33</sup> TFA teachers were, for the most part, placed in the toughest schools, many in large middle schools where teacher attrition tends to be high.

<sup>34</sup> Neild et al. (2004).

<sup>35</sup> Useem & Farley (2004); Neild, Useem, Travers, & Lesnick (2003).

<sup>36</sup> Johnson & Birkeland (2003); Johnson & Liu (2004).

<sup>37</sup> Levin & Quinn (2003).

<sup>38</sup> An editorial in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (October 16, 2004) referred to the “hiring hodgepodge” caused by the new contractual rules.

<sup>39</sup> Johnson & Liu (2004).

<sup>40</sup> About half of the new teachers also had colleague mentor teachers, the traditional in-school mentoring program in which full-time experienced teachers are paid a stipend to provide extra support to novices. District survey data from new teachers show that very high percentages of new teachers (63 percent to 80 percent) praised various dimensions of assistance they received from these teachers. In addition, 81 percent of the new teachers responding to the mid-year RFA survey said that another teacher at their school had been informally “showing them the ropes.”

New-teacher coaches tended to meet with their new teachers much earlier in the school year than did colleague mentor teachers, who were often not appointed until weeks or months into the new year. Seventy percent of the new teacher respondents to the 2003-04 mid-year RFA survey reported that they had met their coaches within two weeks of beginning teaching. By contrast, only 39 percent of new teachers in fall 2002 had met with their colleague mentor teacher by the end of October.

<sup>41</sup> In 2003-04, the coaches reported to the Office of Professional Development at the district’s central office. In 2004-05, the coaches were based in regional offices of the district. (Useem & Costelloe, 2004).

<sup>42</sup> See p. 8 for a description of these data collection methods.

<sup>43</sup> The coaches themselves reported high levels of job satisfaction and feelings of efficacy in supporting new teachers. The coaches believed they had played an important role in boosting the retention rate of new teachers, and they cited instances when they had convinced new teachers to stay. (Useem & Costelloe, 2004).

<sup>44</sup> High schools implemented core curricula in four core subjects in grades 10 and 11 during 2004-05. A common science curriculum was added in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades in 2004-05 and a social studies curriculum was introduced in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade during that same year. For fall 2005, the district hopes to have science and social studies core curricula implemented in grades 1-12.

<sup>45</sup> Some of the teachers who were interviewed were teaching in schools run by external management groups (private companies and universities) that had chosen not to use the district's core curricula.

<sup>46</sup> Teachers who were not fully certified attended for four weeks.

<sup>47</sup> For 2004-05, the New Teacher Academy was run jointly by staff members from Teachers College and the district's Office of Professional Development. In addition to reducing the after-school sessions to 12 from 18, the curriculum was revised to include more information specific to policies and practices in Philadelphia.

<sup>48</sup> Teachers who did not participate in the New Teacher Academy in 2003-04 took part in an induction program during their second year designed by TeachScape, a professional development firm. In Philadelphia, the TeachScape program combined five face-to-face sessions with online interactive learning. TeachScape, among other methods, uses videos of effective teaching practices to spark discussion.

<sup>49</sup> Travers & Costelloe (2004).

<sup>50</sup> Ingersoll (2004).

<sup>51</sup> The School District of Philadelphia, in collaboration with area colleges and universities, and with a \$500,000 grant from the Wachovia Foundation and federal GEAR-UP money, has made a concerted effort to provide training for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade elementary-level certified teachers so that they can pass content examinations. It has also contracted with Princeton Review to provide PRAXIS prep courses.

<sup>52</sup> Walsh & Snyder (2004).

<sup>53</sup> Johnson (2004).

<sup>54</sup> Tabs (2004).

<sup>55</sup> According to TFA data, 60 percent of their participants remain in education in some way (as teacher, principal, policy analyst, etc.) and 40 percent leave the profession altogether.

<sup>56</sup> Murnane et al. (1991); Nelson (1985); Schlechy & Vance (1981).

<sup>57</sup> In 2003, TFA corps members nationally had an average GPA of 3.5 and an average SAT score of 1310 (Mathematica Policy Research, 2004). In Philadelphia, they have been quick to obtain intern certification because they pass the PRAXIS exams with relative ease. Anecdotal and research evidence indicate that principals value their energy, ability, and enthusiasm (Kane-Parsons, 2004).

<sup>58</sup> Skinner (2004).