

## Oregon Mentoring Program

*How does the Oregon Mentoring Program support a vision of educational equity and excellence for each and every child and learner in Oregon?*

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) data reports “*students of color make up more than one-third of the K-12 population but only 3.8% of Oregon’s teacher workforce is non-white*” (OEIB, 2014, p. 6). This growing population of communities of color, immigrants, migrants, and low-income rural students has resulted in a “*persistent achievement gap*” (OEIB, 2013, p. 1) between these student groups and more affluent white students. ODE is determined to correct this disparity by establishing support systems that meet the diverse needs of every Oregon child.

The Oregon Mentoring Program is one of the resources available to school districts to meet this important outcome. The 2007 Legislature established the Oregon Mentoring Program through the passage of HB 2574 and then further expanded it in the 2013 legislative session with HB 3233 Network for Quality Teaching and Learning. The purpose of the program is to **support** beginning educators in Oregon during their first two years of teaching and/or in their first two years as an administrator. It is designed to provide evidence-based mentoring programs for beginning teachers and administrators in order to increase student learning and growth, improve instructional practices, retain effective teachers and administrators, and accelerate educator leadership performance. Mentoring is especially helpful when working with special population groups because it accelerates getting effective resources and strategies into the hands of beginning educators to use with students, thus increasing learning opportunities.

The following table shows the self-reported ethnicity of the educators who responded to the Oregon Mentoring Program surveys in 2013 and 2014, not the full population of educators who were mentored. This table indicates that of the educators who responded to the survey a significant percentage were non-white in each category. It is important to note that in 2013, 20% of the beginning teacher respondents were non-white, and in 2014, 15% of the beginning teachers were non-white. These percentages exceed the 3.8% cited by OEIB and discussed above. While we cannot draw any conclusions from the demographic make-up of these educators who responded to these surveys, these percentages suggest that there are a significant percentage of non-white educators who are participating in the mentoring program. As the mentoring continues, these beginning educators can be followed to see if they are being supported appropriately, if they stay in

the profession, and if students in their classrooms improve compared with classrooms of beginning teachers who are not being mentored.

### ODE Mentoring: Self-reported Ethnicity for the Survey Respondents

| 2013  |           |                  |             |
|---|-----------|------------------|-------------|
|   | White     | Non-White        | No Response |
| <b>Beginning Teachers</b><br>(347 respondents)          | 73% (252) | <b>20% (69)</b>  | 7% (24)     |
| <b>Beginning Teacher Mentors</b><br>(50 respondents)    | 76% (38)  | <b>16% (8)</b>   | 8% (4)      |
| <b>Beginning Administrators</b><br>(37 respondents)     | 81% (30)  | <b>14% (5)</b>   | 5% (2)      |
| <b>Beginning Administrator Mentors</b> (22 respondents) | 86% (19)  | <b>9% (2)</b>    | 5% (1)      |
| 2014  |           |                  |             |
| <b>Beginning Teachers</b><br>(737 respondents)          | 80% (590) | <b>15% (111)</b> | 6% (44)     |
| <b>Beginning Teacher Mentors</b><br>(254 respondents)   | 88% (223) | <b>6% (15)</b>   | 6% (15)     |
| <b>Beginning Administrators</b><br>(77 respondents)     | 82% (63)  | <b>16% (12)</b>  | 3%(2)       |
| <b>Beginning Administrator Mentors</b> (38 respondents) | 90% (34)  | <b>8% (3)</b>    | 3%(1)       |

Beginning teachers were asked: *what did they find was most beneficial about spending time with their mentor?* The beginning teachers discussed what they learned from their mentors and how these skills were helpful in working with students of different population groups. The following are some representative examples of beginning teachers' comments:

*"I found it most beneficial to work with a highly effective, knowledgeable teacher who knew, and could direct me, in what a good ELL teacher does."* - Beginning Teacher, 2014

*"The most beneficial has been ensuring that my instruction is differentiated, equitable, and culturally relevant."* - Beginning Teacher, 2014

*"She helps me to find curriculum to better meet the needs of ALL my students."* -Beginning Teacher, 2014

*"Learning about new strategies on classroom management, differentiating assignments, and working with parents were all important things I learned from my mentor."* - Beginning Teacher, 2014

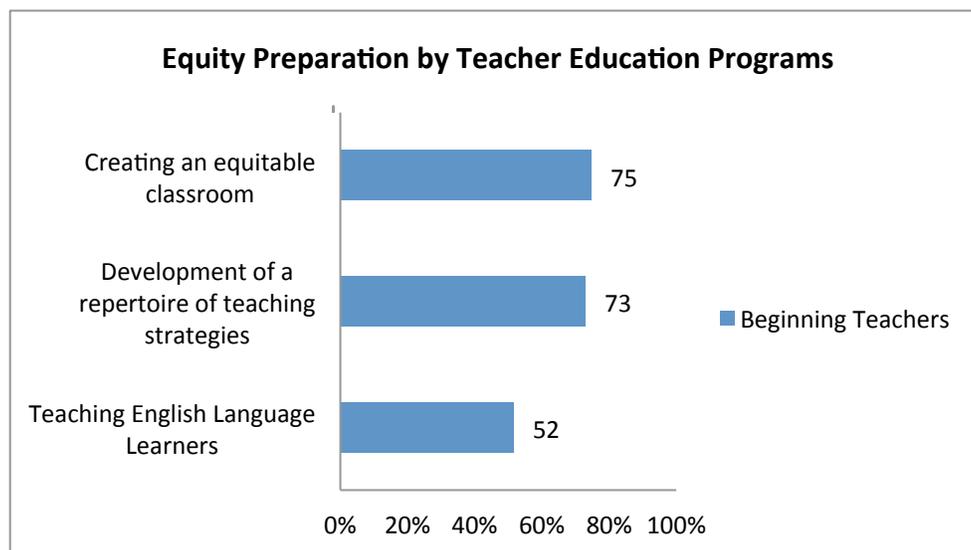
*“He has helped me focus in on ELL achievement.” - Beginning Teacher, 2014*

*“My most at risk students have grown as a result of differentiated instruction that I was able to provide because of the resources my mentor helped me gather.” - Beginning Teacher, 2014*

Oregon educators that are selected to be mentors of beginning teachers and administrators must complete training approved by the Oregon Department of Education. Beginning Teacher Mentors may choose to receive training from the New Teacher Center that addresses educational inequities. The comment below is an example of what many mentors stated about the various trainings:

*“The mentor training by the New Teacher Center is invaluable to my work as a mentor. Without their researched-based training, tools, conversational protocols, trainings on equity, supporting ELL learners, and working with diverse populations, I would not have had any success in my position. New Teacher Center provides more than just tools, it provides a comprehensive framework that sets all programs up for success.” – Beginning Teacher Mentor, 2014*

Beginning teachers participating in the Oregon Mentoring Program were also asked to indicate how well they thought their teacher education program prepared them for being a teacher. The following chart shows three of the areas that are related to equity in the classroom. The percentages reflect the responses *quite well* and *very well* combined. As this table shows, three-quarters of the beginning teachers thought that their teacher education program prepared them *quite well* or *very well* to create an equitable classroom. Slightly fewer thought they were prepared to develop a repertoire of teaching strategies, and over half thought they were prepared to teach English Learners.



Oregon has had mentoring in some school districts since the 1980s<sup>a</sup>; however there has never been a formal definition for mentoring or specific program standards adopted. During March and April 2014 a Beginning Educator Mentoring Program Standards Stakeholder Workgroup met to review definitions of mentoring and mentoring program standards from other states. In June 2014, the Oregon State Board of Education received a proposed mentoring definition and a set of Oregon Mentoring Program Standards developed by the stakeholder group and in August both of these documents were approved.

Equity and culturally responsive language and practices are incorporated throughout the standards as well as one standard is focused on equity. The Oregon State Board of Education is committed in supporting the goals of the OEIB Equity Lens by guaranteeing that the Oregon Mentoring Program understands the responsibility of providing support to beginning teachers and administrators to be prepared to educate all students.

<sup>a</sup>Oregon has been committed to the idea of mentoring new teachers since 1986 when representatives from Southern Oregon State College, the Northwest Regional Laboratory and the Josephine County School District established a consortium for the purposes of mentoring beginning rural teachers (Roper, 1988). Mentoring is one of several components essential to a professional development plan for beginning teachers and administrators (Education Northwest, 2014 and Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009).

## SELECTED REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, *Professional Learning in the Learning Profession: A Status Report on Teacher Development in the United States and Abroad*, 2009.

Education Northwest, *What the Research Says About: Class Size, Professional Development and Recruitment, Induction, and Retention of Highly Qualified Teachers*, 2014.

Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB), *The 2014 Oregon Minority Teacher Act Status Report*, July 2014

Oregon Education Investment Board, *Equity Lens*, April 2013.

Roper, S.S., *Consortium Support for Teachers in Rural Oregon*, 1988

### CEPE Brief: ODE Mentoring Program

ODE is required by law to allocate a portion of funding to evaluate the effectiveness of the mentoring program.

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