

Oregon Department of Education
Beginning Teacher and Administrator Mentoring Program Brief
Oregon Mentoring Impact Survey
2013-2014

The Beginning Teacher and Administrator Mentoring Program was established in Oregon through the passage of the 2007 Legislature's HB 2574 and then was expanded in the 2013 legislative session with HB 3233 The Network for Quality Teaching and Learning. The Oregon Mentoring Grant is designed to support activities related to an evidence-based mentoring programs for beginning teachers and administrators since a priority of Oregon's educational system is to recruit and retain teachers and administrators of the highest quality.

The Center for Educator Preparation and Effectiveness (CEPE) at the Teaching Research Institute at Western Oregon University is working with the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to assess what is going well and what might need to be changed. As part of the evaluation process the CEPE Evaluation Team works with ODE Mentoring Projects to survey Beginning Teachers, Beginning Administrators, their mentors and administrators to gather information for a longitudinal analysis of the program.

In order to receive funds for mentoring programs, school districts (individually or as part of a consortium) apply to ODE through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. In 2013 the ODE Mentoring Program funds were available for districts in August with program start-up in September. For the 2013-2015 biennium, grant allocations were reduced to \$4,000/per beginning teacher and \$3,800/per beginning administrator amount. This Brief will focus on the impact of this funding reduction on the ODE Mentoring projects. Historically, grant allocations were based on a \$5,000/per beginning educator amount.

Twenty-one mentoring proposals representing over 100 districts were submitted to ODE; however due to the high number of grant applications only 16 proposals were awarded. When projects received notification of their grant award in September, schools were already in session and the awards were less than the projects requested. Typically mentoring projects hire mentors during the late spring or early summer and conduct mentoring professional development before schools begin in the fall. One Mentoring Project Director stated:

"While we understand the reduction was motivated by the intention of funding more programs state-wide, it was difficult news."

When ODE announced the funding awards in September 2013 - 16 projects (single district and consortium districts) were funded, representing 76 school districts, 1,128 beginning teachers and 135 beginning administrators. However, as the reduction details reached the individual districts changes occurred. As of January 2014, there are 15 projects that accepted the funds representing 62 school districts with 983 beginning teachers and 97 administrators being mentored.

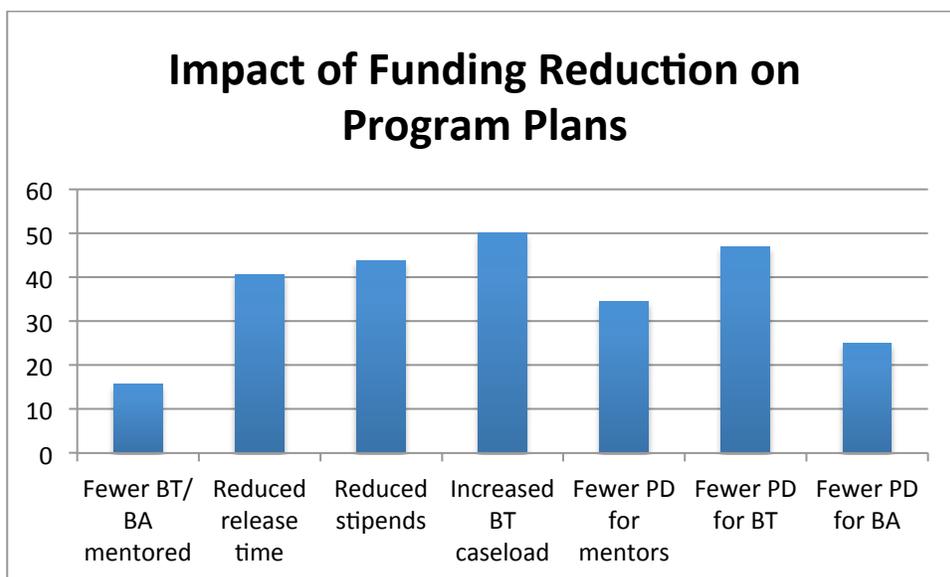
One of the accountability requirements for the ODE Mentoring projects is to meet four times during the year to share successes and challenges of their project plans as well as professional development ideas with all the participating projects. In September 2013, an initial meeting of the 2013-2015, project coordinators included a discussion about the reduction of the funds and maintaining a quality

program. In response to this discussion, the *ODE Mentoring Program Impact* survey was developed.

The *ODE Mentoring Program Impact* survey was sent to each of the 15 projects asking the project coordinators to respond as well as one member from each of the districts included in their project or consortium. This resulted in a survey population of 70 individuals. A 15-item survey was distributed, and 32 people responded to the survey representing 13 of 15 of the projects and 62 of the 76 schools districts. The response rate for this survey was 47%.

69% of the projects had both Beginning Teachers and Beginning Administrators being mentored and 31% had only a Beginning Teacher mentoring program. None of the projects had only a Beginning Administrator mentoring program.

The primary purpose of the survey was to *determine the impact the funding reduction had on ODE Mentoring Projects*. The results showed that 14 districts withdrew their involvement and acceptance of mentoring funds - a single district project and thirteen districts within consortium projects. As is shown in the figure below, multiple components of the project were impacted by the funding reduction. Survey respondents were able to check multiple areas of impact. This figure shows that 50% of respondents indicated mentor caseloads were impacted. While only slightly fewer indicated stipends and professional development opportunities were reduced.



Increasing the caseloads for mentors affects the quality of time the mentees receive from the mentors. Mentors and mentees are required to spend 90 hours of contact time, which can add up quickly when the number of mentees increases from 15 to 22. One respondent said:

“The biggest struggle is our mentor is mentoring 20 to 22 new teachers. It is difficult to coach and mentor and provide 90 hours of contact time.”

In some cases, district leaders reported that as a result of the funding reduction, they could not provide an effective program that met the necessary components of a mentoring program.

“The reduced funding and late awards are major barriers to providing a quality program.”

“I could not find a way to meet the requirements for mentor training and mentor/teacher contact time with the more limited funding.”

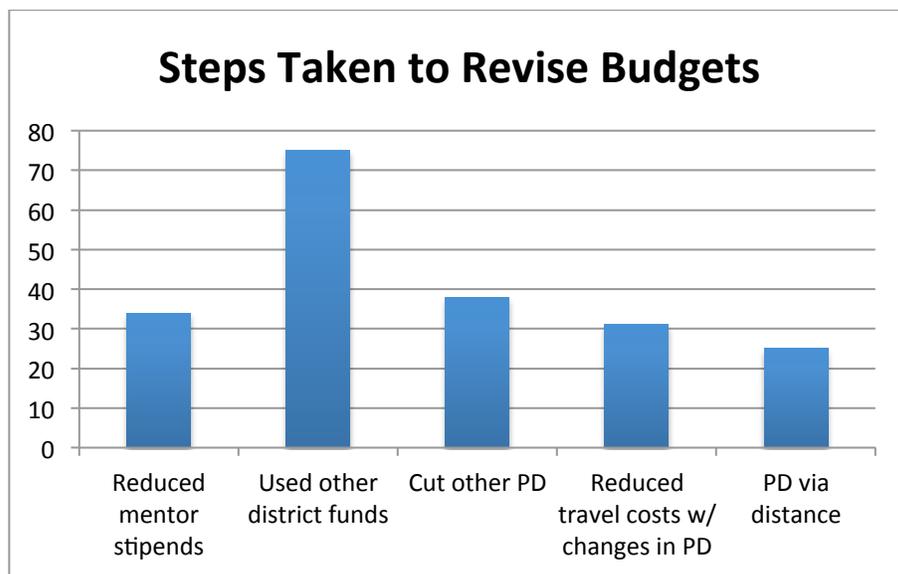
Survey respondents also provided further details about the impact of the funding reduction in their comments:

“Fewer opportunities for mentors to work together and receive PD for both the teacher and principal mentors.”

“Decreased beginning teacher initial induction by 3 days. Decreased beginning teacher seminars by 2 seminars. Decreased the amount of time beginning teachers could be released to observe master teachers. Eliminated NTC CLASS training for beginning admin mentors.”

“Less funds to hire roving subs so that all mentee teachers could go out and see master teachers or have group sessions with mentor and other mentees.”

Projects were asked, *which of the following steps did you take in revising your budget?* Again, respondents were able to check multiple answers to this question. As shown in the figure below, 75% indicated they used other district funds. In their comments, 50% said they were able to use district general funds to supplement the mentoring program. However, there were concerns about the program quality and effects the adjustments had on other district programs. Several projects discussed using Title IIA funds.



The following comments by the respondents further illustrate the impact:

“I have a wait list of new teachers who I will not be able to serve and most of my mentors are working beyond the 15:1 proposed ratio. We are all over the city and even 15:1 is very tough to manage effectively.”

“We were not able to fund a full time release mentor with the reduced funds. We firmly believe this work needs a full time release. Luckily we had another grant that is allowing us to combine funds to provide full time support.”

“We are concerned that we will not be able to provide the same level of support because our mentors will have so many teacher and administrators to mentor. The reduced funding raised the ratios substantially.”

“Devastating for the Consortium of 13 districts to take a 20% cut in funding – which impacts both quality and diverse training opportunities for our mentees and mentors.”

The goal of the Oregon Mentoring Program is to provide high quality individualized professional growth for every beginning teacher and administrator with less than two years of experience. By supporting beginning teachers and administrators the intent is to encourage and build the capacity of Oregon’s educational system. A structured and well-designed mentoring program supports opportunities for beginning teachers to observe, prepare, and implement quality classroom instruction and for beginning administrators to learn effective leadership strategies leading to more confident educators.

One district comment summed up the reaction to the funding reduction:

“The ODE Mentoring Program is an extremely effective program and I would like to see it properly funded without forcing districts to redirect other funding. As the saying goes we must ‘rob Peter to pay Paul’. If the mentor grant is worth doing, and the research indicates that it is, then please fund it adequately so this work can become the norm for teacher and principal induction into the profession rather than the exception for a privileged few.”

CEPE Brief

ODE Mentoring Program

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The Center on Educator Preparation & Effectiveness (CEPE) coordinates and conducts research and evaluation; disseminates resources in the areas of effective teaching; and assists in the development of project proposals. Focus areas include: educator mentoring; environmental education; proficiency-based education; science, technology, engineering and math (STEM); and educator professional development.