

Oregon Mentoring Program (OMP)

This brief highlights the relationship between mentors' participation in continuous professional learning and how it is transferred to mentees through job-embedded and inquiry-based support. The anticipated outcome of this intentional process is increased retention rates of beginning educators.


The Oregon Mentoring Program focuses on supporting beginning teachers and beginning administrators – educators who are in their first two years in their educational position. Effective mentoring is foundational to a quality program and requires that mentors receive quality professional development to increase their strategies, skills and resources to support beginning educators. Professional learning for mentors and mentees is described in **Standard #5 of the Oregon Mentoring Program Standards**.

Mentoring Program Standard #5 Professional Learning

Quality mentor programs expand the knowledge and refine the practice of mentors and mentees through a collaborative, culturally responsive process, supported by research.

(Access the full OAR on the Oregon Secretary of State web page at http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/pages/rules/oars_500/oar_581/581_018.html.)

In order to assess the results of providing a skilled instructional mentor to these beginning educators, the following three data outcomes related to the Oregon Mentoring Program were examined:

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1. Mentors that receive highly effective **professional learning opportunities** based on their job skills, identified needs and the Learning Forward Professional Learning Standards (<https://learningforward.org/standards>) felt more effective in their ability to mentor.
 2. Mentees felt **time with their skilled mentors** in job-embedded support was far more useful than any other form of professional learning they had received.
 3. Beginning educators that receive mentoring from a highly trained mentor who focuses on direct, data driven support to **beginning educators are retained at higher rates** than beginning educators that are not working with a skilled instructional mentor.

This brief will provide information about each of these **outcomes**.

Instructional Mentoring utilizes reflection and inquiry

Instructional Mentors:

- Assess effective teaching and leadership practices and guide beginning educator development.
- Gather data, help analyze and interpret data.
- Prioritize educator needs based on best practices and student needs.
- Collaborate, plan, and guide beginning educators by identifying best practices that focus on increases in student learning.
- Specify next steps based on data, immediate and long-term goals.

Beginning Educator outcomes:

- Demonstrate effective instructional and leadership practices.
- Remain in education at a higher rate than their non-mentored peers.
- Become empowered as educational leaders.

Student Goal

All learners receive equitable learning opportunities and increased academic growth.

(For additional information visit us at trivou.org/centers/cepe/mentor)

Professional Learning for Instructional Mentors

The Oregon Mentoring Projects are required to have their Beginning Educator Mentors participate in professional learning in order to increase their instructional mentoring skills. Oregon statute ORS 329.788 (2) explains, "training curriculum for mentors shall be based on research and knowledge of the needs" of beginning educators and must be approved by the Oregon Department of Education. A review of data across two school years revealed that the majority (2014-15, 87% and 2015-16, 100%) of beginning teacher mentors in the funded Oregon mentoring program utilized the Professional Learning Series (PLS) for their professional learning developed by the New Teacher Center (<https://newteachercenter.org/resources/>).

The Mentoring for Effective Instruction (PLS, 1-4) workshops are regularly offered in various locations around Oregon, based on need, and are offered free to all school districts. During the 2015-2016 school year approximately 100 participants from across the state attended each of the four different workshop sessions.

Evaluations of Professional Learning Series (PLS)

Evaluations are completed at the end of each of the PLS workshops. Since these sessions are open to all school districts the audience is a mix of full-time and part-time mentors, content and instructional specialists, induction coordinators, school administrators, and other district staff. PLS attendees were asked, as a result of this professional learning session, I will be able to: employ the roles, language, and stances of effective instructional mentoring. Respondents were given 6 choices from Not at all Confident to Completely Confident.

- 77% (79 of the 102) of the participants agreed they were **Confident or Very Confident** at the end of the professional learning.
- 93% (90 of the 97) of the participants **Agreed or Strongly Agreed** the content of this professional learning session gave me valuable tools and strategies.

"With my school administrators we have been able to focus on student data. This focus has allowed the administrator to work with staff to develop and implement short and long range plans to support learners at all academic levels."

(Beginning Administrator Mentor, 2016)

Beginning Administrator Mentors

Beginning Administrator Mentors also attend professional learning to increase their effectiveness as mentors. In reviewing data from five sessions across three years, 49 Beginning Administrator Mentors were asked to respond to this statement, *How would you most accurately express your views related to the professional learning you received?* Respondents were given three choices from *Agreed a Little* to *Strongly Agreed*.

- 100% (all 49) BAMs agreed or strongly agreed that the professional learning session will **help increase their effectiveness**.
- 78% (38 of the 49) BAMs agreed or strongly agreed the **professional learning session gave them valuable tools and strategies**.
- 100% (all 49) BAMs agreed or strongly agreed that the **professional learning session deepened their thinking** about mentoring/induction.

An example of feedback from participants when asked, what skill(s) and/or concept(s) did you learn at this PD event that you are ready to apply?

Participants stated:

"Using data to help inform instruction with new mentees."

"Using the Analyzing Student work protocol – This is a great tool."

Examples of feedback from both Beginning Teacher Mentors and Beginning Administrator Mentors are noted here, when asked, what skill(s) and/or concept(s) did you learn at this PD event that you are ready to apply?

"Helping teachers address issues of equity in the classroom - collecting data, identifying inequities, supporting in making changes. Helping teachers build positive relationships w/students and families."
(Beginning Teacher Mentor, 2016)

"I have been able to help new leaders think through problems of practice in their daily work, guide them to considering their options and using a process for arriving at a plan for proceeding."
(Beginning Administrator Mentor, 2016)

"I believe that my impact as a mentor has been positive on student growth. My new teacher has a greater understanding and grasp on classroom management skills. She is able to adjust lesson plans as needed to accommodate for classroom issues or problems. Students clearly understand the expectations and families receive clear feedback and support."

(Beginning Teacher Mentor, 2016)

Perceptions of the Beginning Teacher and Administrator Mentors

At the end of each year, beginning teacher and beginning administrator mentors complete annual surveys regarding their perceptions of the Oregon Mentoring Program. The following results are from the 2015-2016 survey of the mentors (beginning teacher mentors, N=144 and beginning administrator mentors, N=53).

- 86% of beginning teacher mentors (BTM) **agreed that the ongoing training** through project developed mentor professional development (forums) has helped them be effective in their job as a mentor.
- 84% of beginning administrator mentors indicated the New Teacher Center Coaching Leaders to Attain Student Success (CLASS) **training as important/most important in shaping their coaching strategies.**
- 91% (BTM) and 80% (BAM) **agreed that networking with other mentors** has been instrumental in helping them be a more effective mentor.
- 94% beginning teacher mentors (BTM) **agreed** that overall the **mentoring program** has assisted them in **developing their mentoring skills.**
- 100% beginning administrator mentors (BAM) **agreed or strongly agreed** they use the **skills they have learned** in the mentoring program in their **daily professional practice.**

Time Spent with Beginning Educators

Beginning Teacher and Beginning Administrator Mentors are required to spend a total of 75-90 hours with their mentees during the year. Prior to the 2015 Legislative session mentors were required to spend a minimum of 90 hours each year with their mentees. To capture how the time is spent Oregon Mentor Project Directors collect data logs from both the beginning teacher and beginning administrator mentors. The logs have different focus areas related to instructional practices and leadership: instructional planning, resource discussion, observation, professional development, one to one time spent with mentees, etc.

Yearly Averages



87% 87%



Beginning Teachers (BT)

Beginning Administrators (BA)

Impact of Job-Embedded Professional Learning

Mentoring from an experienced teacher/administrator provides daily job-embedded on-demand professional learning to beginning teachers and beginning administrators. At the end of each year, the beginning teachers and beginning administrators complete year-end surveys. Beginning teachers (BT) and beginning administrators (BA) are defined as educators in their first two years. The following results are from the 2015-2016 surveys of beginning teachers (N=1066) and beginning administrators (N=53).

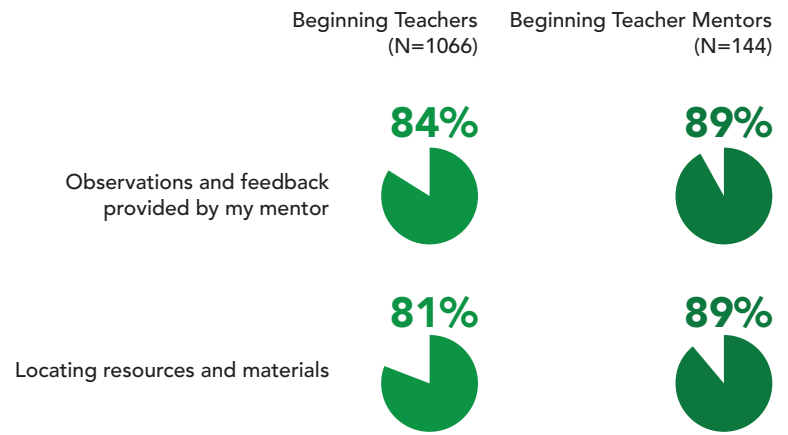
- 87% of beginning teachers indicated that time with their mentor was effective or very effective in **working through challenging situations.**
- 92% of the beginning administrators indicated that time with their mentor was effective or very effective in **conducting observations and providing effective feedback to staff.**

87% of beginning teachers and beginning administrators indicated that **time with their mentor was rated as far more useful** than any other form of professional learning provided by the program.

Job-embedded professional learning is not always the norm in busy schools. 86% (N=917) of the beginning teachers who completed the 2015-2016 surveys stated that the job-embedded professional learning from their mentors "helped them increase effectiveness in their teaching". Out of the 16,835 teachers that participated in the TELL survey across Oregon, 71% agreed / strongly agreed ongoing school-level professional development opportunities for teachers to work with colleagues helped them to refine teaching practices.

Effectiveness of Time Spent Together

Beginning teacher and beginning administrator mentors and their mentees answer annual survey questions to learn what is most effective about the mentoring they receive and provide. Both the beginning teachers and their mentors agreed the **teaching skills they receive/ provide were critical because the instructional skills are foundational to how beginning teachers gain job-embedded knowledge and experience.** The following graphs are based on 2015-2016 mentoring survey results. The graphs explain the areas that were rated most effective by beginning teachers, beginning administrators, and their mentors. Please note these beginning educators are in their first two years as a licensed teacher or administrator in Oregon.



*Percentage includes ratings that time spent was *effective* or *very effective*

Beginning Administrators (N=53)

Beginning Administrator Mentors (N=25)

82%



88%



Locating resources and materials

87%



96%



Working through challenging situations

*Percentage includes ratings that time spent was *effective* or *very effective*

When beginning administrators and their mentors were asked the same question about how effective their time was spent in enhancing their administrative skills they had similar responses.

Retaining Beginning Teachers

One of the goals of the ODE Mentoring program is to increase the retention of beginning teachers and administrators. The graph on the next page shows one-year retention rates for six cohorts of beginning teachers who were mentored in the ODE Mentoring program compared to all beginning teachers in Oregon. As is evident from the graph beginning teachers who participated in the ODE Mentoring program were retained at a higher rate than beginning teachers overall. It is also important to note that the beginning teacher statistic for all beginning teachers in Oregon is inflated since teachers who were mentored are also included in that group.

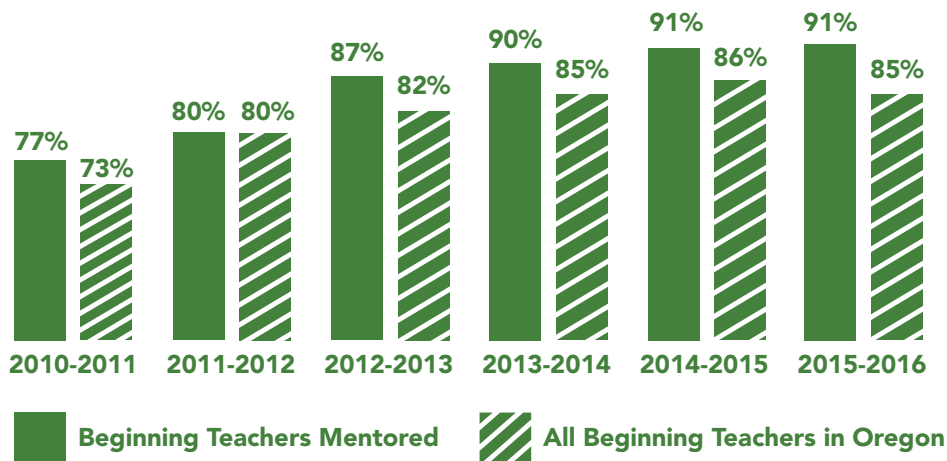
"The mentoring program is awesome and it has made (and will make) me a better teacher. I would not have survived this year without my mentors- and my students have been taught better because of their influence."

(Beginning Teacher, 2016)

"My mentor kept me in the profession. I'm a first year teacher and my student teaching experience was a nightmare in every possible definition of the word. Plus, I got placed doing six sections of a subject about which I knew nothing (never even took a class). Without my mentor's guidance and input in course design, I very much would have left the teaching profession."

(Beginning Teacher, 2016)

Percentage of Beginning Teachers Still Teaching One Year Later



"I had the rollercoaster first year with an extremely challenging (and large) group of students. By October/November I wasn't sure that teaching was right for me - despite wanting to have done it my whole life. It was my mentor who walked me through each step and helped me figure out a good game plan, that didn't include moving to a new career."

(Beginning Teacher, 2016)

Providing principals with job-embedded, ongoing, and tailored professional learning and coaching can increase competence and self-efficacy and also reduce the likelihood that the principal will leave.

(Tekleselassie & Villareal, 2011)

Retaining Effective Administrators

Effective administrators are essential to strong instructional leadership that results in increased growth for students and teachers (Krasnoff, 2015). Cultivating strong principals creates environments of trust and caring where students are fully engaged and focused toward learning outcomes. By mentoring and coaching principals during their first two years as an administrator school districts increase opportunities for improved instruction and learning, as well as supporting teachers and strengthening family/community connections.

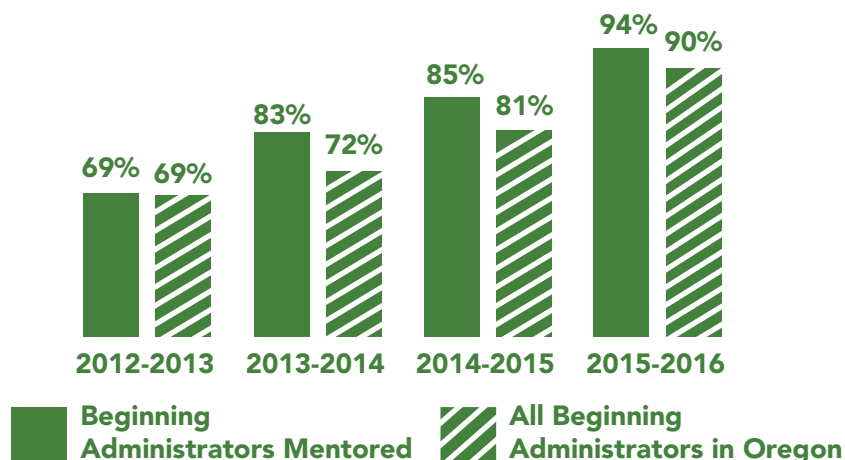
"The personal feedback and support. I never felt like I was alone as an administrator. My mentor had experience in all areas that I needed support."

(Beginning Administrator, 2016)

"Sharing ideas, listening to past experience, running new ideas by mentor for feedback, getting to know another professional on a personal and professional level."

(Beginning Administrator, 2016)

Percentage of Beginning Administrators One Year Later



Examples of Success from the Field

ODE and The Research Institute (TRI) at WOU spoke with Project Directors and lead mentors from all seven of the currently funded Beginning Educator Mentoring Projects to discuss the reasons they felt their mentor professional learning and mentee job-embedded support was so effective improving retention rates. All of these districts/consortiums have been implementing a research-based mentoring program for beginning teachers and/or administrators for many years: Lincoln County School District New Educators Induction Project, North Coast Mentoring Consortium, Mid-Willamette Valley Consortium, St. BeaVer Mentoring Collaborative, Southern Oregon Mentor Consortium, Mentoring for Excellence (PPS), and Hillsboro/Forest Grove Mentor Project. Each project develops their own mentoring program based on the Oregon Mentoring Program Standards, district/consortium vision, goals and objectives and local needs. Though the demographics, locations and educator needs are different in each project reoccurring themes surfaced highlighting the most important components of effective professional learning for both mentors and mentees tied to retention.

Themes

1

Carefully selected and highly trained mentors

2

Building strong relationship connections

3

Data driven comprehensive system of support

Carefully Selected And Highly Trained Mentors

1

"Effective mentoring is foundational to a quality program. An essential element of a mentoring program is a professional mentor who understands and utilizes the skills, strategies and tools necessary for the continuous development of teachers and administrators." (OAR 581-018-0133)

Comprehensive Mentor Selection Process

To ensure the selection of the most highly qualified mentors, Lincoln County School District implemented a comprehensive mentor recruitment, application and interview system. They developed a clear mentor job description and a detailed application. The comprehensive interview process requires applicants to provide a video demonstration of their teaching, and review video of a beginning educator teaching/leading and then role play a mentor conversation.

ODE/New Teacher Center (NTC) Professional Learning Workshops

All of the project directors interviewed use the ODE/New Teacher Center (NTC) professional learning workshops offered throughout the state to provide mentors with the skills, strategies and tools to become highly effective mentors.

Mentor Forums

All of the projects provide Mentor Forums which are on-going professional learning opportunities which are based on needs assessments and/or evaluation data. The Southern Oregon Mentor Consortium implemented a mentor portfolio system, which included artifacts of practice, formative feedback and an exit interview at the end of the year. This portfolio system ensured all mentors were implementing effective mentoring practices. Mentoring for Excellence (PPS) implemented a shadow partner project for mentors. Experienced mentors provide mentoring for beginning mentors by supporting the development of strategies to help a focal teacher, identification of a central question, videotaping each other in mentor-mentee meetings, and debriefing the video with their shadow partners.

Mentor Apprentice Program

Lincoln County School District developed a mentor apprentice program to ensure that mentoring had a systemic approach of continued support. Mentor apprentices were selected and went through all of the ODE/NTC workshops, mentored one volunteer teacher and shadowed a full time mentor in the district. As a result, these mentor apprentices were ready to begin mentoring at the beginning of the next year if a mentor position became available. The mentor apprentice was required to complete the application and interview process and be selected, but they were then ready right away to begin mentoring with all of the skills, strategies and tools necessary to be a highly effective mentor.



Building strong relationship connections

2

All seven project directors discussed how impactful the professional relationship between the beginning educator and a skilled mentor was to the effectiveness of their mentoring program. The mentor develops a supportive, confidential and trusting partnership with the beginning educator to transform practice through a process of reflection and inquiry. Mentors provide 75-90 hours of mentoring support to each mentee. During this time, strong relationship connections develop.

“Mentoring Multiplier Effect”

Several project directors and lead mentors shared stories of mentees reaching out to their mentor for instructional and emotional support several years after they had left the mentoring program, and in some cases, the district. This has been referred to as the “Mentoring Multiplier Effect.” Even though a mentor may be currently supporting 16-18+ mentees, they continue to provide instructional support to multitudes of educators throughout their educational career.

Culture of Acceptance

Projects also shared the professional relationship that is modeled between the mentor and mentee helps to create a culture of acceptance with other staff members. In districts where mentoring programs are in place, mentors and other staff members treat beginning educators as colleagues not as novices. These interactions support a collegial relationship that nurtures and develops effective teachers.

District Connections Made

In the Hillsboro/Forest Grove Mentor Project, a purposeful effort is made during Seminars to connect beginning educators to resources and staff throughout the district. This ensures that educators know how to access the district resources and support throughout their career.

3

Data-driven comprehensive system of support

Each district/consortium has strategies, systems and processes in place to provide just-in-time, individualized support for all beginning educators to increase students’ learning and growth and improve educator retention rates.

Building/Site Based Mentors

In the Mid-Willamette Valley Consortium, mentors in the Salem-Keizer school district are assigned mentees from only one or two buildings. This allows the mentor to become part of the school community, form relationships with staff, students and parents and integrate support with the beginning teacher, instructional coach and resource staff.

Attend Professional Learning Together

The majority of the projects require that their mentors attend professional learning with their mentees. This supports seamless implementation of district initiatives, curriculum and strategies. For example in St. BeaVer Mentoring Collaborative, Beaverton mentors participate in AVID training with their mentees and then focus observations and data collection on implementation of the AVID strategies. Mentoring for Excellence (PPS) mentors attended equity and Courageous Conversation professional learning together to support implementation fidelity in mentee classrooms.

Mentor Models Lessons

In the Mid-Willamette Valley Consortium, Salem-Keizer’s mentors provide support to beginning teachers by using a team approach. While one mentor models a co-planned lesson, another mentor acts as a “whisper coach” explaining instructional practices to the beginning teacher. The whisper coach identifies explicit teaching strategies, processes and actions that the mentor is modeling. Both the beginning teacher and coach are recording data based on predetermined criteria. The team of three then debriefs the lesson at the end.



Mentor Data Tools

All mentor projects use a variety of mentor tools to gather observation data, documentation of mentoring conversations and information on various components of practice. Tools ensure a solid structure for focusing on continuous instructional growth. The Hillsboro/Forest Grove Mentor Project developed a calendar of tools which provides mentors information on when each tool fits best within the cycle of the school year and the needs of the beginning educators. St. BeavVer Mentoring Collaborative and Southern Oregon Mentor Consortium provide professional learning on each tool so mentors understand how to use the tool and the information it is designed to gather.

Consistent, Timely Feedback

To be effective, feedback to beginning educators must be grounded in evidence about their practice. All project directors talked about the importance of focused, immediate feedback and weekly meetings with beginning educators. Mentoring for Excellence (PPS) implemented postcards that they shared with the site administrator to indicate how many times they were in the buildings supporting their beginning teachers. Another district provide postcards to their beginning educators to identify the next steps determined during their last mentoring meeting.

Observing Effective Educators

One effective strategy for moving beginning educator practice forward is to observe effective educators within their educational setting. Hillsboro/Forest Grove Mentor Project utilizes a pre- and post-observation form to focus the observation. The process includes time for the beginning educator to reflect, debrief with their mentor and plan implementation support.

Action Research

Mentoring for Excellence (PPS) implemented an action research project that provided content, process and reflection time for each mentee. The action research project is a rigorous component of continuous learning and beginning teacher support. Teachers experience real life classroom experience with action research and the impact it can have on student learning. PPS partners with Portland State University to provide mentees the option of receiving five PSU credits for the project.

The program-specific information and data provided in this Research Brief illustrates the positive impact instructional mentoring has and is having on retaining effective educators in Oregon. When both beginning teachers and administrators receive job-embedded professional learning by highly trained mentors students have a greater opportunity to succeed. Through the Oregon Mentoring Program Standard #5 Professional Learning, "quality mentor programs expand the knowledge and refine the practice of mentors and mentees through a collaborative, culturally responsive process, supported by research" and program data.

References

- Krasnoff, B. (2015). Leadership qualities of effective principals. Education Northwest Research Brief. Retrieved from <http://nwcc.educationnorthwest.org/krasnoff/files/2015/research-brief-leadership-qualities-effective-principal.pdf>
- Tekleleslassie, A. A., & Villareal III, P. (2011). Career mobility and departure intentions among school principals in the United States: Incentives and disincentives. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 10(3), 251-293. Retrieved from <http://education.ufl.edu/villarreal/files/2011/10/Leadership-and-Policy-Villarreal.pdf>



ODE Mentoring Informational Briefs

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