

EVALUATION BRIEF

DCPS CADRE MENTORING PROGRAM 2007-2008

DCPS Cadre Mentoring Program sought to bring an effective support system to beginning teachers and thereby increase the retention rates of novice teachers.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The *DCPS Cadre Mentoring Program* was designed to develop school-based mentor teachers who would further train, support, and retain beginning teachers. The program aimed at creating a coherent, sustained, and organized set of strategies by which trained mentors can guide the overall instructional improvement and teacher quality in selected schools. The program incorporates research-based practices combined with dialogue, interaction and collaboration among program participants—cadre members, mentors, and novice teachers.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

The *DCPS Cadre Mentoring Program* was targeted at ten district schools (5 elementary, 3 middle, and 2 high). Mentor teachers from each school voluntarily participated in mentoring program activities of training sessions from January to May of 2008. Mentors and novice teachers were placed in pairs by school, grade level, subject area, and areas of interest. Mentor teachers were trained during sessions conducted by the district cadre. The mentoring program was designed to integrate cadre training sessions with mentor training sessions so that mentor teachers provide strong support services for beginning teachers.

Program Participants	# of Participants	Definition
Cadre	16	The cadre was formed of highly effective teachers released from classroom responsibilities. Required to have completed a minimum of 5 years of successful teaching experience and to complete a district screening process.
Mentor Teachers	117	The mentor teachers were experienced teachers who had been in the classroom for a minimum of 4 successful years.
Novice Teachers	113	The novice teachers were beginning teachers who had less than 2 years of teaching experience.

WHAT WAS EVALUATED

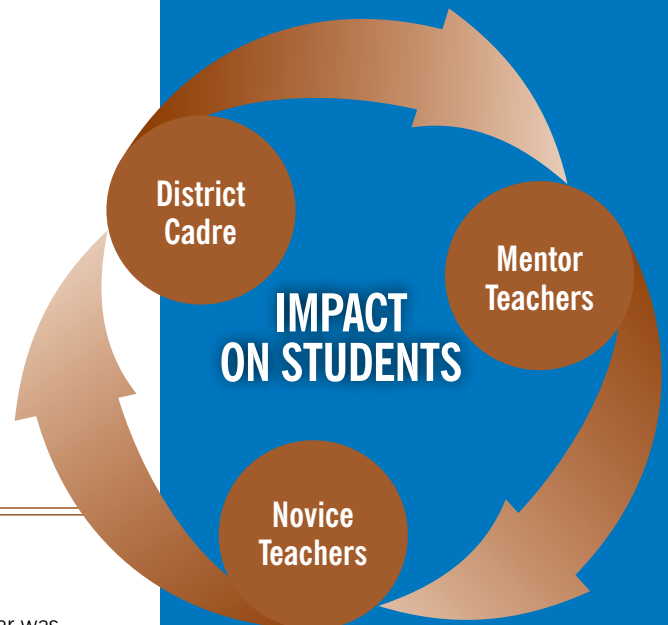
The evaluation of the DCPS cadre mentoring program for the 2007-08 school year was based on three primary data sources:

1. Electronic surveys related to program participants' experiences with the *DCPS Cadre Mentoring Program* were sent to targeted school principals, mentor teachers, and novice teachers to obtain information about the program.
2. Focus group interviews with mentor teachers and the cadre were conducted to gather information about the program and to get their current "read" on things.
3. Mentor teachers were asked to complete the entrance/exit slips from mentor training sessions to gain insight about what they found to be effective in trainings, challenges they faced in helping novice teachers, and experiences they found most memorable in the program.

Program Highlights

10 Participating Schools
256 Participants—Cadre, Mentor Teachers, Novice Teachers

90% of principals stated that they have seen improvement in the effectiveness of novice teachers.



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EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAM

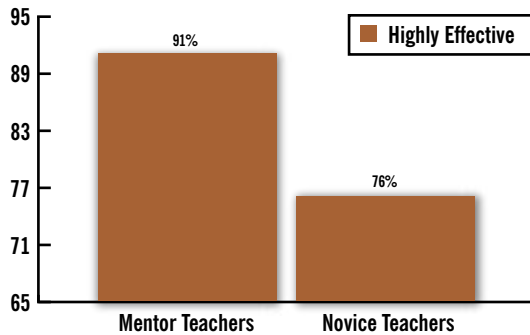
Novice teachers' satisfaction with the cadre mentoring program

- ✦ 89% of novice teachers felt that their mentors met their needs
- ✦ 84% of novice teachers were satisfied with this year's mentoring program

Effectiveness of the cadre mentoring program

- ✦ 91% of mentor teachers rated the program as "highly effective"
- ✦ 76% of novice teachers rated their mentor teachers as "highly effective"
- ✦ 90% of principals stated that they have seen improvement in the effectiveness of novice teachers.

Effectiveness of the DCPS Cadre Mentoring Program



Novice teachers' areas of need were:

Evaluating students' learning (43%)
Classroom management (39%)
Instructional strategies/alternatives (32%)
Planning instruction (24%)
Effective communication skills with staff (11%),
Using instructional time efficiently (9%), and
16% indicated other areas included differentiating instruction, classroom assessment, etc.

Areas of assistance novice teachers received from mentor teachers were:

Instructional strategies/alternatives (74%)
Planning instruction (68%)
Classroom management (59%)
Dealing with individual differences among students (50%)
Evaluating student learning (49%)
Motivating students (46%)
Using instructional time efficiently (35%)
Communicating with parents (12%)

CHALLENGES

The biggest challenge faced by mentor and novice teachers was "time." Time constraints in terms of mentoring activities as well as opportunities to schedule novice teacher observation were concerns listed most frequently. Other concerns outlined by mentor teachers and cadre were:

- ✦ lack of administrative support
- ✦ lack of communication between the program constituencies
- ✦ starting the cadre mentoring program late in the school year, and
- ✦ lack of better matching methods among mentors and novice teachers.

CONCLUSION

Findings of this program evaluation indicate a high level of satisfaction and appreciation for the DCPS Cadre Mentoring Program. Data shows that the novice teachers' retention rates in all targeted schools was significantly higher than that of the district's beginning teachers during the current school year. Clearly, feedback from surveys, focus group interviews, and entrance/exit slips data indicate that the DCPS Cadre Mentoring Program was effective and should be continued with further refinement.

Retention Rates of Novice Teachers

