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**School Principals’
Perspectives on the
Passport to Teaching**

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I. PASSPORT TO TEACHING

A. THE PASSPORT PROGRAM

State governments use a wide variety of requirements to regulate entry into the teaching profession. They vary in the degree to which they require prospective teachers to complete coursework, accumulate student teaching experience, and perform on written examinations before they are granted entry into the classroom. The goal of the licensure regulations should be to ensure minimum quality, but education researchers have not succeeded in isolating measures that cost-effectively and reliably predict teacher performance.

In recent years, the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE), a new organization funded by the U.S. Department of Education, has devised a primarily examination-based approach called the Passport to Teaching to address this problem. With the Passport program, ABCTE set out to develop rigorous and comprehensive examinations in professional teacher knowledge and subject matter that would identify people competent to enter the teaching profession in any state regardless of the individual's method of preparation. By encouraging states to adopt the Passport as an acceptable route into the classroom, ABCTE hopes to remove barriers to entry such as student teaching requirements or specific course requirements that might otherwise deter qualified candidates. For example, the Passport could create opportunities for career changers, for veteran teachers with no formal credential, and for teacher candidates with nontraditional preparation to enter or remain in teaching.

To date, five states have recognized the Passport to Teaching. Those states are Idaho, Florida, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, and Utah. One challenge to the Passport program is the opposition by teacher-educators who see the program as a threat to traditional, degree-granting teacher preparation programs, which offer the courses and student-teaching opportunities that

would be eliminated as requirements if the Passport were accepted for certification. Another major impediment to more widespread adoption of the Passport is the need for more rigorous and objective evidence on the ability of the Passport program to identify high-quality or even minimal-quality teachers.

B. THE LONGITUDINAL STUDY AND THIS REPORT

To help address the need for rigorous research evidence, ABCTE obtained a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to contract with Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR) to conduct an independent, five-year longitudinal evaluation of American Board certification programs. In a recent report (Glazerman and Tuttle 2006), we described the early progress of the Passport program and the plans for evaluating both the Passport and a newer certification program for veteran teachers.

This report is the first in a series of reports from that evaluation study. Here, we provide some early evidence on the performance of American Board–certified teachers based on our recent survey of their supervisors. The study pertains to the first cohort of teachers to be certified through the Passport to Teaching program and begin teaching in 2005–2006. Nearly all of the supervisors we interviewed for this report were school principals; therefore, we refer to the telephone survey as the principal survey. The main goal of the principal survey was to learn how the Passport teachers’ direct supervisors judge their performance on the job. The performance ratings are subjective, but supervisors, unlike parents, fellow teachers, and students, have the job of observing and evaluating all aspects of a teacher’s performance and thus have the best perspective available. We also asked questions about the role of ABCTE certification in hiring that teacher. In a few cases, we interviewed a different individual to address hiring questions. Section B provides a detailed description of the data collection methods.

We found that principals typically rated Passport holders to be “as effective” as or “somewhat more effective” than “all other teachers [they had] observed in their career” on every dimension of job performance. A small number of Passport holders received low ratings (“much” or “somewhat” less effective), and a slightly larger number received “much more” effective ratings. Based on the ABCTE teachers they had supervised, principals were mixed on their appraisal of American Board certification, with the most common response that of uncertainty because of the limited experience with the program (typically just one teacher).

It is important to consider this report in its context as the first of several on the American Board certification programs. We report here on the first cohort of Passport holders and expect that cohort to be somewhat idiosyncratic and smaller than future cohorts. Even for the current cohort, we are continuing to collect data on student achievement gains that will allow us to form more objective measures of performance to consider alongside the present findings.

The next section discusses the data and methods used in this report. Section C presents the findings, and Section D concludes with a summary of the main findings and their implications for both policy and the ongoing research effort to understand ABCTE programs.

II. DATA AND METHODS

A. SURVEY DESIGN

We collected the data for the study by conducting a telephone survey of supervisors (principals) in spring 2006. This period corresponds to the end of the 2005–2006 school year, the first year in which it was possible to observe Passport-certified teachers in the classroom. The interview included a series of questions about the circumstances under which the Passport holder was hired,¹ the amount of time the respondent observed the teacher in the classroom, the respondent's professional background, and the respondent's ratings of the ABCTE teacher's effectiveness.

The effectiveness ratings were five-point scales that covered 11 dimensions ranging from instruction to collaboration and collegiality. We also asked respondents to rate the teacher's performance overall and their confidence in the Passport to Teaching as a credential. To anchor the ratings, we asked principals to compare Passport teachers to all other teachers they have observed in their career. For novice Passport holders, we also asked principals to rate the Passport holders relative to all other novice teachers they have observed in their career.

B. VALIDITY OF THE PRINCIPAL SURVEY

A principal survey such as the one described here has advantages and disadvantages but overall was the most useful approach we considered for providing early evidence on teachers certified through the Passport program. The main disadvantage is that principal ratings are subjective and can say more about the person performing the rating than the teacher whose

¹ We asked if the respondent was responsible for hiring the American Board teacher in question. In cases when the respondent was not the hirer, we identified the hirer and interviewed that person separately. The "hirer" and "observer" were usually the same person—the principal—except in five cases.

performance is rated. For example, when we ask principals to rate ABCTE teachers against others they have observed, each respondent has a different reference group. Some principals may have hired the Passport holder out of desperation after observing a string of poor teachers. Others may have a very high standard. This was a special concern for us because each respondent reported on just one teacher. Therefore, we had no way to calibrate scores statistically.

We determined that subjective ratings are still useful because the principal, whose role is to observe and supervise the teacher in all aspects of the job, offers the best perspective available. And the reference group of the particular principals in our sample is relevant because we wish to know how ABCTE affects that status quo. Furthermore, by asking about the principals' background and the frequency and duration of their observations of the teacher, we can control some of the variation in factors that might affect any one principal's perspective. Another advantage of principal ratings relative to measures that use standardized student test scores is that the ratings can be applied to all classroom teachers, including those in nontested subjects and grades.

The research literature on the validity of principal ratings as a tool to measure teacher performance is not conclusive but does suggest that principal ratings predict achievement. A recent working paper by Jacob and Lefgren (2005) found that principals were able to predict which of their teachers produced the largest and smallest student achievement gains, although the principals could not distinguish among teachers in the middle of the performance distribution. Jacob and Lefgren cited earlier studies (Murnane 1975; Armor et al. 1976; Medley and Coker 1987; Peterson 1987, 2000) that show correlations between principal ratings and other outcomes, albeit small ones.

Our principal survey findings are not intended to stand alone. Several measures of teacher effectiveness are needed to draw conclusions about the performance of Passport holders in the classroom. This report on principal ratings is intended to be a companion to future reports that incorporate analysis of growth in test scores in students of Passport and comparable non-Passport holders.

C. SAMPLING FRAME, SAMPLE DESCRIPTION, AND NONRESPONSE

We targeted the universe of teachers eligible to participate in the study. That is, we identified all Passport holders who were known to hold a K–12 classroom teaching position (52 individuals) and contacted their schools or districts to identify appropriate respondents to the survey. The initial sample comprised 56 individuals, but 4 were deemed ineligible because their primary responsibility was not classroom teaching (2 were principals) or their status as classroom teachers could not be verified.

We completed interviews with supervisors of 39 of the 52 eligible teachers, for a response rate of 75 percent. Typically, there was one Passport holder per school and hence one respondent per teacher. For one teacher, we have two sets of ratings because she split her time between two schools. For the analysis, we averaged her two sets of ratings. When we could not report fractional ratings—for example, in reporting the full distribution of scores—we included both principals’ ratings in the frequency count but adjusted the percentages by using weights so that each teacher was counted once. The weighting made a trivial difference in the percentages relative to the unweighted counts.

The response rates were high across many subgroups, although some were higher than others. Table II.1 shows the response rates by type of school, grade configuration, teaching assignment of the ABCTE teacher, and school location. The response rates were at least 70 percent in traditional public, charter, and private schools. The response rate was higher for

elementary schools than for middle or high schools, as also reflected in the response rates by subject area, with principals of teachers assigned to elementary subjects responding at the highest rates. Sample members in Idaho, where most of the Passport holders were teaching, had the highest response rate, with response rates for sample members in other states lagging.

TABLE II.1
RESPONSE RATES BY SUBGROUP

Subgroup	Eligible Cases	Response Rate (percentage)
Overall	52	75.0
School Type		
Traditional public	38	73.7
Charter	4	100.0
Private	10	70.0
Grade Level		
Elementary	17	88.2
Middle	5	80.0
High	30	66.7
Teaching Assignment		
Elementary (all subjects)	10	90.0
English/language arts (secondary)	10	60.0
Mathematics (secondary)	13	69.2
Science	6	50.0
Resource	4	100.0
Other	9	90.0
Location		
Idaho	33	93.4
Pennsylvania	9	44.4
Florida	5	20.0
Other	5	60.0

Source: Mathematica Policy Research, 2006 Survey of Principals of Passport to Teaching Teacher.

Not surprisingly, the respondents are fairly representative of the full sample (universe) of eligible Passport teachers. Table II.2 shows the characteristics of respondents, nonrespondents, and the full sample. The respondents are within 7 percentage points of the full sample on each subgroup defined by school type, grade level, and subject area. The largest difference between the respondent sample and the universe is the percentage from Idaho, with the state somewhat over-represented in our survey sample, and the other states, mainly Florida and Pennsylvania, each under-represented.

TABLE II.2

CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS AND NONRESPONDENTS (PERCENTAGES)

Subgroup	Full Sample	Respondents	Nonrespondents
School Type			
Traditional public	73.1	71.8	76.9
Charter	7.7	10.3	0.0
Private	19.2	17.9	23.1
Grade Level			
Elementary	32.7	38.5	15.4
Middle	9.6	10.3	7.7
High	57.7	51.3	76.9
Teaching Assignment			
Elementary (all subjects)	19.2	23.1	7.7
English/language arts (secondary)	19.2	15.4	30.8
Mathematics (secondary)	25.0	23.1	30.8
Science	11.5	7.7	23.1
Resource	7.7	10.3	0.0
Other	17.3	20.5	7.7
Location			
Idaho	63.5	79.5	15.4
Pennsylvania	17.3	10.3	38.5
Florida	9.6	2.6	30.8
Other	9.6	7.7	15.4

Source: Mathematica Policy Research, 2006 Survey of Principals of Passport to Teaching Teacher.

The resulting sample included principals with a range of experience and a range of time spent observing their teachers. Principals' average level of experience in the classroom as a teacher was 12 years, and their average experience as an administrator was 8 years, with a range of 1 to 26 years. The average principal's duration of a teacher observation was 36 minutes, and most principals reported that they observed the teacher at least three times during the year.

The most surprising result was the experience level of the Passport teachers themselves, many more of whom than expected were already teaching before the 2005–2006 school year. We asked only whether the teacher was a first-year teacher, but most respondents volunteered the teachers' years of experience in the profession or in the school, allowing us to estimate the distribution of experience in the sample. Table II.3 shows the principal-reported experience level of Passport holders who were teaching in their schools. Only 31 percent were in their first year. Of the remainder, many were in the early part of their careers, but several were veteran teachers, with six or more years of experience. Presumably, these teachers sought the American Board's Passport certification as a means to prove subject area mastery and not to meet initial licensure requirements to enter the teaching profession.

TABLE II.3
EXPERIENCE LEVEL OF PASSPORT TEACHERS

Years of Teaching Experience Before 2005–2006	Number of Passport Holders	Percentage
None	12	30.8
1–5	11	28.2
6–10	2	5.1
More than 10	5	12.8
1 or more, number unknown	9	23.1
Total	39	100.0

Source: Mathematica Policy Research, 2006 Survey of Principals of Passport to Teaching Teacher.

III. FINDINGS

We present the survey findings in two parts corresponding to two areas of inquiry. The first area concerns the role of the Passport certificate in the hiring process. The second area concerns the effectiveness of Passport teachers once hired. In addition, we discuss some supplemental analyses that we conducted to help readers better understand the survey data.

A. HIRING DECISIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF ABCTE

Overall, the respondents responsible for hiring the teachers in our sample had positive assessments of those teachers but were more moderate in their opinions of ABCTE certification, when they were aware of it at all.

The Passport holders had generally been hired in a competitive environment. Almost all of them competed against other candidates for their positions (see Table III.1). If the position was competitive, we asked the respondent to compare the Passport holder who filled the position to the other candidates overall. Three-quarters of respondents ranked the Passport holder “somewhat” or “much” stronger than the other applicants. Only one teacher was rated “somewhat weaker” than other candidates.²

An interesting finding—likely related to the high proportion of our sample with teaching experience—is that the majority of Passport holders received their job offer even before they obtained a Passport (19 of 30, or 63 percent). Many of these teachers had been hired several years earlier, in which case the Passport was often a means to certify their subject matter expertise rather than help them gain entry into the profession. A high proportion of respondents, almost 20 percent, did not know if the candidate had ABCTE certification at the time of hiring.

² We did not interview principals who declined to hire Passport holders, so we cannot assess whether certification was a factor in unsuccessful job candidacies.

For those teachers who did have that certification, their hirers were fairly evenly split between indicating that ABCTE certification had no impact or a positive impact. None indicated that ABCTE certification had a negative impact.

TABLE III.1
FACTORS RELATED TO HIRING DECISIONS

Factors	Number	Percentage
Hiring decision was competitive	33	90.3
How ABCTE candidate compared to other candidates		
Much weaker	0	0.0
Somewhat weaker	1	3.1
About the same	7	21.5
Somewhat stronger	8	24.6
Much stronger	17	50.8
Teacher obtained ABCTE certification after being hired		
Yes	19	51.4
No	11	30.6
Don't know	7	18.1
Impact that ABCTE certification had on hiring decision		
Negative impact	0	0.0
No impact	6	54.6
Positive impact	5	45.5
Respondent would hire ABCTE teacher in the future		
Yes	15	40.9
No	0	0.0
Depends	19	53.5
Don't know	2	5.6
<hr/>		
Total	37	

Source: Mathematica Policy Research, 2006 Survey of Principals of Passport to Teaching Teacher.

Interested in the reasons for their response, we probed those who indicated that the Passport had an impact on their hiring decision. One respondent said that he/she “wouldn’t have hired [the person] without certification.” Two cited the subject matter certification as the key to hiring for the given positions. Another respondent said that obtaining the certification was a signal of working harder. “Any time we see teachers go above and beyond, that’s a positive.”

Given the fairly untested nature of ABCTE certification, it is a good indication of the quality of our sample of Passport holders that, when asked if they would hire a teacher certified by ABCTE, 40 percent of hirers responded with an unqualified “yes.” This rate was similar for respondents who had hired experienced (43 percent) and novice teachers (33 percent). Approximately half of all respondents said that their decision to hire another Passport holder would depend on other factors, and the remainder said they did not know whether they would hire another Passport holder. No respondent indicated that he or she would *not* hire another Passport holder.

The respondents’ more general comments about ABCTE in response to an open-ended question were illustrative and generally positive. Several mentioned that it was their first exposure to ABCTE and that the teacher in question had worked out well; one was “skeptical at first” but asserted that ABCTE is an “excellent alternative for people who are qualified to be good teachers.” Others were advocates of the certification and had encouraged current teachers to pursue it, often to meet requirements from the No Child Left Behind legislation. Another commonly cited benefit of the program was the identification of individuals with expertise in a particular subject, often mathematics and science. More than one respondent commented on the rigor of the examination.

Of the less positive responses, the most common criticism was the lack of classroom experience. One principal of a Passport holder who received low ratings was concerned that

“individuals do not have practical student teaching experience. It is imperative to have experience with an accompanying teacher to help with planning, classroom management, etc.”

B. PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Respondents gave Passport teachers positive ratings on average for all dimensions of performance. As shown in Table III.2, the typical rating was somewhere between “equally as effective” as and “somewhat more effective” than other teachers observed by the supervisors in their careers on nearly every performance dimension rated. A rating of zero suggests that the Passport teacher is “equally effective,” and an average rating of 0.5, for example, means that the responses are halfway between “equally” and “somewhat more” effective.³

The first column in Table III.2 shows that the Passport teachers overall were rated closer to “somewhat more effective” than “equally effective,” with an average rating of 0.7. The highest ratings were in “communicating content knowledge” (0.9) and “responding to feedback from other teachers and administrators” (1.0) and the lowest in “managing the classroom” (0.3).

If the Passport holder in question was a first-year teacher, we also asked the supervisor to compare that teacher to other first-year teachers they had observed over their career. The second column in Table III.2 shows the novice-to-novice comparison. The last two columns in Table III.2 are subgroups (novices and experienced teachers) as compared with all other teachers.

Beginning teachers with Passport certificates fared well when compared with other first-year teachers, scoring closer to “somewhat more effective” than “equally effective” (0.6). They rated highest in “engaging students in learning” (0.8) and lowest in “adapting instruction” (0.3) and classroom management (0.3) as compared with other first-year teachers. Not surprisingly, the

³ This method treats the interval between each response option on the five-point scale as the same. Given that respondents rarely used the extreme options, the results vary little when we relax this assumption.

TABLE III.2

EFFECTIVENESS OF PASSPORT HOLDERS AS RATED BY THEIR PRINCIPALS

Area of Effectiveness	All Passport Teachers	Passport Holders in First Year of Teaching		Passport Holders with Two or More Years of Teaching Experience
	Compared with All Other Teachers	Compared with Other First-Year Teachers	Compared with All Other Teachers	Compared with All Other Teachers
Understanding students' needs	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.8
Planning lessons	0.5	0.5	-0.2	0.8
Leading instructional activities	0.8	0.5	0.3	1.0
Adapting instruction	0.8	0.3	0.3	1.0
Managing the classroom	0.3	0.3	-0.3	0.6
Encouraging desired student behavior	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.9
Engaging students in learning	0.7	0.8	0.3	0.9
Communicating content knowledge	0.9	0.6	0.1	1.3
Collaborating with other teachers	0.8	0.5	0.3	1.0
Responding to feedback from other teachers and administrators	1.0	0.7	0.7	1.2
Relating to parents	0.6	0.5	-0.2	1.0
Overall performance	0.7	0.6	0.3	0.9
Sample size (number of teachers)	39	12	12	27

Source: Mathematica Policy Research, 2006 Survey of Principals of Passport to Teaching Teachers.

Note: Relative teacher effectiveness was rated on a five-point scale:

-2 = Much less effective

-1 = Somewhat less effective

0 = Equally effective

1 = Somewhat more effective

2 = Much more effective

Cell entries are average ratings.

Ratings are weighted to account for multiple respondents for one teacher.

beginning teachers' ratings fell in nearly every category when compared with teachers of all experience levels, but their overall rating was still positive (0.3). In these comparisons, beginning teachers were rated lowest in "planning lessons" (-0.2), classroom management (-0.3), and "relating to parents" (-0.2). They were rated highest in responding to feedback (0.7).

Passport holders with teaching experience fared better than Passport holders new to teaching, with an overall performance rating of 0.9. In the individual categories, they rated highest in communicating content knowledge (1.3) and responding to feedback (1.2).

Table III.3 shows the distribution of ratings across the full five-point scale for the overall performance measures and for two other questions about American Board teachers and certification. According to the overall ratings, the most common responses were that Passport holders' overall performance as teachers was "average" or "above average" (see Figure III.1). Similarly, for the individual performance items noted in Table III.2, the most common responses fall in the middle three categories. The rare exceptions are two teachers who were rated "somewhat less effective" or "much less effective" on nearly every measure, which translates into a rate of 5 percent who were underperformers. The other 95 percent were judged as effective or better than their peers.

For first-year teachers, we asked principals to tell us if they are confident in their first-year teachers' ability to develop into an effective teacher. All but one reported being "confident" or "very confident" about this outcome.

We also asked respondents if their experiences gave them confidence in the American Board certification. None of the principals reported "a great deal of confidence" in the certification based on teacher performance, but nearly half reported "some confidence," nearly half reported "a little confidence," and the remaining 6 percent (two respondents) said that they had "no confidence," corresponding to the two respondents who rated their teachers as ineffective in

every area. The moderate nature of the responses to the confidence question suggests that principals are probably reluctant to generalize from the experience of a single teacher.

TABLE III.3
PRINCIPAL RATINGS OF OVERALL PERFORMANCE
AND CONFIDENCE IN TEACHERS AND ABCTE

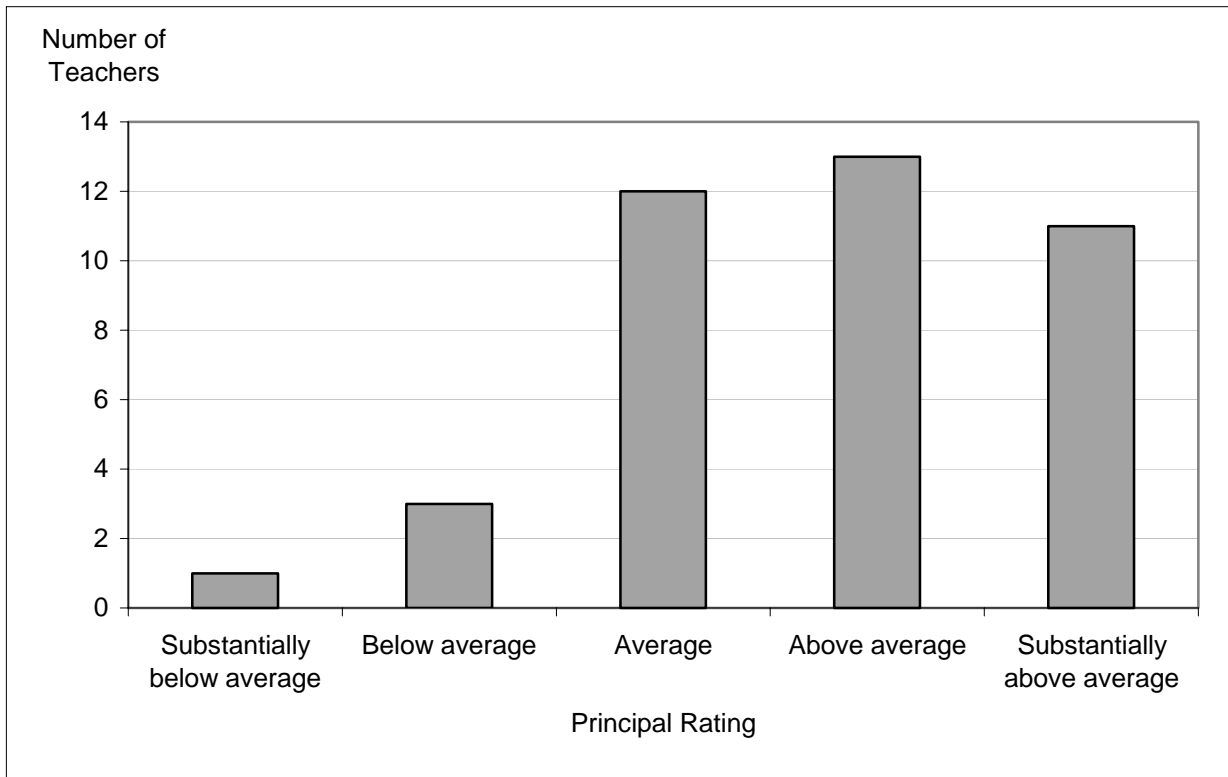
Rating	Number	Percentage
Overall performance as compared with all teachers		
Substantially below average	1	2.6
Below average	3	7.7
Average	12	30.8
Above average	13	32.1
Substantially above average	11	26.9
Overall performance as compared with first-year teachers (first-year Passport teachers only)		
Substantially below average	1	8.3
Below average	1	8.3
Average	2	16.7
Above average	6	50.0
Substantially above average	2	16.7
Confidence that Passport holder will develop into an effective teacher, confidence as compared with other first-year teachers (first-year Passport teachers only)		
Not at all confident	1	8.3
Somewhat confident	0	0.0
Confident	4	33.3
Very confident	7	58.3
Confidence in ABCTE certification, based on teachers' performance		
No confidence	2	5.6
A little confidence	15	41.7
Some confidence	16	43.1
A great deal of confidence	0	0.0
Don't know	4	9.7

Source: Mathematica Policy Research, 2006 Survey of Principals of Passport to Teaching Teachers.

Note: Percentages are weighted to account for multiple respondents for one teacher.

FIGURE III.1

PRINCIPAL RATING OF OVERALL PERFORMANCE OF ABCTE
TEACHERS AS COMPARED WITH ALL TEACHERS



Source: Mathematica Policy Research, 2006 Survey of Principals of Passport to Teaching Teachers.

C. UNDERSTANDING THE PERFORMANCE RATINGS

To help interpret the findings in the previous sections, we looked for evidence in our data on whether ratings might reflect something other than teacher effectiveness and whether principals place implicit weights on some dimensions of performance over others.

First, ratings vary significantly by the context in which the survey was administered—specifically, the characteristics of the respondent and his or her school or the characteristics of the Passport holder. We used a regression model to estimate the relationship between the ratings

and the following characteristics:⁴ principal's years of experience as an administrator, the amount of time the principal reported observing the teacher in the classroom, whether the teacher was in his or her first year of teaching, the teaching assignment (subject area), and the type of school—public, private, or charter (see Table III.4).⁵

In general, differences in ratings by teaching assignment were statistically significant, but differences in teacher and principal experience were not. Teachers in charter schools received higher ratings than those in traditional public schools while those in private schools received lower ratings (although not statistically significant). Elementary school teachers received lower ratings than teachers in all other subjects, particularly resource teachers and those teaching secondary mathematics or language arts. We also estimated models with each component as the dependent variable and found similar results.

Another issue is that, while we report the principal's overall rating of a Passport holder, it may not be obvious that (or how) the overall rating is an aggregate measure reflective of the individual components of effectiveness. To try to gauge this, we used another regression model to estimate the relationship between the overall rating and the 11 individual performance areas (see Table III.5). The coefficients were not statistically significant for any of the components, which is not surprising given the sample size and collinearity of the components. Nevertheless, we can still discern some trends in the relative weight given each measure without generalizing beyond this sample. The components with the largest coefficients (and therefore, presumably, the largest contribution to the overall rating) were engaging students in learning, understanding

⁴ We reported findings from a linear regression model that treats the responses on the five-point scale as cardinal with equal intervals. We also estimated an ordered logit model, which relaxes the equal interval assumption. We did not report the ordered logit results, but they led to the same conclusion.

⁵ Although there were several ways we could include the relevant data for time observed (e.g., as the total duration of observations versus separate variables for frequency and average length), the model was not sensitive to the way in which we defined that measure.

students' needs, and classroom management. Least important were encouraging desired student behavior, responding to feedback, and leading instructional activities.

TABLE III.4
THE EFFECT OF PRINCIPAL AND TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS
ON OVERALL RATINGS

Characteristic	Coefficient	Standard Error	P-value
Teacher is a novice (first year)	0.057	0.398	0.887
Supervisors' experience level (years)	0.034	0.025	0.183
Time supervisor reports observing teacher (minutes)	0.000	0.001	0.783
School Type			
Public, traditional	0.000	n.a.	n.a.
Public, charter	1.641	0.575	0.008***
Private	-0.369	0.481	0.448
Teachers' Assignment			
Elementary education	0.000	n.a.	n.a.
Secondary English/Language Arts	0.977	0.574	0.100
Secondary Mathematics	0.961	0.539	0.085**
Resource teacher (any grade)	1.380	0.699	0.058**
Science	0.492	0.640	0.448
Other	0.543	0.510	0.295
Intercept	2.705	0.638	0.000***
R-squared		0.24	
Sample Size (teachers)		39	

Source: Mathematica Policy Research, 2006 Survey of Principals of Passport to Teaching Teachers.

n.a. = not applicable, coefficient on omitted variable not estimated.

*Significantly different from zero at the .10 level.

**Significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

***Significantly different from zero at the .01 level.

TABLE III.5

THE EFFECT OF COMPONENTS ON OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS RATING

Explanatory Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	P-value
Understanding students' needs	0.273	0.237	0.259
Planning lessons	0.030	0.165	0.857
Leading instructional activities	-0.040	0.197	0.839
Adapting instruction	0.086	0.162	0.600
Managing the classroom	0.160	0.145	0.281
Encouraging desired student behavior	-0.082	0.172	0.637
Engaging students in learning	0.336	0.224	0.147
Communicating content knowledge	0.131	0.166	0.436
Collaborating with other teachers	0.067	0.175	0.703
Responding to feedback from other teachers and administrators	-0.047	0.172	0.789
Relating to parents	0.010	0.183	0.957
Intercept	0.383	0.324	0.248
R-squared		0.82	
Sample Size (teachers)		36	

Source: Mathematica Policy Research, 2006 Survey of Principals of Passport to Teaching Teachers.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

A. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The administrators who hire and supervise Passport holders rendered their judgments on the first cohort of certificate holders and gave a generally positive assessment of the teachers and a cautious assessment of the program that certified them.

In terms of the teachers themselves, the supervisors' experiences were generally positive. Those respondents who hired the ABCTE teachers said that the teachers were stronger than the other job candidates. Those who observed the ABCTE teachers (typically the same respondent) said that they were as or more effective than the average teacher they had observed during their careers. In terms of specific dimensions of teaching, the principals gave Passport teachers slightly stronger ratings on their responsiveness to feedback and their ability to communicate content knowledge and weaker ratings on classroom management.

Respondents also, however, demonstrated some hesitation about attributing the positive experiences to the American Board certification. A majority of Passport teachers had already been teaching when they received their credential; therefore, the Passport could not have played a role in their being hired. For those who earned the credential in order to teach, administrators did not feel the credential affected the hiring decision, or they could not even recall whether the teacher had the credential at the time of hiring. Principals' confidence in the potential of their novice Passport holders to develop into effective teachers did not translate into a high level of confidence in the Passport credential. We assume that such a response reflects a reluctance to extrapolate from the experience with a single teacher to all other teachers who earned the same credential.

Our finding that most of the early Passport holders were not new to the teaching profession when they got their credential was important for understanding how the program is used. Accordingly, we conclude that the early adoption of ABCTE's Passport to Teaching was a means to certify subject matter expertise so that teachers could either move into or keep a position in a particular field; early adoption was not usually a means to enter teaching.

B. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has some important limitations. It is only the first of many reports on the American Board certification programs and includes data on the first cohort of teachers. This pioneer group is likely to be idiosyncratic and smaller than future cohorts. Yet, even for the current cohort, we are continuing to collect data on student achievement gains so that, in the future, we will be able to form more objective measures of performance for consideration along with the current findings.

The performance ratings are subjective. They vary with school characteristics, which could mean that they vary for reasons other than teacher quality, although at this point we have no way to estimate the relationship independently. With test scores data in hand, we will be able in the near future to measure the correlation between principal ratings and achievement growth. Until then, we must interpret the findings in light of how we think principals would have rated a comparable group of teachers who received traditional certification. For example, principals may have a tendency to rate most teachers above average.

Finally, by focusing only on Passport holders who were teaching, we did not address the teaching quality or potential teaching quality of those who delayed their entry into teaching or were unable to find teaching positions. We will address this and many other limitations in future components of the longitudinal study as outlined in our design report (Glazerman and Tuttle 2006). For example, principals may have a tendency to rate most teachers above average.

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