

THE TARRANCE GROUP

MEMORANDUM

TO: Andrew Campanella, ABCTE
FROM: Brian Tringali
B.J. Martino
DATE: April 9, 2007
RE: Key Findings from a Survey of Attitudes in the State of Florida

The Tarrance Group is pleased to present these summary findings from a survey of Florida adults ages 20-64, with at least a Bachelor's Degree, and not currently working as a teacher. All respondents interviewed in this study were part of a fully representative sample of N=500 adults fitting that profile (hereafter "educated, non-teaching, working-age adults"). The margin of error for such a sample size is +/- 4.5% in 19 of 20 cases. The interviews were conducted on February 21-26, 2007.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Survey respondents were read three descriptions of three different types of teachers, and asked if each person described would make an effective teacher. The results clearly indicate that teachers with real-world experience who know their subject and know how to teach are viewed to be as or more effective than those who come directly from college without outside work experience.

Effective Teachers

"Yes"-Effective

Someone with several years of real-world work experience in the subject they want to teach, who knows the strategies of excellent teaching, but has never taught before.	82%
Someone right out of college with a degree in education, but with no work experience other than experience in the classroom as a student teacher.	72%
Someone with a Bachelor's degree in the subject they want to teach, but has never taught and has not demonstrated knowledge of how to teach.	37%

At the same time, educated, non-teaching, working-age adults recognize the scope of the teacher shortage problem in the state. Fully three-fourths of respondents rated the teacher shortage as a serious or severe problem. Asked to rate on a scale from 0 to 10, 0 being "not at a problem at all" and 10 being "a severe problem," 74% rated the problem a '7' or higher, with a 32% plurality rating it a '10.'

While they believe that teachers coming out of the traditional system or the ABCTE can be effective, their ratings of the quality of teachers in their community and the state suffer. Given the teacher shortage in the state, this should not be a surprise that the increased burden on current teachers would be greater and have an impact on their ability to effectively teach.

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A plurality (35%) of respondents grade the quality of teachers in their community a “B,” while a similar plurality (38%) grade the quality of teachers statewide a “C.”

Grading Teachers

	<i>All Survey Respondents</i>		<i>Parents W/ Children <18 in House</i>	
	<u>In Your Community</u>	<u>Statewide</u>	<u>In Your Community</u>	<u>Statewide</u>
A	15%	3%	21%	1%
B	35%	26%	39%	27%
C	23%	38%	23%	37%
D	6%	9%	5%	7%
F	3%	3%	5%	5%

ABCTE, the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, administers the “Passport to Teaching” program which provides a way for adults, with at least a Bachelor’s Degree, to obtain teacher certification in Florida. Currently, 27% of educated, non-teaching, working-age adults have heard of ABCTE.

Finally, the survey asked respondents about some of the reasons why a person would choose a career in teaching. Three reasons stood out with almost universal agreement: being a positive influence in a young person’s life (96% agree that it is a good reason to go into teaching), giving something back to the community (89% agree), and passing on knowledge and experience gained in life (86%).

Why Choose A Career In Teaching?

	<u>Agree</u>
To be a positive influence in a young person’s life	96%
To give something back to the community and society	89%
To help pass on the knowledge and experience gained in my life	86%

These results may help explain why respondents viewed teachers with “real world work experience” as slightly more effective than teachers right out of college. While any teacher has the potential to be a positive influence and give something back, the type of teachers who come through ABCTE’s Passport to Teaching program have the third quality: experience.

And potential candidates are out there. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of respondents say they have or would consider changing careers and becoming a teacher. After learning more over the course of the survey, that number climbs to 38%.

This survey returned strongly encouraging results for the future of ABCTE’s programs in Florida. The educated, non-teaching, working age adults in the state recognize the severity of the teacher shortage problem, and view those certified teachers who come out of ABCTE’s program as an effective solution.

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