

# Principals express satisfaction with Teach For America teachers

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A large majority of school principals are satisfied with teachers provided to their campuses through the Teach For America program, according to a new RAND Corporation study.

Principals with more experience rated Teach For America corps members more highly. By comparison, principals who are Teach For America alumni, along with principals at charter schools, were similarly satisfied overall but rated corps members' abilities lower in specific areas.

The findings are from a RAND survey of 1,803 principals that Teach For America commissioned to help improve the preparation, placement and performance of its teachers.

The results show that more than 80 percent of the principals surveyed in 2015 expressed satisfaction with Teach For America teachers. Approximately 20 percent of the principals surveyed said they were not satisfied. In a similar survey of principals in 2013, only 6 percent expressed a similar sentiment.

"While the overall satisfaction rate with Teach for America remains very high, the decline in principal satisfaction, along with Teach For America alumni who were more critical of corps members, provides an opportunity for improvement," said Mollie Rudnick, lead author on the study and graduate fellow at the Pardee RAND Graduate School.

Researchers say the principals who participated in the latest survey had fewer years teaching and less experience as a principal than participants in the 2013 survey.

The study found satisfaction rates are directly connected to how long a principal had been a school leader. When compared to principals with less experience as a teacher or principal, the principals with more experience rated corps members' abilities to improve [student performance](#) significantly higher. These same principals also rated the Teach For America corps members higher in comparison to the other novice teachers in their own schools.

Key areas where principals gave high ratings to Teach For America teachers include developing positive relationships with colleagues and administrators, having an impact on student performance, having high expectations for all students and knowledge of the subject matter they teach.

In addition, 86 percent of principals indicated they would hire additional corps members and 66 percent indicated they would recommend hiring corps members to other principals.

"School principals interview, hire and rely on our corps members to make a significant, positive impact with their students and contribute to a thriving community. Principals are essential partners for Teach For America," said Elisa Villanueva Beard, chief executive officer for Teach For America. "We're glad to see that principals are overwhelmingly satisfied with the teachers we provide to their schools. We will use these findings to continue to improve our recruitment, preparation and support of corps members."

Principals identified their own experience with previous corps members, along with the corps members' ability to fit in with school culture,

collaborate with staff, their commitment to teaching, and the support and training provided by Teach For America, as the main reasons they would hire corps members in the future.

The two main reasons the principals gave for not hiring corps members in the future were their classroom management skills and the fact that corps members' initial commitment is for only two years.

For RAND researchers, the results suggest there is an opportunity to provide additional education to all principals who are hiring Teach For America teachers, as well as review how the corps members are trained for their classroom experience.

**More information:**

[www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR1116.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1116.html)

Provided by RAND Corporation

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