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Report on the Teacher Needs Survey

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Report on the Teacher Needs Survey

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Executive Summary

To help PreK-12 teachers pursue student achievement goals effectively, the Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education recognized the vital importance of involving educators in the design and implementation of professional development (Azin-Manley et al., 1996; Desimone et al., 2002; Kisner et al., 1998; Ruhland & Bremer, 2002). In response to the 2005-2006 on-line Teacher Needs Survey, a total of 2334 teachers from 49 States and the District of Columbia shared their classroom management, instructional strategies, classroom diversity, and parental communication needs with APA for the first time. Such results are noteworthy at a time when two-thirds of teachers report that they have no control over the content or delivery of available professional development (Choy et al., 2006). More importantly, national data suggest that when teachers think they have influence in determining the content of in-service professional development, they are more likely than those who think they have no influence to participate in such learning opportunities (NCES, 2005). Educator-designed professional development may therefore provide an opportunity to enhance the effectiveness and retention of new and experienced educators (Ediger, 1995; Levine, 2006; NSDC, 1994; Raudenbush et al., 1992). Educators in the Teacher Needs Survey respondent pool indicated:

- ✓ A preference for receiving professional development in the form of in-district workshops with teams of teachers or on-line modules.
- ✓ A preference for receiving professional development activities related to instructional skills and classroom management.
- ✓ A preference for receiving professional development activities related to classroom management among first year teachers.

For *classroom management*, specific areas receiving the highest interest ratings included:

- *Ensure that students' negative behaviors are not an ongoing distraction to teachers and their classroom*
- *Ensure that students are socially and emotionally safe in the classroom*
- *Ensure that all students participate in classroom interaction*

For *instructional skills*, specific areas receiving the highest interest ratings included:

- *Promote critical thinking*
- *Motivate students to learn*
- *Design or implement a challenging curriculum, including problem solving techniques*

For *classroom diversity*, specific areas receiving the highest interest ratings included:

- *Groups of students of varying grade level readiness*
- *Gifted students*
- *Special learning needs students*

For *communication with families and caregivers*, areas of greatest interest included:

- *Behavior problems*
- *Academic problems*

Coalition History

The Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education began in 2002 as a way to bring together psychologists who are interested in applying psychological science to improve Pre-K-12 education. Within the American Psychological Association, the Coalition has included, but not been limited to, representatives from 14 APA divisions and a number of affiliated groups.

APA divisions that have been actively involved in the Coalition include divisions 5 (Evaluation, Measurement, and Statistics), 7 (Developmental Psychology) 12 (Society of Clinical Psychology), 13 (Consulting Psychology), 15 (Educational Psychology), 16 (School Psychology), 17 (Society of Counseling Psychology), 25 (Behavior Analysis), 27 (Society for Community Research and Action), 35 (Society for the Psychology of Women), 37 (Child, Youth and Family Services), 43 (Family Psychology), 53 (Society of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology), and 44 (Society for the Psychological Study of Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Issues).

Affiliated groups that have been actively involved include: APA Board of Educational Affairs (BEA), APA Board of Scientific Affairs (BSA), Committee on Psychological Tests and Assessment (CPTA), Committee of the Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS), Committee on Children, Youth and Families (CYF), Council of Representatives' Child and Adolescent Caucus (CAC), Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA), and Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PTACC).

History of the Teacher Needs Survey

The Coalition's goal is to support educators' ability to apply the results of psychological science in their classrooms and schools. To support this goal, the Coalition began designing an on-line Teacher Needs Survey in May 2004. The purpose of the survey was to ask educators what type of support they would like from psychology and in what format. The Teacher Needs Survey focused on four educational areas: instructional strategies, classroom management, classroom diversity, and parent/caregiver outreach. Between August and December 2004, the Coalition piloted the survey nationwide and gathered a sample of 900 Pre-K-12 teachers. At the Coalition's December 2004 meeting, representatives reviewed the survey results. The pilot data were used to refine the survey, including additions to the demographics section (ethnicity, gender, region, grade); changes to the rating scales (Likert Scale); and a reduction in the number of questions relating to teachers' professional development needs.

Following the 2004 Coalition meeting, proposed revisions were reviewed and adopted in stages. After two mailed circulations of draft revisions, the on-line survey was launched in April 2005. A preliminary report using an initial sample of 499 participants was made to Coalition members in December 2005. The purpose of the report was to evaluate how the data should be evaluated and presented. Between December 2005 and May 2006, an additional 1835 participants completed the on-line survey making a total respondent pool of 2334 educators distributed among 49 states and the District of Columbia.

Areas Addressed in the Teacher Needs Survey

The Teacher Needs Survey asked educators to indicate the specific types of training they would be interested in receiving under each of the four areas addressed—classroom management, instructional strategies, classroom diversity, and communication with families/caregivers. In

addition, educators were asked to indicate their level of preparation in each of the four areas and to rank order each area with regard to priority of training. Finally, educators were asked to rank the type of training modality they would prefer from options including on-line modules; regional, university, or conference workshops; and in-district workshops. A number of demographic items were also completed.

Method

Participants represent a convenience sample of educators who responded to the on-line survey. Over 200 educational organizations were contacted of which 84 responded by broadly disseminating the web-link. Organizations included national, state, and district unions and other educational organizations.

In addressing the representativeness of the Teacher Needs Survey respondent pool, a comparison was made with a recent national sample of over 63,000 educators conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (Strizek et al., 2006).