

**State of the Teaching Profession
200) Annual Survey**

**A COMPAS Report to
The Ontario College of Teachers**



Ontario
College of
Teachers

**COMPAS Inc.
Public Opinion and Customer Research**

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1.0. Introduction

1.1. Background

The third annual Ontario College of Teachers survey of the profession is part of an ongoing effort to gauge teachers' own assessments of the state of teaching and education in the province. This 2005 survey explores such themes as:

- problems that confront schools in Ontario today
- the effectiveness of the provincial government in dealing with problems in schools in Ontario today
- education reform ideas
- the importance of class size in student success
- the new multi-year collective agreements
- factors that attract and discourage teachers wanting to pursue a career as a principal or vice-principal
- participation in various professional development activities
- teachers' experience in pre-service education programs
- public perceptions relating to the teaching profession.

1.2. Methodology

The Ontario College of Teachers commissioned COMPAS to undertake a representative sample survey of 1000 teachers. Conducted by professional interviewers using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) technology, the survey was completed in a more than two week period at the end of July. By convention, samples of n=1000 are deemed accurate to within 3.1 percentage points 19 times out of 20.

The questionnaire consists of a mix of scale and forced-choice questions. In the case of some of the more complex, forced-choice questions, the options



presented to respondents were derived from a precursor study conducted for the College by COMPAS.

The precursor study among n=100 Ontario teachers asked exploratory open-ended questions on some of the topics subsequently examined in the full n=1000 survey using forced-choice queries. For example, the n=1000 survey asked the following question: “Thinking of the following eight problems that confront schools in Ontario today, please tell me which is the biggest?” The eight problems listed in the forced-choice question were derived from the eight most frequently volunteered responses to a similar, fully open-ended question in the precursor n=100 study. The principal investigators on this study were Dr. Conrad Winn and Tamara Gottlieb.

2.0. Problems That Confront Schools

2.1. Class Size—The Leader among Six Significant Problems

Almost one-third of teachers (32%) report that large class size is the biggest problem that confronts schools in Ontario today, as shown in table 2.1. Another 16% of respondents feel that at-risk, immigrant, and special-needs students are the biggest problem. Meanwhile 14% say that the biggest problem is student discipline; another 14% say that it is not enough support staff.

Concern about large classes is especially high among younger and less experienced teachers. In practice, 43% of respondents 34 years old or younger feel that class size is the biggest problem. The proportion drops to 32% among those aged 35-49, and 25% among those aged 50-64. Following a similar pattern, concern about class size declines from a high of 40% among those with 1-5 years of teaching experience to 17% among those with over 30 years teaching experience. It looks as if concern about class size attenuates as teachers develop more experience. They become less concerned either because their skills are on the upswing or they become inured to the problem.



Table 2.1: Eight Biggest Problems¹

	All	Principals
Large classes	32	13
At-risk, immigrant, and special needs students	16	28
Not enough support staff	14	19
Student discipline	14	2
Curriculum, technology, or materials	10	11
Government administration	5	11
Not enough teachers	5	11
Teacher salaries	1	0
[UNPROMPTED] Other	1	4
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know/Refused	2	2

Class size is less of a problem for principals than teachers as a whole, as evidenced in table 2.1. Among principals, 13% single out class size as the greatest problem. This compares with 38% among elementary school teachers, 29% among secondary school teachers, 30% among occasional teachers, and 18% in the “other” category. The lower concern among principals is attributable partly to age and partly to role or perspective. If age were the only factor accounting for concern about class size or lack thereof, principals aged 50-64 would be just as concerned as non-principals in that cohort. But in that cohort only 15% of principals assert that class size is the biggest problem facing schools today compared to 25% among respondents as a whole, 26% among secondary school teachers, and 28% among elementary school teachers.

Teachers in the French Catholic system are more concerned than others—41% vs. 31% among teachers in the remaining boards. Recent classroom experience may account for a portion of the greater concern among French Catholic board teachers. French Catholic teachers are moderately more inclined to report that their classes were larger this year than last—31% vs. 24% among teachers as a whole.

¹ “Thinking of the following eight problems that confront schools in Ontario today, please tell me which is the biggest?”(%) [RANDOMIZE].



2.2. Provincial Government Good on Salaries, Mediocre or Poor on Most Educational Issues

Teachers generally believe the provincial government has been at most only moderately effective in dealing with problems that confront schools today but opinion varies by problem. Table 2.2A shows that most respondents (50% score a 5 or 4; mean 3.4) perceive the government as very effective in dealing with teacher salaries; for all other problems, the mean is 3.0 or lower with fewer than 31% of respondents scoring a 5 or 4.

The multivariate statistical technique, factor analysis, was applied to the ratings to reveal how teachers perceive the government's performance and not just how they score its performance. As shown in table 2.2B, two factors or ways of thinking about the government's performance emerge from the factor analysis:

- ❑ a *classroom* factor, whereby teachers think of the government's performance in respect of shortages of teachers with special skills, shortages of teachers in general, support staff, large classes and students with special needs;
- ❑ a *non-classroom* factor, whereby teachers think in terms of student discipline, curriculum, technology, or materials, government administration, buildings, and teacher salaries.



Table 2.2A: Effectiveness of Ontario Government on Selected Problems, 5-Point Scale²

	All	Principals	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
Teacher salaries	3.4	3.6	12	38	34	11	4	1
Not enough teachers	3.0	3.0	5	26	37	22	9	2
Curriculum, technology, or materials	2.9	3.1	5	25	37	23	9	1
Government administration	2.7	2.8	2	14	45	23	10	7
Not enough teachers with specialized training in key areas	2.6	2.5	2	15	37	29	15	2
Large classes	2.5	3.0	4	17	28	28	22	1
At-risk, immigrant, and special needs students	2.5	2.4	2	14	34	32	16	3
Better buildings	2.5	2.4	2	16	33	27	20	2
Student discipline	2.5	3.0	1	15	34	28	18	4
Not enough support staff	2.4	2.6	3	13	26	37	20	1

The government is perceived to be slightly more effective in dealing with *non-classroom* problems than in dealing with *classroom-related* problems. COMPAS computed a mean score for each factor by taking a mathematical average of respondent scores for all the variables contained within a given factor. Under this procedure, each factor mean is on the same 5-point scale as the individual questions. The factor mean for the *non-classroom* factor (2.8) is slightly higher than the factor mean for the *classroom* factor (2.6) with the difference being statistically significant.

² “How effective do you think the provincial government has been in dealing with each of the following problems that confront schools in Ontario today? Please respond using a 5-point scale where 1 means not at all effective, and 5 means extremely effective.” [RANDOMIZE]



Table 2.2B: Classroom-Related vs. Non-Classroom-Related Problems—Two Factors Emerging from a Factor Analysis of Scores in Table 2.2A

	Class-room	Non-class
Q3.7 - Not enough teachers with specialized training in key areas	.697	
Q3.6 - Not enough teachers	.656	
Q3.8 - Not enough support staff	.650	
Q3.1 - Large classes	.562	
Q3.5 - At-risk, immigrant, and special needs students	.561	
Q3.4 - Student discipline		.682
Q3.2 – Curriculum, technology, or materials		.611
Q3.3 - Government administration		.577
Q3.9 - Better buildings		.505
Q3.10 - Teacher salaries		.456

3.0. Initiatives and Reforms

3.1. Teachers Favour Most Initiatives, Undecided about College Structure, Oppose Ministers' Permits for Uncertified Teachers

Teachers were asked to rate the desirability of a list of education initiatives and some practices, as shown in table 3.1. Smaller class sizes (mean 4.4) and classroom support to assist students with special needs (mean 4.4) top the list. Other very highly favoured initiatives, all earning means of 4.2, are

- more physical education, music, and art,
- a mentoring program for new teachers,



- placing specially trained teachers in literacy and numeracy in every elementary school.

Moderate majority support (i.e. >50% scoring 4-5) is expressed in favour of healthy foods in vending machines, a safe school action team, multi-year collective agreements, a review of elementary school curricula, and mandatory schooling to age 18.

At the bottom of the long list (table 3.1A) are

- Increasing the number of males in teaching, supported by a large plurality (49% score 4-5) and earning a mean of 3.5,
- Changing the College's governance structure, supported by a moderate plurality (40% score 4-5) and earning a mean of 3.3, and
- Hiring uncertified teachers by means of letters of permission, opposed by a strong majority (73% score 1-2) and earning a mean of 1.9.

Teachers are relatively homogeneous in their attitudes towards these initiatives irrespective of the segment to which they belong. A few noteworthy exceptions emerge.. Principals reveal a lesser tendency to embrace healthy foods in vending machines and mandatory schooling to age 18, as shown in table 3.1A. French Catholic board teachers are more likely than others to embrace mandatory schooling while they are less likely to embrace multi-year agreements or resist uncertified teachers.

As might be expected, some consistency emerges between the problems that teachers single out as major (table 2.1) and the scores that they assign to various initiatives (table 3.1). Teachers who volunteer that large classes are the biggest problem (table 2.1) are apt to score smaller classes as a highly desirable initiative (mean 4.8 vs. 4.4 among all teachers). Those who volunteer that government administration is the biggest problem (table 2.1) are less apt than others to find desirable a safe school action team (mean 3.3 vs. mean 3.9 among all teachers). In practice, teachers who are sceptical of government administration may be cool to safe school actions teams because they see them as another doubtful administrative invention.



*Table 3.1A: Desirability of Various Initiatives and Practices
on 5-Point Scales³*

	All	Princi- pals	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
Smaller class sizes	4.4	4.0	65	20	10	3	2	* ⁴
Providing support in the classroom to assist students with special needs	4.4	4.5	63	24	8	3	2	*
More physical education, music and art	4.2	4.1	52	29	13	4	2	0
A mentoring program for new teachers	4.2	4.4	53	26	14	4	2	1
Placing specially trained teachers in literacy and numeracy in every elementary school	4.2	4.3	50	28	14	6	3	*
Healthy foods and beverages in school vending machines	4.0	3.6	46	23	15	8	6	1
A safe schools action team	3.9	3.7	32	33	24	7	2	1
Multi-year collective agreements	3.8	4.0	31	32	25	7	4	2
A review of elementary curriculum	3.6	3.5	26	28	28	10	6	3
Mandatory schooling to age 18	3.5	2.9	33	20	22	12	12	*
Increasing the number of males in teaching	3.5	3.5	22	27	33	11	7	1
Modifying the governance structure of the Ontario College of Teachers	3.3	3.3	19	21	36	13	7	6
Hiring uncertified teachers by means of [Ministers'] letters of permission	1.9	1.8	2	5	19	25	48	1

³ "I am going to read you a list of education initiatives. Please tell me how you feel about each on a 5 point desirability scale where 1 means not at all desirable and 5, extremely desirable." [RANDOMIZE]

⁴ Greater than 0 and less than 0.5.



Table 3.2B: Classroom- vs. Macro- vs. Governance-Related Initiatives —Three Factors Emerging from a Factor Analysis of Scores in Table 3.2A

	Class-room	Macro I	Macro II
Q4.8 - Providing support in the classroom to assist students with special needs	.714		
Q4.3 - More physical education, music and art	.633		
Q4.1 - Smaller class sizes	.613		
Q4.10 - A mentoring program for new teachers	.591		
Q4.9 - Placing specially trained teachers in literacy and numeracy in every elementary school	.545		
Q4.2 - Healthy foods and beverages in school vending machines	.509		
Q4.12 - Modifying the governance structure of the Ontario College of Teachers.		.759	
Q4.13 - A review of elementary curriculum		.615	
Q4.11 - Increasing the number of males in teaching		.459	
Q4.6 - Multi-year collective agreements			.573
Q4.7 - Hiring uncertified teachers by means of [Ministers'] letters of permission			.530
Q4.4 - Mandatory schooling to age 18			.511
Q4.5 – A safe schools action team		.404	.423

The COMPAS research team examined the structure of thinking about the initiatives listed in table 3.2A by applying factor analysis, using the same method as in section 2.2. The factor analysis reveals three types of initiatives: *classroom-related* initiatives such as more classroom assistance for students



with special needs, smaller classes, and more physical education, music, and art; one set of *macro* or *overarching* initiatives such as changing the governance structure of the College and a review of elementary curriculum; and another set of *macro* initiatives such as multi-year collective agreements.

Teachers care a lot more about classroom-related initiatives than the others. The mean factor score for the classroom-related factor is 4.3. This is much higher than the means of 3.5 and 3.3 for the macro I and macro II factors. Teachers' feelings about the three factors are relatively homogeneous with the main exception of gender. Female teachers assign especially high scores to the classroom-related factor (4.4 vs. 4.1 among males) and to the macro II factor (3.3 vs. 3.1).

3.2. How to Improve Student Learning— Smaller Classes, Literacy and Numeracy Programs, Assistance for At-Risk/Immigrant/Special Needs...But Not Standardized Testing

Respondents were subsequently presented with a list of eight initiatives or reform ideas for promoting student learning. They were asked to identify the one most conducive and the one least conducive for improving learning. The three most helpful initiatives are considered to be (a) smaller classes, (b) increased support for at-risk, immigrant and special needs students, and (c) literacy and numeracy programs, as shown in table 3.2. A large majority of respondents (71%) believe that standardized testing is the least helpful education initiative.

Principals are less apt than teachers as a whole to single out smaller classes as most helpful (19% vs. 35% among all respondents) while they are more apt than others to cite teacher professional development as the most helpful initiative (21% vs. 8% among all teachers).



Table 3.2: Most vs. Least Helpful or Effective Initiatives or Reform Ideas for Improving Student Learning (in Descending Order of Gap Scores)

	Most ⁵	Least ⁶	[Most – Least]
Smaller classes	35	2	+33
Increased support for at-risk, immigrant and special needs students	18	2	+16
Literacy and numeracy programs	16	2	+14
Teacher professional development	8	4	+4
Better materials and textbooks	8	4	+4
Better curricula	6	4	+2
Increased support for students entering the workforce directly from high school	8	10	-2
Standardized testing	*	71	-71
[UNPROMPTED] Not aware of recent initiatives or reform ideas	0	*	NA
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know/Refused	1	2	NA

The perceived effectiveness of smaller classes declines nominally with age. In practice, 37% of respondents aged 34 or less single out smaller classes as most helpful compared to 37% of those aged 35-49, 32% of those aged 50-64, and 23% of those aged 65+. These differences are not statistically significant but they conform to a general pattern of older teachers' attributing less importance to class size than younger ones, as discussed in section 2.1.

3.3. Small Classes Vital— Particularly for Special Needs Students and Earlier Years

Section 3.2 reported that teachers rank small classes at the top of initiatives or reforms for improving student learning. Respondents were subsequently

⁵ “Which of the following eight initiatives or reform ideas would be the most helpful or effective in improving student learning in Ontario?” [RANDOMIZE].

⁶ “Which of the following eight initiatives or reform ideas would be the least helpful or effective in improving student learning in Ontario?” [RANDOMIZE].



asked to score on a 5-point scale the importance of small classes for student success. Given the earlier finding, one might expect very high scores. That is precisely what emerges. Class size is almost universally considered to be extremely important to student success with more than 9 in 10 teachers (91% score a 5 or 4; mean 4.6) rating class size as highly important, as shown in table 3.3a.

Following the pattern reported in sections 2.1 and 3.2, the perceived importance of smaller classes declines with age (from a high of 4.7 among respondents aged 18-24 to a low of 4.0 among respondents aged 65+).

Respondents in the independent school system are less apt than respondents in all other systems to say that smaller classes are important (mean 4.3 vs. 4.6 among all other respondents). This is to be expected given that classes tend to be smaller among independent schools. People tend to ascribe less importance to those benefits that they can take for granted.

Virtually two-thirds of teachers believe that small class sizes are more valuable in some settings than others rather than of an equal value in all settings, as shown in tables 3.3B and C. Among this majority, opinion is split between those who see a particular need in the earlier grades and those who see a greater need in the case of special needs students or those with behavioural problems (table 3.3C).

Principals are especially apt to believe that small classes are more valuable in some settings (72% vs. 63% among respondents as a whole), particularly for special needs students (34% vs. 26%). Of principals, it can be said that they see less urgent value in small classes than teachers as a whole but they see particular merit in the case of special needs students. By contrast, teachers who teach additional courses outside the school year are more likely than others to see small classes as equally valuable across the board.

Table 3.3A: Impact of Class Size on Student Success on 5 Point Scale⁷

All	Principals	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
4.6	4.5	69	22	7	1	1	*

⁷ “How important is class size in student success? Please respond using a 5-point scale where 1 means not at all important, and 5, extremely important.”



Table 3.3B: “Would you say that small classes are... “ [ROTATE]⁸

	All	Principals
A lot more important in some settings than others	41	40
Equally important in all situations	36	28
Somewhat more important in some settings than others	22	32
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know/Refused	*	0

On balance, teachers do not perceive their classes to have changed fundamentally in size with 24% saying that their own classes became larger, 17% smaller, and the remainder split between no change in size and respondent uncertainty, as shown in table 3.3D. Teachers in the French Catholic system report a slightly greater tendency to have experienced larger classes—31% vs. 24% among teachers as a whole.

Table 3.3C: “In which of the following six situations are small classes especially important?” [RANDOMIZE]

	All	Principals
In every grade	31	23
For special needs students or those with behavioural problems	26	34
K to Grade 3	16	19
K to Grade 8	13	9
In split classes	6	4
At the Applied level in high school	6	11
[UNPROMPTED] Other	1	0
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know/Refused	2	0

⁸ “Thinking of the impact of class size on student learning, would you say that small classes are... [ROTATE].”



Table 3.3D: Compared to last year, are your classes... [ROTATE
POLES]

	All	Principals
Much bigger	7	0
Somewhat bigger	17	13
About the same	49	49
Somewhat smaller	15	34
Much smaller	2	0
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know/Refused	10	4

4.0. Career Development and Professional Development

4.1. Personal Goals— Enthusiastic about Teaching, Open to Leaving the Profession, Unenthusiastic about Administration

Ontario teachers were asked to score their level of personal interest in eleven career paths. Teachers emerge as enthusiastic about their roles as classroom teachers. The overwhelming majority embrace these roles and are uninterested in becoming principals or superintendents. On a five point interest scale, respondents express

- ❑ a mean interest of 4.1 in developing classroom skills with 75% scoring 4-5 and 10% scoring 1-2—a more than 7:1 ratio of high vs. low interest in this career or professional direction, as shown in table 4.1A;
- ❑ a mean interest of 4.0 in mentoring new teachers with 72% scoring 4-5 and 10% scoring 1-2—a more than 7:1 ratio of high vs. low interest in this career or professional direction;



- ❑ a mean interest of only 2.2 in becoming a principal or vice-principal with 24% scoring 4-5 and 64% scoring 1-2—a ratio of less than 2:5 of high vs. low interest in this option; and
- ❑ an even lower interest in becoming a superintendent with a mean of 1.6, 8% scoring 4-5, and 81% scoring 1-2—a ratio of 1:10 of high vs. low interest in this option.

Teachers' interest in developing classroom skills and mentoring forms part of a larger pattern of teaching commitment. Respondents display high levels of interest in developing their skills as an associate teacher for student teachers and as a subject specialist, as shown in table 4.1A. Given the enthusiasm of teachers for their classroom roles, the profession in Ontario can take some significant comfort in the quality of the selection process. Teachers embrace what they do.

Interest in career development outside the classroom is especially high among those who teach additional courses outside of the school year. Thus, 52% (mean 3.3) of those who teach additional courses are interested in developing as a consultant versus 31% (mean 2.7) of those who do not teach additional courses.

From the survey data, the profession would appear to face conundra with respect to filling positions of principal. To the extent that the profession may want to increase the pool of potential candidates for principal and superintendent-type responsibilities, the profession is constrained by a relative lack of interest in such career options.

The profession is also vulnerable to a personnel drain. Teachers report being open to transferring their teaching skills to roles outside formal education. The profession could experience a drain if private or public sector employers opted to poach on teaching territory and hire away teachers. At least some teachers appear to get more satisfaction from teaching, from their roles in the classroom, than from their identities as teachers. Thus, they would appear to like teaching more than being teachers. As shown in table 4.1A, the mean level of interest in "using [their] skills as a teacher outside a school environment" is 3.6 with 58% scoring 4-5 and 19% scoring 1-2—a ratio of 3:1 in favour of high vs. low interest.



Table 4.1A: Career Directions—5 Point Interest or Desirability Scale⁹

	All	Principals	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
Developing your practice as a classroom teacher	4.1	3.2	52	23	13	3	7	3
Mentoring or coaching new teachers	4.0	4.5	42	30	17	4	6	2
As an associate teacher for student teachers	3.7	2.9	37	27	16	6	12	2
As a subject specialist	3.7	2.6	35	27	16	7	13	2
Using your skills as a teacher outside a school environment	3.6	3.5	31	27	21	9	10	2
As a curriculum leader	3.2	3.9	22	23	25	10	19	2
As a division chair or department head	2.8	2.4	20	16	17	10	34	3
As a consultant	2.8	2.9	17	18	20	13	31	2
As a principal or vice-principal	2.2	4.9	14	10	11	11	53	2
Changing to a completely different career outside of a school environment	2.0	2.1	8	9	13	13	55	2
As a superintendent	1.6	1.9	4	4	9	9	72	2

Teachers who teach additional courses outside the school year are especially open to using their teaching skills outside a school environment. For the moment, it does not appear that such interest would lead inexorably to changing careers. Few teachers, even those who teach additional courses outside the school year, express much interest in “changing to a completely different career outside of a school environment,” as shown at the bottom of table 4.1A. However, teachers who teach additional courses outside the school year are receptive to using their teaching skills outside a school environment, and their loss could be troublesome for the profession. This teacher segment is more receptive than others to assuming non-classroom responsibilities,

⁹ “How would you like to see your career develop in the future? Please score each of the following possibilities on a 5-point scale where 1 means not at all interested in that career direction personally and 5, extremely interested. [RANDOMIZE].”



including becoming a division head, subject specialist, curriculum leader, or principal, as shown in table 4.1A.

The factor analysis of the scores in table 4.1A yields a three-factor solution, as shown in table 4.1B. Teachers view their career options as *classroom-related* vs. *administration-related* vs. *career change-related*. The *classroom* factor includes the career paths of associate teacher, mentoring, development as classroom teacher, subject specialist, curriculum leader and department head. The *administration* factor or career path includes becoming a principal, superintendent, or consultant. The *career change* factor is comprised of changing to a different career outside the school system and using teaching skills outside a school environment.

*Table 4.1B: Three Types of Career Paths from Factor Analysis of
Table 4.1A—Classroom, Administration, and Career Change*

	Class- room	Admin- istration	Career Change
Q15.6 - As an associate teacher for student teachers	.784		
Q15.2 - Mentoring or coaching new teachers	.706		
Q15.1 - Developing your practice as a classroom teacher	.663		
Q15.4 - As a subject specialist	.627		
Q15.3 - As a curriculum leader	.551	.448	
Q15.5 - As a division chair or department head	.548	.471	
Q15.7 - As a principal or vice-principal		.851	
Q15.9 - As a superintendent		.837	
Q15.8 - As a consultant		.478	
Q15.11 - Changing to a completely different career outside of a school environment.			.780
Q15.10 - Using your skills as a teacher outside a school environment			.746



Teachers are most interested in pursuing the *classroom* path (factor mean 3.6) and least interested in administration (factor mean 2.2). However much they embrace teaching, teachers would prefer to leave the profession entirely (*career change* factor mean 2.8) than work toward an *administration* role (factor mean 2.2).

Those who teach courses outside of the school year bring a certain overarching enthusiasm. They are more interested in all types of career development than are those who do not teach additional courses. For example, among those who teach additional courses, mean interest in *classroom* development is 3.8 vs. 3.5; *administration* factor mean of 2.5 vs. 2.1; *career change* factor mean of 3.1 vs. 2.8.

4.2. Pros and Cons of Becoming a Principal— The Opportunity to Improve Schooling and Exercise Leadership vs. Board Politics, Middle Manager Stress, and Student Crises

Respondents were asked about the considerations that motivate teachers to consider becoming a principal or vice-principal.. Almost one-third (29%) feel that the opportunity to improve schooling is the main reason for thinking about becoming a principal, as shown in table 4.2A. Another 26% of teachers cite enjoyment of leadership as a motivator for becoming a principal. Teachers in the French Catholic system are less apt to cite enjoyment of leadership (11% vs. 26% overall), citing better pay instead (21% vs. 10% among respondents overall).

Respondents were also asked about the considerations that discourage teachers from wanting to become principal or vice-principals. The most discouraging considerations are the politics of the job (35%), middle-management stress (22%), and the psychology of dealing with worried parents, students in crisis, and disciplinary issues (19%), as shown in table 4.2B. Teachers in the French Catholic system are least apt to be concerned about politics (9% vs. 35% overall) and most apt to be concerned about middle-management stress (42% vs. 22% overall).



Table 4.2A: Why Become a Principal or Vice-Principal (Forced Choice)¹⁰

	All	Principals
An opportunity to improve schooling	29	49
Enjoying leadership	26	36
A desire to get out of the classroom	12	2
Better pay	10	2
A desire for more responsibility	9	6
Ambition for authority or power	9	0
[UNPROMPTED] Other	*	0
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know/Refused	5	4

Table 4.2B: Why Avoid Becoming a Principal or Vice-Principal (Forced Choice)¹¹

	All	Principals
The politics	35	28
Middle management stress—having more responsibility than authority	22	26
The psychology of dealing with worried parents, students in crisis, or disciplinary issues	19	17
Missing out on the joys of the classroom	13	4
Long hours	7	21
Lack of job security	2	2
[UNPROMPTED] Other	1	0
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know/Refused	2	2

¹⁰ “As you know, some teachers want to follow a career path that leads to becoming a principal or vice-principal. Which of the following six reasons is the main factor do you think? [RANDOMIZE].”

¹¹ “Which of the following six factors would most discourage a teacher from thinking about becoming a principal or vice-principal? [RANDOMIZE].”



4.3. Most Professional Development Time Spent on Supplemental Learning Activities

Teachers reported spending the most number of professional development days during the last 12 months doing supplemental learning activities. Specifically, respondents spent 29 days on average doing extra background reading in their subject areas of specialization, and 24 days on average in collaborative learning with other educators in their school, as shown in table 4.3.

Time spent in professional development appears to be higher among females than males, higher among younger teachers than among older teachers, and higher among those who teach additional courses outside the school year.

Table 4.3: "Thinking of professional development activities over the last twelve months, approximately how many days have you been involved in each of the following activities, if any?"
[RANDOMIZE]

	All	Principals	DNK
Extra background reading in your subject areas of specialization	29	40	5
Collaborative learning with other educators in your school	24	43	4
Development and implementation of curriculum materials	18	20	3
Being a mentor to a new teacher	17	45	3
Additional qualification courses	12	3	1
Being supported by a mentor	11	36	2
Participation in a distance education program	8	2	1
Participating in research, development or evaluation projects	8	11	1
Being an associate teacher for a faculty of education	7	15	1
Involvement with subject associations	6	6	4



	All	Principals	DNK
Board in-service	5	13	2
Attendance at conferences, workshops and institutes	5	8	1
Education workshops on literacy and numeracy	4	5	1
Summer teacher development sessions	4	2	1
Organizing conferences, workshops, or institutes	3	7	1

4.4. Teaching Assignments and Content Knowledge— 82% of Assignments Well Suited

Given the enthusiasm of teachers for their classroom duties, as reported copiously above, one might expect that most have been assigned teaching responsibilities for which they are well suited most of the time. Indeed, that is what the data show. More than four-fifths of respondents say that their assignments are well suited given their content knowledge, as shown in table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Percent of Assignments Well Suited to Content Knowledge¹²

All	Principals	DNK
82	84	0

¹² “Over the past five years, approximately what percentage of your own teaching assignments have been well suited to your content knowledge and teaching strengths? [IF RESPONDENT VOLUNTEERS THAT HE/SHE WAS NOT TEACHING DURING ALL OF THE LAST FIVE YEARS, THEN SAY: Then, please provide an estimate for the period you were teaching.]”



5.0. Pre-Service Education

5.1. Moderately Positive Impact, Excellent Grade for Practicum, Generally Moderate Grades, Poor Grades for Teaching Administration, How to Teach Minorities, and How to Work with Parents

Ontario teachers feel that their pre-service program had a positive impact on their teaching skills and classroom performance. More than three-quarters of respondents (77% score a 5 or 4) say that their pre-service program had a positive impact on their teaching skills and classroom performance, as shown in table 5.1A.

Table 5.1A: Impact of Pre-Service Program¹³

	All	Principals
Strongly positive	27	34
Moderately positive	50	36
No net impact	16	21
Moderately negative	3	4
Strongly negative	1	0
[UNPROMPTED] No opinion	1	2
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know/Refused	2	2

¹³ "Thinking of the pre-service program at your faculty of education, how would you describe its impact on your teaching skills and classroom performance: [ROTATE POLES]."



Table 5.1B: “On a 100 point university report card type scale, what grade would you give your pre-service program for... [RANDOMIZE]”

	All	Principals	DNK
The practicum experience	81	78	3
Time spent with other teachers-in-training	72	69	3
The instructors as sources of guidance or advice	71	65	2
Material imparted by instructors in the classroom	69	64	4
Its assigned reading	64	60	5

Among the five main components of pre-service preparation, the practicum experience earns the highest score, as shown in table 5.1B. The practicum is the only component to earn a score of over 80%. Time spent with other teachers in training and the instructors as sources of guidance or advice earn scores in the low 70’s. These are followed by material imparted by instructors and assigned reading with the lowest scores.

When teachers are asked to score the components of the program, the pre-service program earns moderately good grades, as shown above. Teachers assign their pre-service program appreciably lower grades when asked to assess its contribution to their preparedness, as shown in table 5.1C. Among 13 elements of preparedness, only two earn scores in the 70’s—understanding the standards of practice and teaching effectively. Three elements of preparedness earn scores under 60%—handling administrative tasks, teaching students from minority backgrounds, and working with parents.

Teachers are relatively homogeneous in their assessments of pre-service programs irrespective of their segment or their role in the system. One departure from homogeneity is principals’ very low score to pre-service programs for teaching them how to relate to parents (score of 42% vs. 50% among teachers as a whole). Another departure from homogeneity is the low score given to pre-service programs for teaching students from minority backgrounds by both principals and teachers in the French Catholic system—



*A COMPAS Report for the Ontario College of Teachers,
2005 Annual STP Survey, September 5, 2005*

scores of 43% and 38%, respectively, as compared to 52% among teachers as a whole.

Table 5.1C: “Using the same 100 point scale, please rate your pre-service program for each of the following contributions. Helping you... [RANDOMIZE]”

	All	Principals	DNK
Understand the standards of practice for the teaching profession	72	65	5
Teach effectively	71	68	3
Set appropriate teacher-student boundaries	69	64	4
Acquire the relevant knowledge and skills to teach your subject area	69	69	4
Maintain a good standard of behaviour in the classroom	68	65	3
Help students excel	68	65	3
Understand the provincial curriculum	68	65	7
Work with colleagues	66	62	3
Understand how to monitor, assess, record and report student progress	65	60	3
Teach students with different abilities	62	58	4
Handle the administrative tasks of being a teacher	55	55	3
Teach students from minority backgrounds	52	43	5
Work with parents	50	42	4

The COMPAS team applied multiple regression-based causal modelling to the data in tables 5.1B and C in order to reveal statistically the principal drivers



or causes of teachers' overall assessments of the pre-service programs. Perceived instructor quality emerges as the top driver, as shown in table 5.1D.

Table 5.1D: Causal Modelling-Derived Key Drivers of Impact of Pre-Service Program (Tables 5.1B-D) upon Teaching Skills and Classroom Performance (Table 5.1A)

	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients
	B	Beta
(Constant)	1.855	
(Q22.4) The instructors as sources of guidance or advice	.010	.221
(Q22.2) Material imparted by instructors in the classroom	.006	.133
(Q23.3) Acquire the relevant knowledge and skills to teach your subject area	.005	.127
(Q23.7) Teach effectively	.005	.125
(Q22.5) Time spent with other teachers-in-training	.005	.107

- a. Dependent Variable: Q21 – Thinking of the pre-service program at your facility of education, how would you describe its impact on your teaching skills and classroom performance?

The results of the causal modelling reveal that pre-service programs are most likely to have a positive impact among teachers who:

- assign high grades to the instructor and the material imparted by the instructor (table 5.1B),
- feel that they acquired relevant knowledge for teaching in their subject area and generally learned how to teach effectively (table 5.1C), and
- assign a high performance score for the time spent with other teachers in training (table 5.1B).¹⁴

¹⁴ “The regression equation, as shown by the unstandardized betas in table 5.1D, demonstrates that impact of the pre-service program moves .01 points (on the 5-point scale) toward the positive end of the scale for every 1-point increase (on the 100-point report card



5.2. Teachers Split on Program Length, Practice Teaching Should be Emphasized if Program Length is Extended, Principals Most Supportive of Program Extension

Teachers are split on the issue of the length of the teacher education program in Ontario. As shown in table 5.2A, some respondents feel that the length of the program should be extended to 10 months (30%) or two years (26%), while others believe that the length should either remain at 8 months (40%) or be shortened (1%).

Table 5.2A: Should Pre-Service Program Be Shortened or Extended?¹⁵

	All	Principals
Be shortened	1	0
Remain at 8 months	40	26
Be extended to the length of a school year at 10 months	30	26
Be extended to two years	26	47
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know/Refused	3	2

Principals are an outlier, more convinced than others that the program should be lengthened. Nearly half (47%) of principals say the current length of teacher education programs should be extended to two years. This compares to

scale) in the instructor's rating as a source of guidance or advice. A similar calculation can be made for the effect of the other drivers simply by multiplying the change (i.e. 1 point on the 100-point scale) by its un-standardized beta. The standardized betas indicate relative importance--the higher the standardized β (in absolute value), the greater the importance. In this case, the instructor and the material imparted by the instructor are the top two drivers."

¹⁵ "The current length of a teacher education program in Ontario is 8 months. Do you believe that the length of the teacher education program should: [ROTATE POLES]."



26% among teachers as a whole. Thus, principals are almost twice as likely as teachers as a whole to believe that pre-service preparation should become a two year program.

Among those teachers who advocate extending the program, almost all (87%) say that practice teaching should be emphasized if the program were extended, as shown in table 5.2B.

Table 5.2B: [ASK ONLY IF RESPONDENT SAYS “BE EXTENDED” TO Q19] “Which should be emphasized if the program is extended?”

	All	Principals
Practice teaching	87	88
Academic	5	6
[UNPROMPTED] Both	8	6
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know/Refused	*	0

6.0. Multi-Year Collective Agreement

6.1. Multi-Year Collective Agreement Will Produce Peace and Stability

Almost three-quarters of teachers surveyed (71%) agree that the new multi-year collective agreements will bring peace and stability to the Ontario education system, while only 16% feel that the agreements would not bring peace and stability.



Table 6.1: “Generally speaking, do you think that the new multi-year collective agreements will bring peace and stability to the Ontario education system? [UNPROMPTED]”

	All	Principals
Yes	71	77
No	16	13
Don't know/Refused	14	11

6.2. Education-Friendly Government and Length of Agreement Assure Peace and Stability; Opinion Divided on Reasons against Peace and Stability

Respondents were also asked to give the main reason why they believed or did not believe that peace and stability would attend the multi-year collective agreement. As shown in table 6.2A, almost one-third (31%) of those who foresee peace and stability attribute this to a government perceived as education-friendly. Another 25% believe that peace and stability will come because the agreement covers several years.

Table 6.2A: [IF YES] “Which of the following five reasons best accounts for your view?” [RANDOMIZE]

	All	Principals
The current government is education-friendly	31	31
The agreement covers several years	25	33
The atmosphere is not tense	18	11
Most or all major issues were resolved	14	22
The issue of pay and working conditions was resolved	10	3
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know/Refused	2	0



Table 6.2B: “[IF NO] Which of the following seven reasons best accounts for your view?” [RANDOMIZE]

	All	Principals
There’ll be Board-specific conflicts	19	50
The Government won’t keep its promises	19	0
Some issues weren’t resolved	18	33
The general atmosphere	18	0
Inflation may outpace the pay agreement	13	17
The contract’s benefits are weak	4	0
The contract is too short	3	0
[UNPROMPTED] Don’t know/Refused	6	0

While the immense majority who are confident of several years of peace and stability are relatively unified in their assessment of the causes, the small minority who do not anticipate peace and stability are diverse and divided in the reasons for their perspective. Teachers who do not expect peace attribute their forecast to board-specific conflicts, a government that will not keep its promises, unresolved issues, the general atmosphere of mistrust, and inflation.

7.0. Perceptions of the Teaching Profession

7.1. Teachers Highly Concerned about the Public’s Lack of Understanding and Appreciation of the Teaching Profession

Teachers were asked to indicate their level of concern regarding several public perception issues. Almost 9 in 10 indicated they were highly concerned about the general public’s lack of understanding of the demands and complexities of the teaching profession (86% score a 5 or 4; mean 4.4), as shown in table 7.1.



Table 7.1: Degree of Concern about the Profession's Public Affairs Situation on 5 Point Scales¹⁶

	All	Principals	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
Many people don't understand the demands and complexities of the teaching profession	4.4	4.3	65	21	9	3	2	0
It is vital for the public to appreciate the excellent education provided by our schools given the resources they have available	4.3	4.3	49	33	14	3	1	*
Many people have an unrealistic understanding of the ability of teachers to solve problems that have their origins outside education	4.1	4.1	43	32	18	5	3	*
It is vital for the teaching profession to promote its achievements as a way of continuing to attract many of the best and the brightest to take up teaching as a career	4.1	4.3	41	32	19	4	3	*

¹⁶ "How concerned are you about the following public perception issues relating to the teaching profession? Please score each of the following issues on a 5 point scale where 1 means not at all concerned and 5, extremely concerned. [RANDOMIZE]."



	All	Principals	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
Many people fail to understand the centrality of schools for preparing young people to become democratic-minded citizens with the skills to function successfully in a very complex world	3.8	3.7	27	35	28	6	3	1
The teaching profession suffers from a lack of a widely known and respected representative as its "public face"	3.5	3.7	25	27	30	11	8	1

7.2. Strong Majority Support for Undertaking and Funding Communications, Information and Public Relations Campaign

A large majority of Ontario teachers feel that undertaking a communications, information or public relations campaign to enhance the image of the teaching profession is highly important (75% score a 5 or 4; mean 4.1).



Table 7.2A: Importance of a Communications, Information, and Public Relations Campaign on a 5 Point Scale¹⁷

All	Principals	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
4.1	4.1	46	29	16	5	5	*

Table 7.2B: Causal Modelling-Derived Key Drivers of Support (Table 7.2A) for a Communications/Information/PR Campaign (Table 7.1)¹⁸

	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients
	B	Beta
(Constant)	.700	
(Q25.6) It is vital for the teaching profession to promote its achievements as a way of continuing to attract many of the best and the brightest to take up teaching as a career.	.228	.214
(Q25.3) The teaching profession suffers from a lack of a widely known and respected representative as its "public face".	.156	.170
(Q25.5) It is vital for the public to appreciate the excellent education provided by our schools given the resources they have available.	.167	.134
(Q25.1) Many people don't understand the demands and complexities of the teaching profession.	.156	.131
(Q25.2) Many people fail to understand the centrality of schools for preparing young people to become democratic-minded citizens with the skills to function successfully in a very complex world.	.133	.124

¹⁷ "All things considered, how important is it for a communications, information, or public relations campaign to be undertaken to enhance public respect for or image of the profession of teaching? Please use a 5 point scale where 1 means not important and 5, extremely important."

¹⁸ Dependent Variable: Q26 – "All things considered, how important is it for a communications, information, or public relations campaign to be undertaken to enhance public respect for or image of the profession of teaching? Please use a 5 point scale where 1 means not at all important and 5, extremely important."



Perceived importance of a PR campaign to enhance public respect for teaching is especially high among those who are concerned about the following public priorities:

- Achievements should be promoted as a way of attracting the best and the brightest,
- The profession lacks a “public face,”
- The public should appreciate excellence in view of limited resources,
- The demands and complexities of the teaching profession are often misunderstood, and
- The importance of schools in shaping democratic-minded citizens with the skills to function successfully in a very complex world.

The above portrait emerges from causal modelling with importance of a campaign as the dependent variable and concern about public perception issues as the independent variables, as shown in table 7.2B.

As shown in table 7.2C, more than half of respondents felt that the Ontario College of Teachers, along with other education sector organizations, should assign a high priority to such a campaign (56% score a 5 or 4; mean 3.6).

Table 7.2C: College Funding Priority for Campaign on 5 Point Scale¹⁹

All	Principals	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
3.6	3.7	23	33	27	9	7	1

¹⁹ “How high a funding priority should the College of Teachers assign to undertaking such a campaign in partnership with other education sector organizations. Please use a 5 point scale where 1 means not important and 5, extremely important.”

