

Student Teaching Program

Student Teacher and Cooperating Teacher Survey Results

Spring 2021

Introduction

Austin Independent School District’s (AISD) Student Teaching Program partners with various universities, colleges, and alternative certification programs to provide students preparing to enter the teaching profession with experience in a classroom environment. Student teachers and interns have the opportunity to gain valuable experience working in and making professional connections in an urban school district. For cooperating teachers who host a student teacher/intern in their classroom, the student teaching experience provides an opportunity to develop their mentoring capacity. Additionally, the Student Teaching Program can serve as a teacher pipeline for the district.

This report describes the results from the Student Teacher Survey and the Cooperating Teacher Survey. The purpose of the two surveys was to gather information regarding (a) the student teacher/interns’ experience in the program that can be used for program improvement and (b) the quality of student teachers/interns as potential future teachers for AISD, respectively.

The Student Teacher Survey had a 58% ($N = 197$) response rate, and the Cooperating Teacher Survey had an 64% ($N = 200$) response rate.

Student Teaching Program Participants

There were 197 participants in the Spring 2021 Student Teaching Program cohort. The majority (68%; $n = 133$) of participants were student teachers and 32% ($n = 64$) were interns. Forty-nine percent of participants were enrolled in a teacher preparation program in the University of Texas (Table 1).

Table 1

The largest group of participants were enrolled in the University of Texas (49%).

Teacher preparation program	Percentage	<i>n</i>
University of Texas	49%	97
Texas State University	18%	35
Region 13	16%	32
St. Edwards University	7%	13
Texas Tech University	5%	10
Other	5%	10
Total	100%	197

Source. AISD human resources data

Note. The Other category includes Austin Community College, Concordia University, Educators of Excellence, Huston-Tillotson University, Stephen F. Austin State University, and Western Governors University.

Twenty-four participants were placed with more than one cooperating teacher. Slightly more participants (51%) were placed in at least one Title I campus. Overall, 52% of placements were on an elementary campus, 15% were on a middle school campus, and 33% were on a high school campus. Examining by course subject, the largest group participants was placed in a general education classroom (36%), followed by participants placed in a fine arts classroom (17%, Table 2).

Table 2

Thirty-six percent of participants were placed in a general education classroom.

Placement campus subject	Percentage	<i>n</i>
General education	36%	70
Fine arts	17%	34
Science	14%	28
Special education	11%	22
English	6%	12
Math	5%	10
Physical education/health	5%	10
History	3%	6
Other	3%	5
Grand Total	100%	197

Source. AISD human resources data

Note. The Other category includes history, language other than English, career and technical education, and content interventionist.

Student Teacher Survey Results

The majority of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that their experience was positive (95%) and would recommend their cooperating teacher for placement in the future (95%). Many respondents who recommended their cooperating teacher for placement in the future indicated that their cooperating teacher was supportive, welcomed them into the classroom, provided constructive feedback, answered questions, and encouraged student teachers to try new things in the classrooms. Examples of respondents comments include:

“She always offered feedback that was really helpful. Whenever she noticed behavior from me that she liked or that she thought I could continue to develop, she talked to me about it. She was also very open to my ideas, and I was able to observe very helpful scaffolding moments with students. I learned a lot from her.”

“She is a wonderful mentor! She has no problem with handing over the reins and letting you teach. She also provides a lot of constructive feedback that will help elevate your teaching to the next level.”

“She was professional, patient, and knowledgeable. She has many years of experience. The students appeared to trust and respect her. She also made herself available to answer my questions.”

AISD's Student Teaching Program

AISD's Student Teaching Program coordinates placements for student teachers and interns in the fall and spring semesters annually. The teacher preparation program typically determines the logistics of the placements.

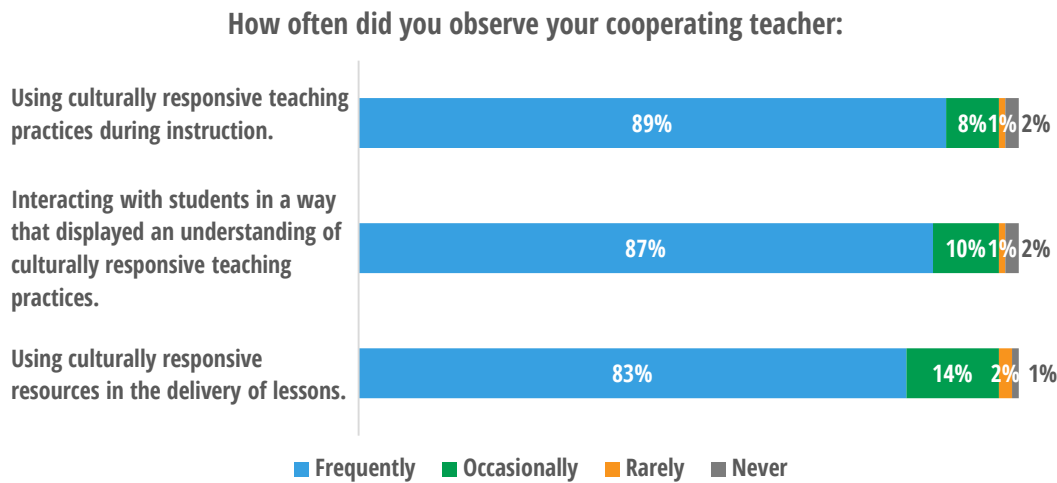
The program operates by first recruiting AISD teachers to be cooperating teachers (i.e., teachers who are interested in opening their classroom to host a student teacher/intern). The district ensures that interested cooperating teachers meet various requirements, such as having a minimum of 3 years of teaching experience, an *effective* rating or higher on AISD's Professional Pathway for Teachers (PPfT) teacher appraisal system, and the campus principal's approval.

Partnering universities, colleges, and alternative certification programs typically reach out to AISD with students who are interested in participating in AISD's Student Teaching Program. Potential student teachers/interns must pass a criminal history check before they are matched and placed with a cooperating teacher. Student teacher/intern placements are typically based on factors such as grade level and subject area. Additionally, the district tries to ensure that student teachers/interns are represented on Title I campuses. Additional

One AISD value is using culturally responsive practices with students. The majority of student teachers/interns (89%) indicated they frequently observed their cooperating teacher using culturally responsive teaching practices during instruction (Figure 1). Additionally, 87% of respondents indicated they frequently observed their respective cooperating teachers interacting with students in a way that displayed an understanding of culturally responsive teaching practices, and 83% of respondents indicated they frequently observed their respective cooperating teachers using culturally responsive resources in the delivery of lessons.

Figure 1.

The majority of respondents (89%) indicated they frequently observed their cooperating teacher using culturally responsive teaching practices during instruction.



Source. Student Teacher Survey, Spring 2021

Finally, 86% of respondents indicated they were interested in employment in AISD. When asked why they were interested in working with AISD, many said they supported AISD practices, had a positive experience with their placement campus, had a positive experience with their children enrolled in AISD, and wanted to remain and grow in the Austin community. Among those who indicated they were not interested in employment in AISD, many said they planned to move to another city.

Cooperating Teacher Survey Results

The majority (95%) of cooperating teachers strongly agreed/agreed that their student teacher/intern was prepared for the first day of providing instruction. When asked about the student teacher/intern’s ability to incorporate culturally responsive teaching practices into instruction, 84% of cooperating teachers reported they frequently observed their student teacher/intern interacting with students in a way that displayed an understanding of culturally responsive teaching practices (Figure 2). Additionally, 73% of respondents frequently observed their student teacher/intern using culturally responsive teaching practices during instruction, and 69% frequently observed their student teacher/intern using culturally responsive resources in the delivery of lessons.

AISD’s Student Teaching Program

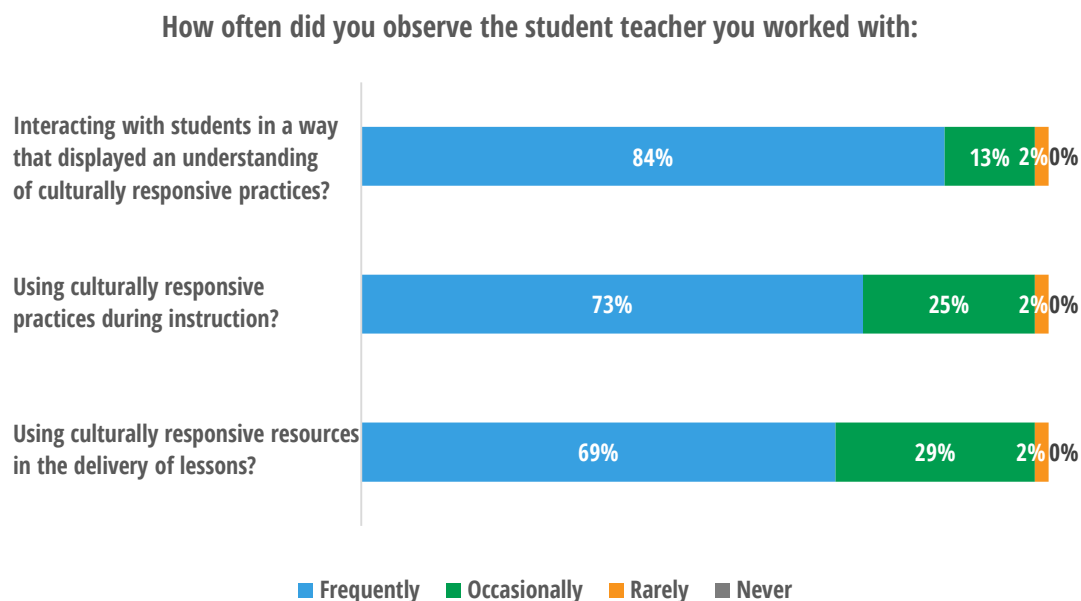
(continued)

recruitment is sometimes conducted if the current pool of cooperating teachers does not match the subject area or grade level of a student teacher/intern, in an effort to place all student teachers/interns for the semester.

Prior to entering the classroom, student teachers/interns attend orientation sessions held by AISD. The sessions provide an overview of initiatives, programs, and district expectations. Student teachers/interns are also provided with access to AISD’s Human Capital Platform, for which they complete a required BLEND course, and access to other professional learning resources in the district. Finally, various events are hosted near the end of the semester to encourage professional networking.

Figure 2.

The majority of cooperating teachers (84%) indicated they frequently observed their student teacher interacting with students in a way that displayed an understanding of culturally responsive practices.



Source. Cooperating Teacher Survey, Spring 2021

Cooperating teachers were also asked what area(s) of strength the student teacher displayed, as well as what feedback they had for the student teacher. Overall themes regarding area(s) of strengths displayed included the ability to develop rapport with students, be adaptable/flexible, and create engaging lessons. Examples of respondents’ comments include:

“Good rapport with students, works hard, plans own lessons, collaborates with me”

“Lesson planning and lesson creation, creating strong relationships, flexibility”

“Organization, thorough lesson planning and activities for the students. Flexibility, and willing to change things up when needed. Very willing to listen and take advice. Remarkable job of teaching both in person and remote students simultaneously. Good classroom management and good relationships with the students.”

“My student teacher is a very compassionate, knowledgeable, and organized teacher who takes time to build a strong rapport with students. She is very observant and she takes direction well. She plans creative and engaging lessons to capture the attention and interest of the students. Students find her to be very approachable and trustworthy. I have seen immense growth over the past 8 months of working with her, and I am confident that she will continue to succeed as an effective teacher.”

Respondents were able to provide their suggestions on how the student teacher/intern could improve. Many of these suggestions involved helping them develop strategies to overcome the challenges many novice teachers experience when they begin instructing their own classroom. In this case, student teachers/interns were able to develop strategies to this prior to instructing their own classroom. Overall themes related to feedback for the student teacher/intern included honing classroom management skills, time management skills, differentiation skills, and increasing

confidence level. Examples of cooperating teachers' comments include:

“Over time, she needs to learn how to more strongly encourage students to engage in learning and correct them when they are off task. However, this is not something that I would expect a brand new teacher to immediately know how to do or feel comfortable doing.”

“The student teacher had many strengths. She could improve on differentiation in her lessons.”

“Student teacher can improve in her classroom management area by reinforcing the classroom rules and stopping the lesson whenever students need to be redirected and reminded of rules and expectations.”

“No blatant weaknesses that aren't common with zero-year teachers. He will surely overcome small weaknesses through experience and reflection.”

In total, 91% of cooperating teachers indicated they would recommend the student teacher for employment to their principals.

Many cooperating teachers (94%) indicated they would like to be a cooperating teacher again. Reasons cited included wanting to share their experience and knowledge. Many also stated they had learned from the student teachers and had reflect on their own practice as a result (e.g., through gaining a different perspective, new pedagogy, instructional tools, or content delivery methods).

Conclusion

Overall, the majority of student teachers and interns indicated they had a positive experience in the Student Teaching Program, and results suggest that the Student Teaching Program can be an effective pipeline for teacher recruitment. Not only did the majority of cooperating teachers say they would recommend their student teacher for employment to their principals, but the majority of student teacher respondents indicated interest in employment with AISD. Additionally, student teachers entering AISD will have previous knowledge and experience with AISD systems, practices, and values. It may be noted that student teachers/interns may benefit from gaining experience with and learning more about incorporating culturally inclusive teaching practices and resources and differentiation during the lesson.

Jenny Leung, MA



Department of Research and Evaluation



4000 IH 35 Frontage Road | Austin, TX 78704
512.414.1724 | fax: 512.414.1707
www.austinisd.org/dre | Twitter: @AISD_DRE

June 2021

Publication 20.25