



R3 Framework Evaluation Brief: Beginning Teacher Support Programs

August 2024

Prepared by Measurement Incorporated

Pitt County Schools' (PCS) Beginning Teacher (BT) Support program includes several types of assistance to new teachers during their first three years in the profession that include BT Mentors and Facilitating Mentors. BT Mentors are teachers who meet several times a month monthly with assigned BTs in their schools to provide mentorship and support on various aspects of teaching, e.g., classroom management, lesson planning, instruction, curriculum, and assessment, etc. Facilitating Mentors are teachers who primarily support BT Mentors by meeting with them and providing resources to build their capacity, while also facilitating monthly "Teacher Talks" meetings to BTs.

This edition of the *R3 Framework Evaluation Brief* focuses on the experiences of BT Mentors, including the level of support they received from their Facilitating Mentor, the ways in which they implemented their role, their perceptions about the impact of the program on BTs, and the likelihood that they would continue serving in the role for the 2024-25 school year. The information was designed to support the DEEL Office's BT Support Team in making data-driven adaptations to the roles and responsibilities of the BT Mentor and Facilitating Mentor. Specifically, the BT Support Team was interested in data to help answer the following questions.

Support: To what extent were BT Mentors supported in their role? What supports were the most helpful? What additional support is needed?

Implementation: How often did the BT Mentors meet with their BTs? What topics were discussed during the meetings? What were the challenges and successes to implementing the role?

Impact: What were the benefits of the BT Mentor program to BTs?

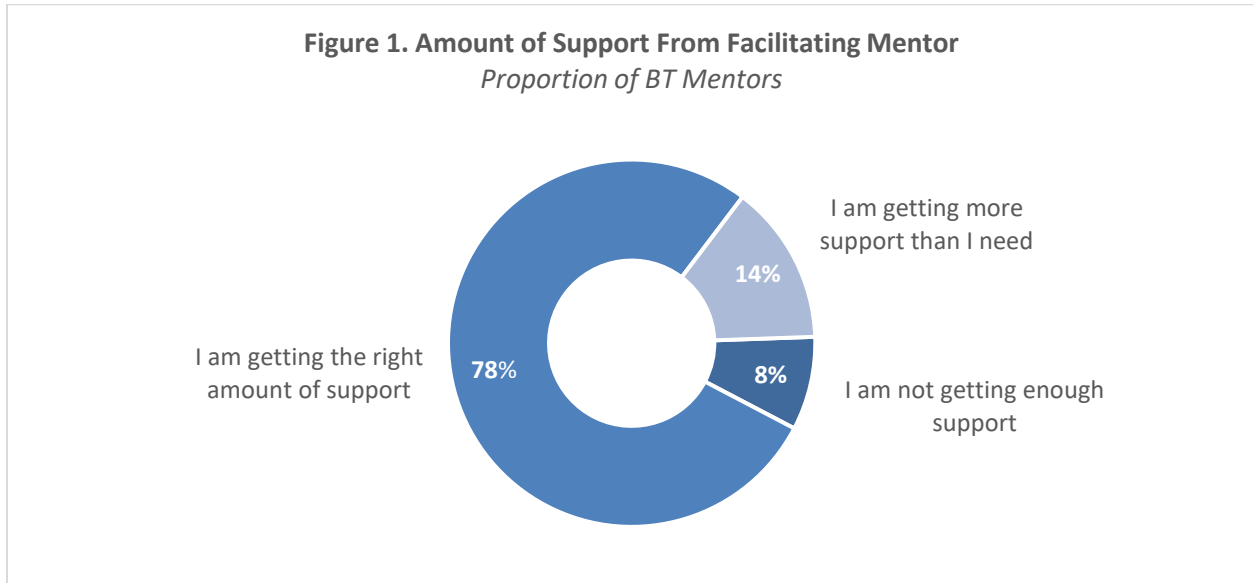
Continuation of the Role: To what extent do BT Mentors plan to continue in their role?

The data collected for the brief included an online survey¹ that was administered in May 2024 to BT Mentors, the Monthly BT Mentor Log², and an interview with the BT Support Team lead. The findings are organized by the key areas listed above.

¹ The survey was completed by 85 BT Mentors. The estimated response rate was 23%.

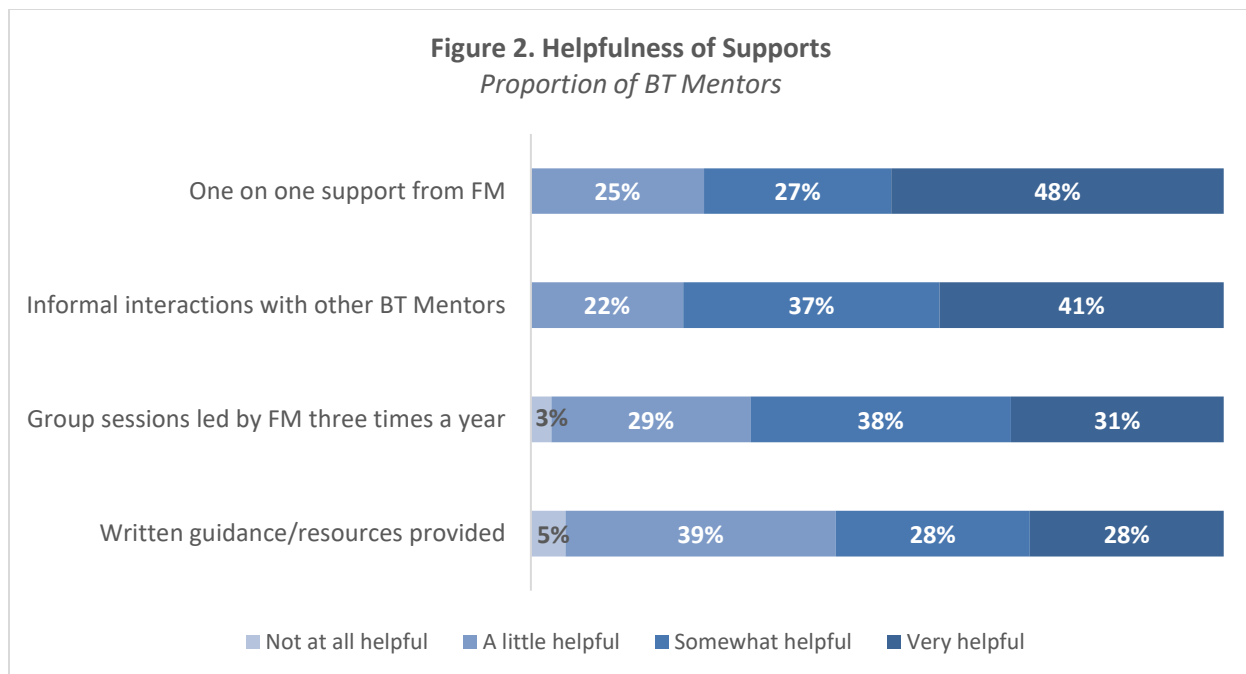
² The database contained 1,893 entries.

Key Findings on Support to BT Mentors: BT Mentors perceived the support provided to them to be adequate and helpful. Specifically, they gave high marks to the one-on-one support from their Facilitating Mentor. They also found informal meetings with other BT Mentors to be helpful. They would like additional support and training in how to conduct classroom observations of their BTs and how to best support BTs in differentiating instruction.



Source: BT Mentor Survey (n=85)

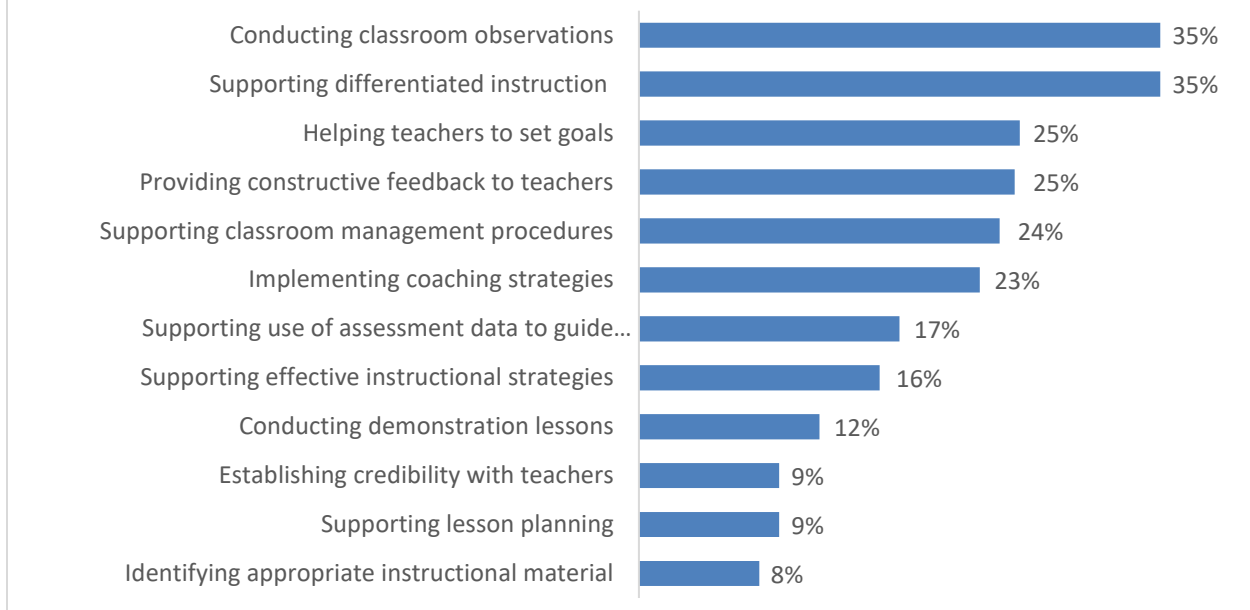
- As seen in **Figure 1** above, most BT mentors reported receiving the *right amount of support* from their Facilitating Mentors (78%). Another 14% of BT Mentors reported receiving *more support than needed*.
- Conversely, only 8% of BT Mentors reported that they were *not receiving enough support* from their Facilitating Mentors.



Source: BT Mentor Survey (n=85)

- When asked to rate the helpfulness of support provided to them, BT Mentors rated one-on-one support from their Facilitating Mentors (FMs) and informal interactions with other BT Mentors the highest (see **Figure 2**). Specifically,
 - One-on-one support from FMs was rated as *very helpful* by 48% of BT Mentors, *somewhat helpful* by 27%, and *a little helpful* by 25%.
 - Informal interactions with other BT Mentors were rated as *very helpful* by 41% of BT Mentors, *somewhat helpful* by 37%, and *a little helpful* by 22%.
- Fewer BT Mentors (31%) rated the group sessions led by FMs as *very helpful*. Another 38% rated the group sessions as *somewhat helpful*, and a *little helpful* or *not at all helpful* by 31%.
- Only 28% of BT Mentors rated the written guidance/resources that were provided to them as *very helpful* while another 28% rated it as *somewhat helpful*. On the other hand, 44% rated the resources as *a little helpful* or *not at all helpful*.

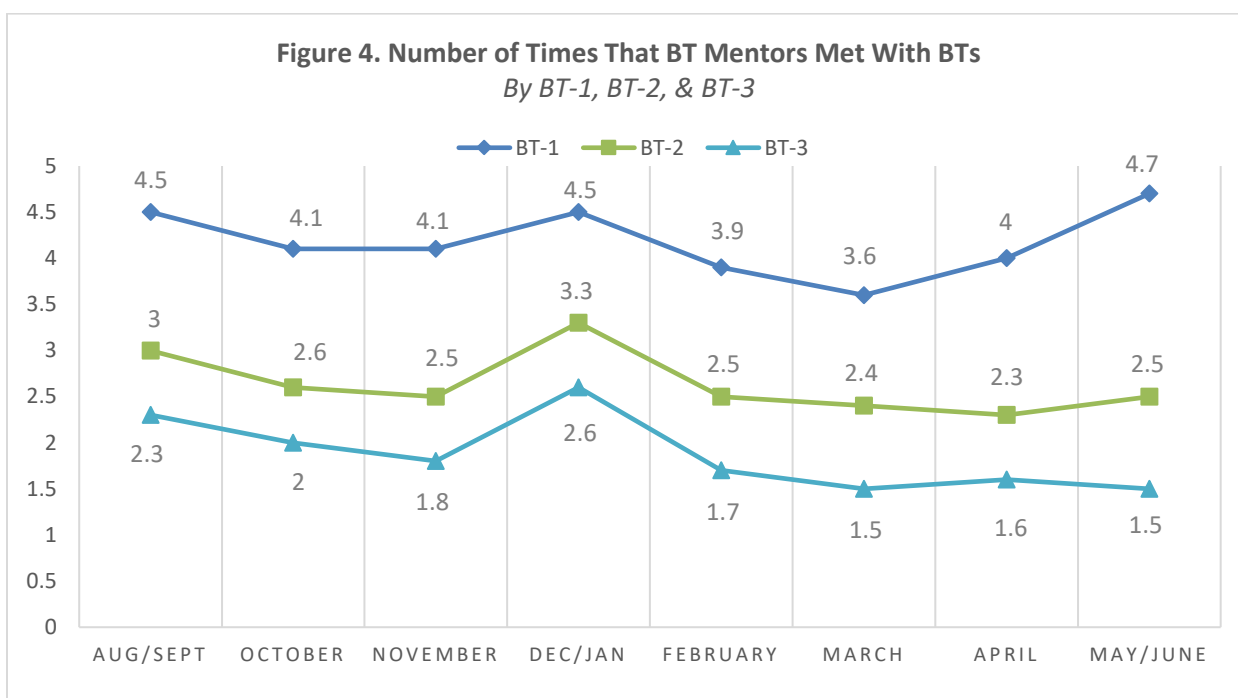
Figure 3. Areas Where Additional Support/Training Are Needed
Proportion of BT Mentors who checked Yes



Source: BT Mentor Survey (n=85)

- As seen in **Figure 3**, BT Mentors' most requested areas for additional support/training were conducting classroom observations (35%) and supporting the use of differentiated instruction (35%).
- One-quarter of BT Mentors also requested additional support/training in helping teachers to set goals (25%) and providing constructive feedback to teachers (25%). These were closely followed by supporting classroom management procedures (24%) and implementing coaching strategies (23%).
- Not shown in the figure, 12% of BT Mentors *did not* need additional support/training in any of the listed areas.
- Several BT Mentors who selected "other", left open-ended responses that included "providing constructive, positive criticism" and "matching mentees with appropriate program mentor" as areas where additional support needed.

Key Findings on the Implementation of the BT Mentor Role: BT Mentors adhered to meeting frequency guidelines with their BTs, according to logs that were submitted. Meetings typically occurred informally or were scheduled based on BT Mentors' perception of need. These meetings most often occurred after school or during planning or free periods. BTs needed the most support in classroom routines and student discipline and behavior, according to BT Mentors. BT Mentors perceived their support to be helpful to their BTs and reported positive relationships with them; however, they felt that the lack of interest from their BT in receiving support was a barrier to their effectiveness. They also reported work overload and scheduling difficulties as barriers. A review of the log data revealed that the number of logs that were submitted declined throughout the year.

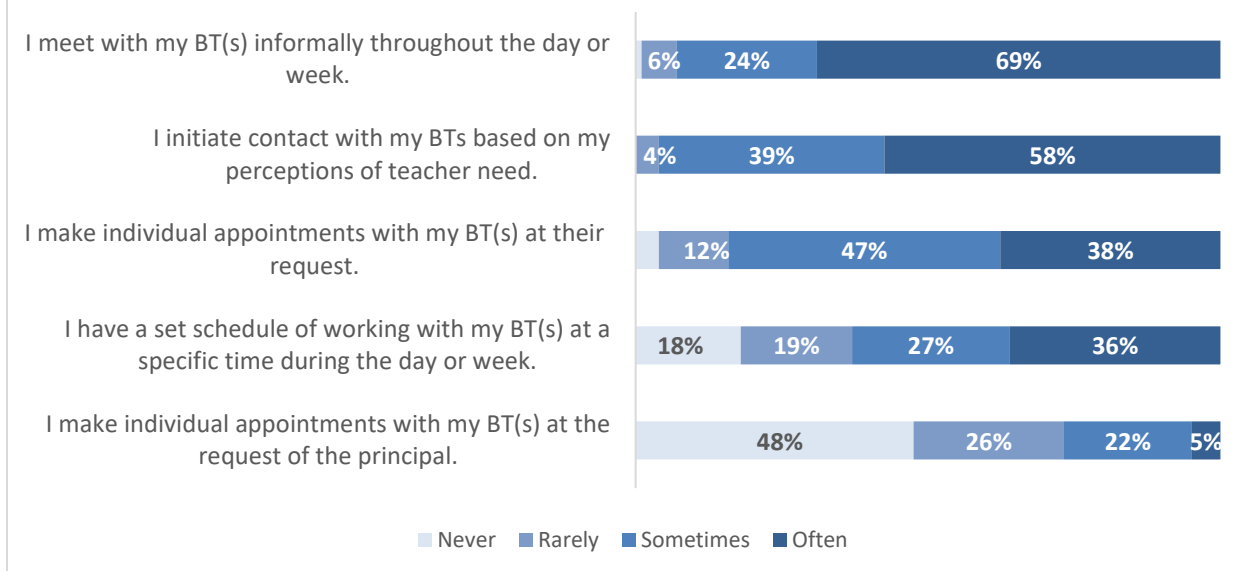


Source: BT Mentor Log (n=1,893)

- The following guidance was provided to BT Mentors regarding the expected frequency of their meetings with BTs, which was based on BTs' year of teaching.
 - Four times a month for BT-1 (first year of teaching) teachers
 - Two times a month for BT-2 (second year of teaching) teachers
 - One time a month for BT-3 (third year of teaching) teachers
- **Figure 4** shows the average number of times that BT Mentors met with their assigned BTs each month, disaggregated by BTs' teaching year status. The information is based on the monthly logs that were submitted by BT Mentors.
- As seen in the figure, BT Mentors adhered to the expected meeting frequency for most of the months and often exceeded the guidelines.³ For example, BT Mentors met with their BT-1s more than four times a month for six of eight months. They met with BT-2s and BT-3s more than the expected frequency for all months of the school year.

³ Several months were combined on the log due to truncated school days because of recess and start and end dates for the school year.

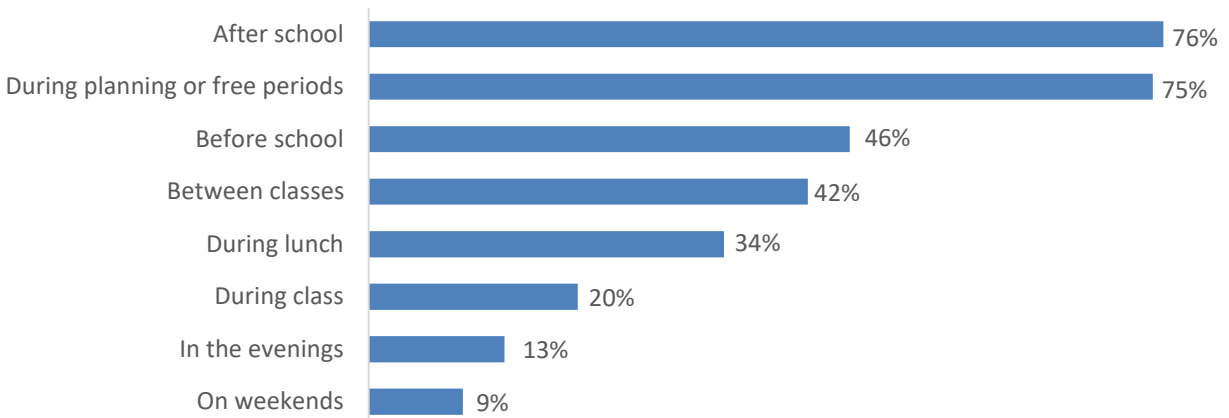
Figure 5. Methods Used to Schedule and/or Meet With Their BT
Proportion of BT Mentors



Source: BT Mentor Survey (n=85)

- When asked to report on their methods for scheduling and/or meeting, most BT Mentors (69%) reported that they *often* met with their BTs informally throughout the day or week (**Figure 5**).
- Another 58% of BT Mentors *often* initiated contact with their BT based on their perceptions of teacher need.
- Some BT Mentors *often* made individual appointments at the request of the BT (38%) or had a set schedule of meetings with BTs at a specific time (36%).
- Conversely, few BT Mentors (5%) made individual appointments with BTs at the request of the principal.

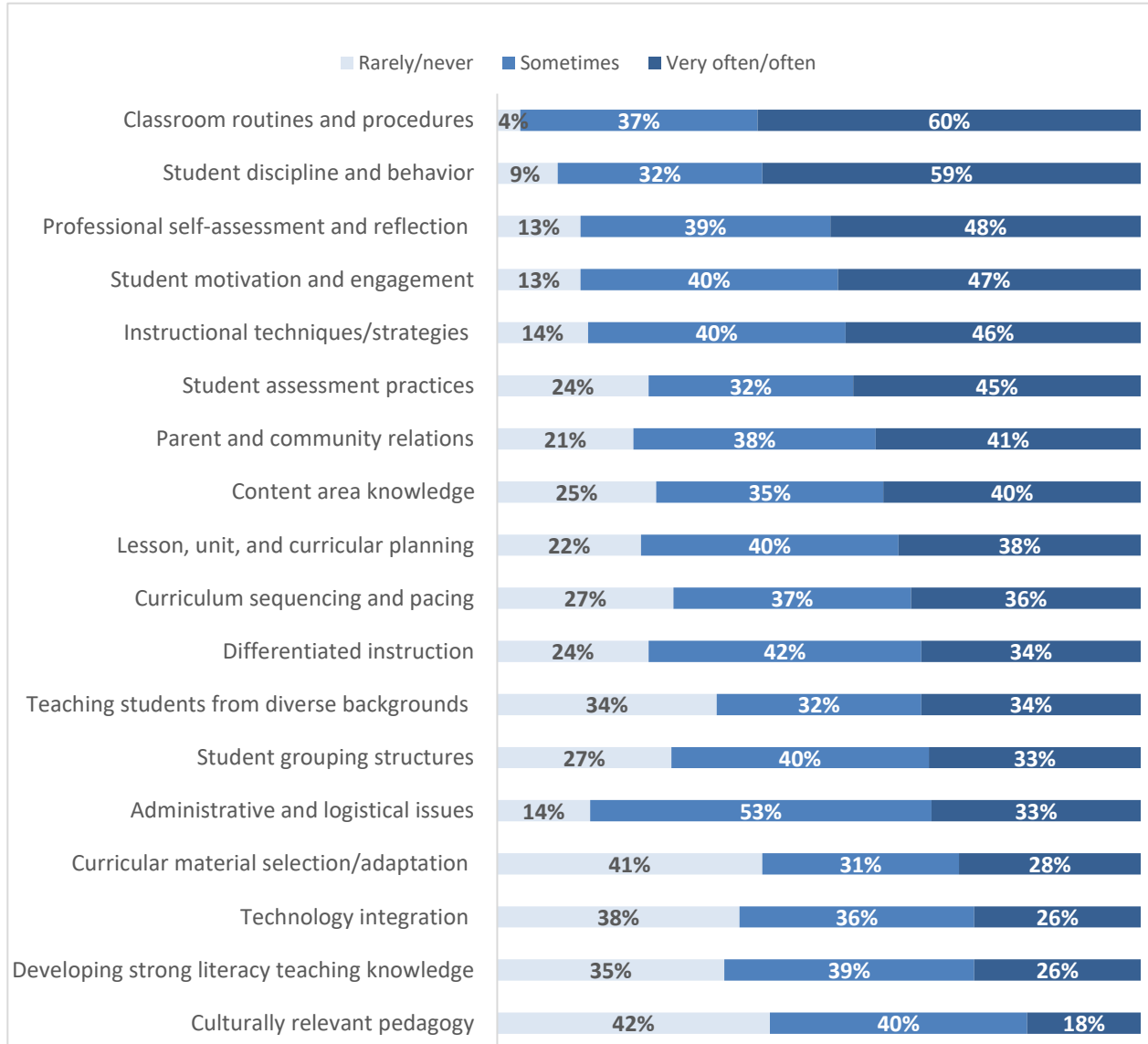
Figure 6. When BT Mentors Meet With Their BT
Proportion of BT Mentors who checked Yes



Source: BT Mentor Survey (n=85)

- **Figure 6** shows that most BT Mentors met with their BTs after school (76%) or during planning or free periods (75%).
- Some BT Mentors met with their BTs before school (46%), between classes (42%), and/or during lunch (34%).
- A smaller proportion of BT Mentors met with their BT in the evenings (13%) or on the weekends (9%).

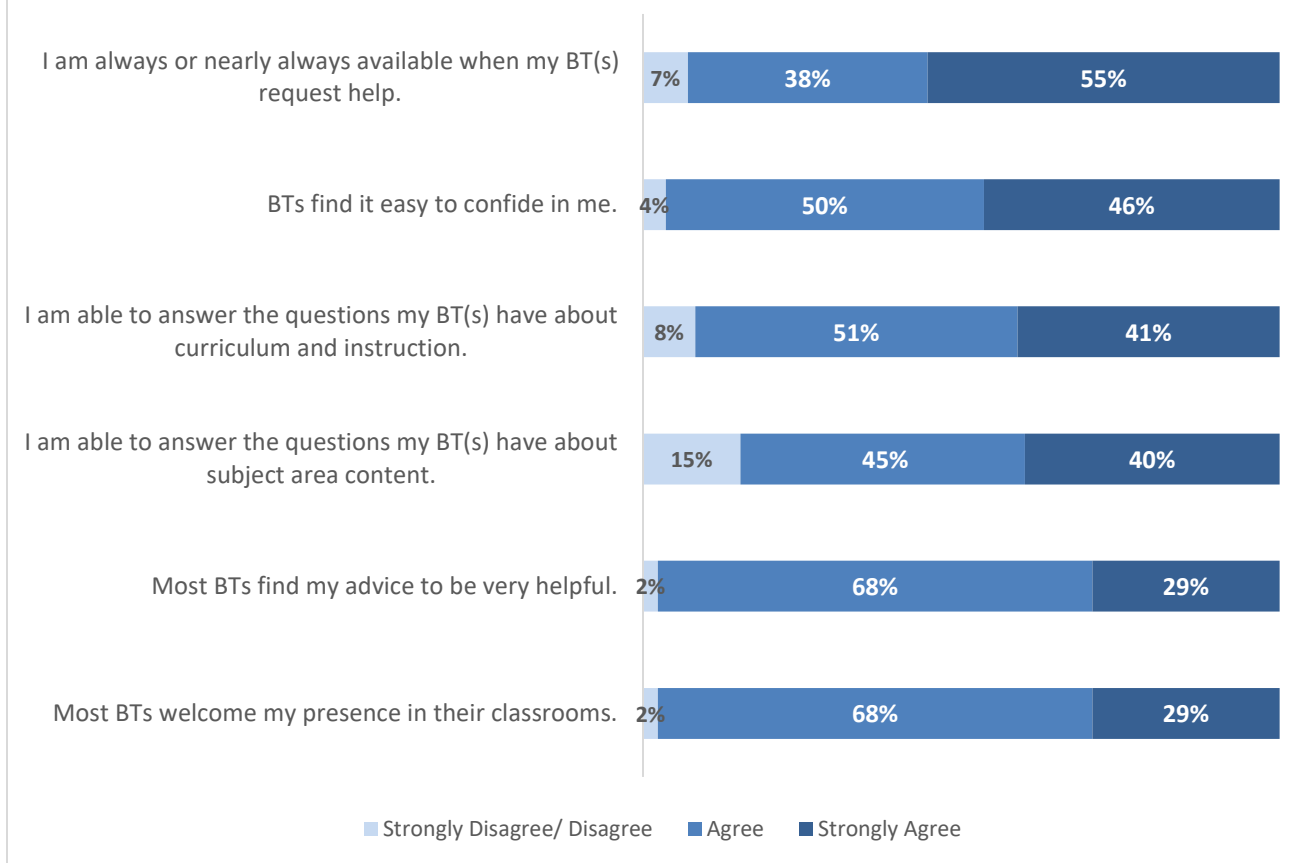
Figure 7. Frequency of Support in Various Areas of Teaching
Proportion of BT Mentors



Source: BT Mentor Survey (n=85)

- **Figure 7** lists the frequency of support provided by BT Mentors in various areas of teaching. The top three areas that BT Mentors provided support to BTs in were classroom routines and procedures (60%), student discipline and behavior (59%), and professional self-assessment and reflection (48%).
- The figure lists other areas where support was often needed but by a smaller proportion of BT Mentors.
- Not shown, BT Mentors added the following areas in the open-ended “other” category.
 - IEP development and behavior management
 - Grading concepts, lesson planning, paperwork, and technical aspects of teaching
 - Developing positive relationships with students

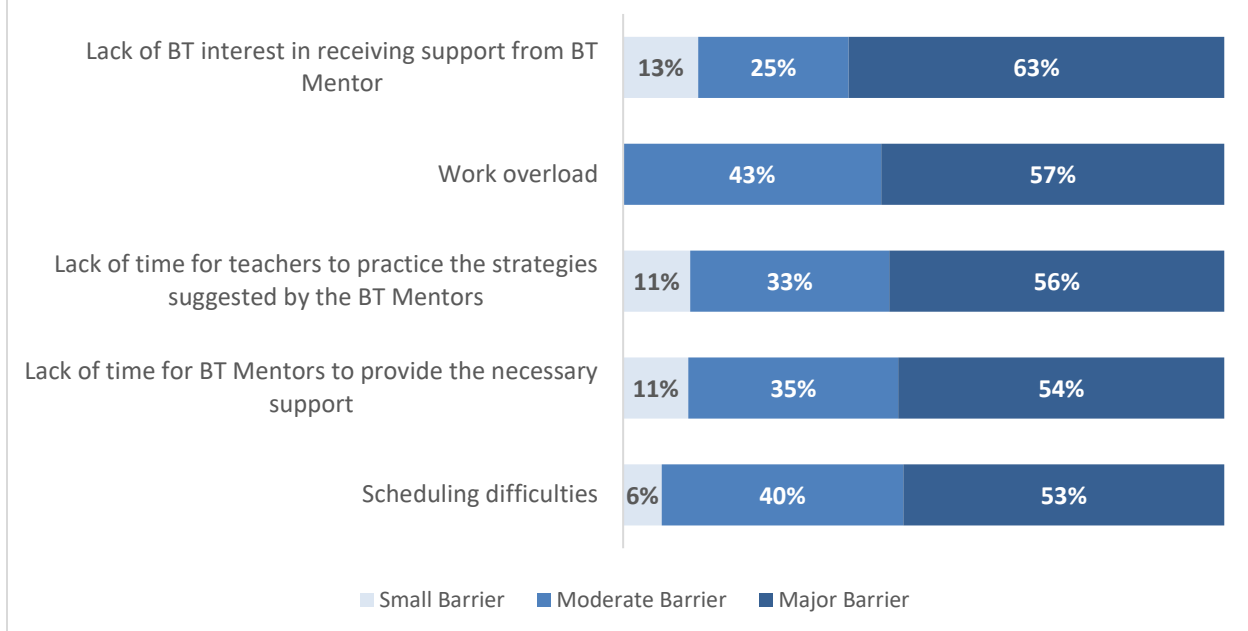
Figure 8. Perception of Supports and Relationships With BTs
Proportion of BT Mentors



Source: BT Mentor Survey (n=85)

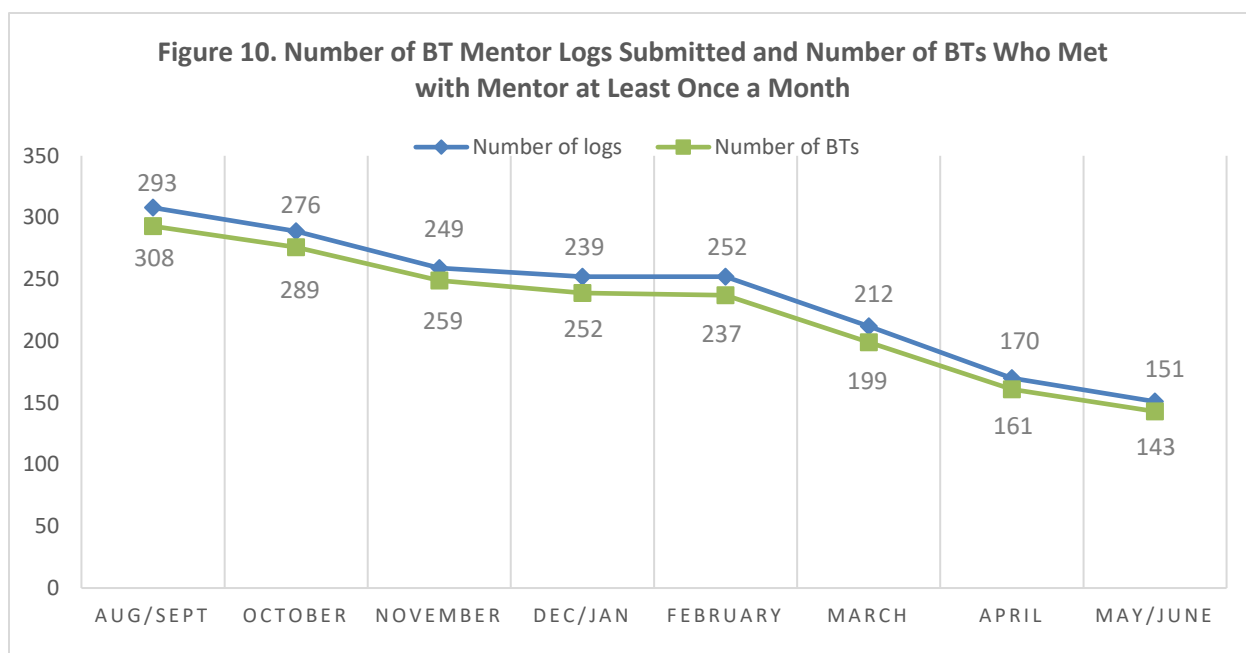
- BT Mentors were asked to report their perception of support and relationships with the BTs. This data is reported in **Figure 8**.
- As shown in the figure, most BT Mentors *strongly agree* or *agree* that they were able to support BTs in the following ways.
 - Being available when BT(s) request help (93%)
 - Answer questions that BTs have about curriculum and instruction (92%)
 - Answer questions about subject area content (85%)
- Most BT Mentors (96%) *strongly agree* or *agree* that BTs found it easy to confide in them.
- Most BT Mentors were more likely to *agree* than *strongly agree* that BTs found their advice to be helpful and welcomed their presence in their classrooms (68% vs. 29%, respectively).
- Not reported in the figure, most BT Mentors *strongly disagree* or *disagree* that BTs do not need a BT Mentor to help them (92%).

Figure 9. Barriers Restricting the Effectiveness of the BT Mentor Program
Proportion of BT Mentors



Source: BT Mentor Survey (n=85)

- **Figure 9** lists the top five barriers that restricted BT Mentors' effectiveness and the extent to which they reported each as a barrier.
- Many BT Mentors reported that the lack of BT interest in receiving support from BT Mentors was a *major barrier* (63%).
- Second to that was work overload, which was reported as a *major barrier* by 57% of BT Mentors.
- More than half of BT Mentors reported that the lack of time for teachers to practice suggested strategies was a *major barrier* (56%). Similarly, 54% of BT Mentors reported the lack of time for them to provide support was a *major barrier*.
- Another 53% of BT Mentors felt that scheduling difficulties restricted the effectiveness of the BT Mentor Program.
 - Regarding scheduling difficulties, one BT Mentor wrote "I am currently a mentor for a teacher that has the same planning time as me. I feel that it would be more difficult to meet with teachers in other roles, but it would allow me more time to go in for observations."
 - Another wrote in that "BT not communicating in order to schedule meetings."



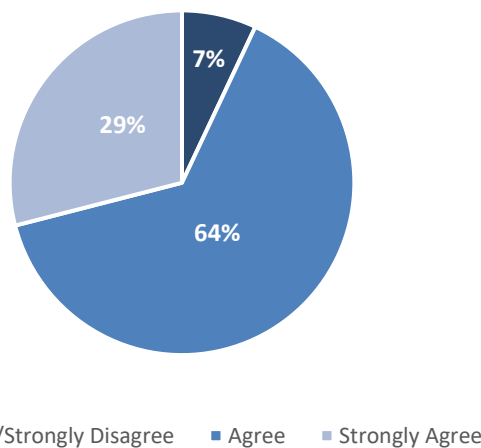
Source: Monthly BT Mentor Log (n=1,893)

- A review of the BT Mentor logs revealed the number of log submissions declined over time, which also showed a decline in the number of BTs who met with their BT Mentor monthly.
- **Figure 10** shows that 293 BT Mentors submitted a log for the August/September period. Subsequently, the number of BT Mentors who submitted a log decreased each month until February when the number increased to 252 but remained below the August/September number. The rate of decline, however, increased after February. By May/June, only 151 BT Mentors submitted a log which is almost half as many logs that were submitted in August/September.
- Similarly, the number of BTs that met at least once a month with their BT Mentors declined over time, as indicated by the log. For example, the figure shows that the number of BTs who met with their BT Mentor at least one time in August/September was 308.⁴ By May/June, less than half of BTs, i.e., 143 met with their BT Mentor according to the log reports.

⁴ Most BT Mentors met with one BT; however, some BT Mentors met with up to 4 BTs.

Key Findings on Impact of the BT Mentor Program: BT Mentors perceived the program to have a big impact on teaching and learning in schools. For example, they reported that the BT Mentor program offered enhanced support and assistance to BTs and helped BTs to feel less isolated. BT Mentors also reported that BTs improved their teaching skills in various areas. More specifically, BT Mentors mentioned success in BT's classroom management and student engagement and relationships with students most often. Other areas of success included time management, communication with parents, instructional strategies, student grouping, and differentiating instruction to meet students' needs.

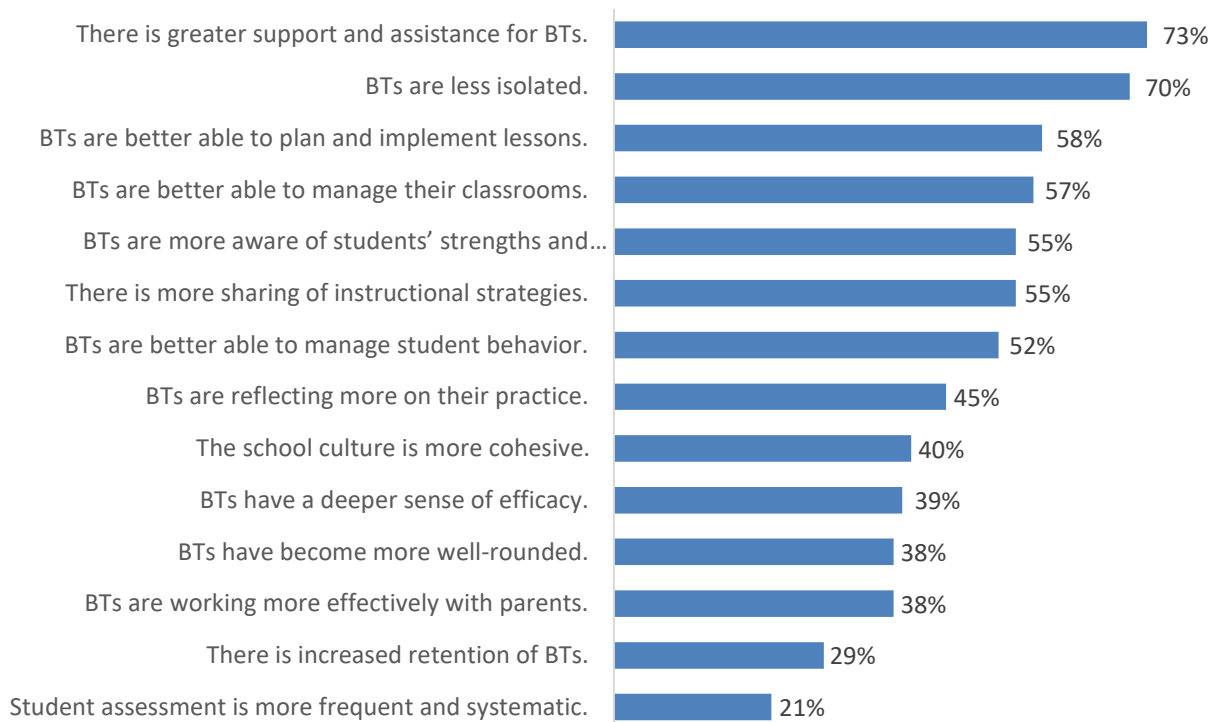
Figure 11. Impact on Teaching and Learning in Schools



Source: BT Mentor Survey (n=85)

- As seen in **Figure 11**, the majority of BT Mentors *strongly agree* or *agree* that the BT Mentor program made a big impact on teaching and learning in schools (93%).

Figure 12. Benefits of the BT Mentor Program
Proportion of BT Mentors checking Yes



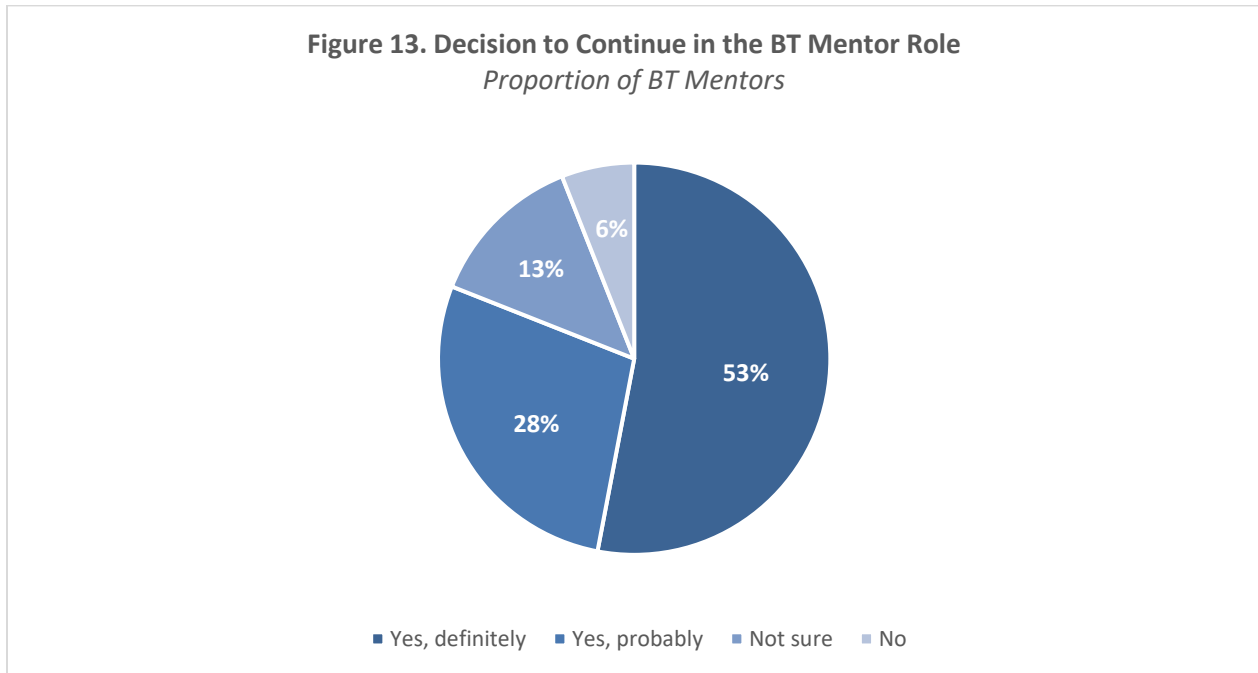
Source: BT Mentor Survey (n=85)

- **Figure 12** shows that most BT Mentors reported that the BT Mentor program provided greater support and assistance for beginning teachers (73%). BT Mentors also felt that BTs were less isolated because of the program (70%).
- Over half of the BT Mentors reported that BTs were
 - Better able to plan and implement lessons (58%)
 - Better able to manage their classrooms (57%)
 - More aware of students' strengths and weaknesses (55%)
 - Better able to manage student behavior (52%)
- Not reported in the figure, BT Mentors also commented on the strengths and successes of BTs in their monthly log.
 - 20% of BT Mentor entries documented success with BT *classroom management* skills. For example, one mentor shared: "[My BT] has grown leaps and bounds with his classroom management. He has systems and procedures in place to make sure the students are in a safe environment."
 - 17% of BT Mentors highlighted their BT's success with *student engagement and relationships with students*. Mentors submitted responses such as, "[My BT] was able to make lessons more engaging for the students. She has established

positive relationships with students with behavioral needs. She is beginning to accommodate her students based on their needs.” Another mentor commented, “[My BT] has spent time building relationships with the students. She has created a nurturing environment with consistent routines. Several parents have expressed their appreciation for all she has done for their children in a short amount of time.”

- 11% of BT Mentors documented that BTs succeeded in their *time management* skills. A mentor noted, “[My BT] has wonderful time management skills. She completed assessments and progress reports before they were due. [She] continues to juggle higher education for herself and beginning teacher requirement.”
- 11% of BT Mentors documented that BTs excelled in communicating with students’ *parents*. One mentor wrote, “[My BT] has grown as an educator for the past months. It's clearer to her that establishing rapport with parents is an integral part in managing student behavior in the classroom.” Another BT Mentor said, “[My BT] communicates with the parents of his students. He keeps a log to document his phone calls and emails.”
- 8% of BT Mentors praised BTs for their instructional strategies, noting “increased comfort with content and instructional strategies”. Some mentors also pointed out BTs’ effective use of external resources like Canvas and PowerSchool to enhance instruction.

Key Findings on the Continuation of the BT Mentor Role: Most BT Mentors are likely to continue in their role next year. However, some are uncertain about continuing and a small number have decided not to return.



Source: BT Mentor Survey (n=85)

- As seen in **Figure 13**, more than half of BT Mentors will continue in the BT Mentor role next year (53%). Another 28% reported that they will probably continue in the role next year.
- Conversely, only 13% were not sure if they will be continuing in the BT Mentor role next year and 6% reported they would not be returning.
- Not shown in the figure, BT Mentors reported the following reasons for not continuing in their role.
 - Burnout/work overload (2 BT Mentors)
 - Dissatisfaction with BTs lack of interest (1 BT Mentor)
 - Retiring or leaving PCS (2 BT Mentors)

Conclusions

Pitt County Schools supports new teachers during their first three years of teaching by pairing them with a BT Mentor. BT Mentors meet with these teachers regularly throughout the school year to provide mentorship in their role as a teacher. Facilitating Mentors provide Monthly Teacher Talks for BTs and support the efforts of BT Mentors.

This edition of the *R3 Evaluation Framework* focused on the BT Mentor program. The DEEL Office BT Support team wanted to learn about the support, implementation, and perceived impact of the BT Mentor program. Key findings that were summarized in this report are highlighted below.

Support: To what extent were BT Mentors supported in their role? What supports were the most helpful? What additional support is needed?

- Most BT Mentors felt supported in their role. They rated the one-on-one meetings with the Facilitation Mentor and informal meetings with other BT Mentors as *most helpful*. They would like additional support on how to conduct classroom observations of their BTs and how to best support BTs in differentiating instruction.

Implementation: How often did the BT Mentors meet with their BTs? What topics were discussed during the meetings? What were the challenges to implementing the role?

- BT Mentors met or exceeded the expected frequency of meetings with the BTs that they reported on their log. During meetings, BT Mentors discussed classroom routines and student discipline and behavior with the BTs most often. The biggest challenges were lack of interest from BTs and work overload felt by BT Mentors.

Impact: What were the benefits of the BT Mentor program to BTs?

- BT Mentors perceived the program to be impactful on two fronts: (1) it provided support to BTs to help them feel less isolated, and (2) the program helped BTs improve their teaching skills.

Continuation of the Role: To what extent do BT Mentors plan to continue in their role?

- Most BTs were likely to continue in their role during the 2024-25 school year.

Overall, the findings present a positive view on the value and importance of the BT Mentor program. One area in need of further discussion and examination is log submissions. Our review of the log data showed that the number of log submissions decreased over time and the rate of decline was more substantial after February. This impacted reports on the number of BTs who met with their BT Mentor. It is difficult to determine from the data if BT Mentors continued to meet with their BTs but did not submit their log or if they did not meet with their BTs and therefore, did not submit a log. Survey data showed that some BT Mentors reported a lack of interest from BTs, which made it difficult for them to schedule meetings. Additionally, the informal nature of the meeting structure could have made it harder for BTs to meet with their BT Mentor.

One recommendation is to identify potential barriers and develop solutions to increase log submissions, e.g., simplify the log, develop formalized reminders, provide BT Mentors time to

complete logs, etc. Another recommendation is to examine and address barriers to meeting with BTs. For example, create a process early in the school year for identifying BTs who are more difficult to meet with and consider alternative ways they can be supported, e.g., leverage the support of the Facilitating Mentor, school administrator, and/or school-based Instructional Coach. Two, reconsider the meeting structure to ensure that BT Mentors and their BTs can meet formally several times each month.