

# Findings from the 2021 Teach For America National Principal Survey

**August 2021**

**Author**

John Wells

**Submitted to:**

Teach For America  
25 Broadway, 12th Floor  
New York, NY 10004

**Submitted by:**

Westat  
An Employee-Owned Research Corporation<sup>®</sup>  
1600 Research Boulevard  
Rockville, Maryland 20850-3129  
(301) 251-1500

## Contents

---

<u>Chapter</u>		<u>Page</u>
	Executive Summary.....	vii
	Introduction.....	vii
	Methods.....	vii
	Findings.....	viii
1	Introduction .....	1
	Background.....	1
	Outline of This Report.....	3
2	Study Approach and Methods .....	5
	Instrument Development .....	5
	Institutional Review Board and School District Research Approval.....	7
	Survey Administration.....	7
	Response Rates.....	8
3	Principal Characteristics and School Characteristics and Context .....	9
	Principal Characteristics .....	9
	Demographics .....	9
	Work Experience.....	11
	TFA Alumni Status.....	13
	School Characteristics and Context.....	14
	School Governance Structure.....	14
	School Size.....	15
	Focus of Teacher Professional Learning.....	16
	COVID-19.....	17
4	Findings on Principals’ Perceptions of and Satisfaction with Corps Members and Alumni.....	19
	Capacities and Contributions of Corps Members.....	19
	Impacts of Corps Members on Students.....	25
	Overall Satisfaction with Corps Members.....	27

<b><u>Chapter</u></b>		<b><u>Page</u></b>
	Capacities and Contributions of Alumni.....	28
	Impacts of and Overall Satisfaction with Alumni.....	29
5	Findings on Principals’ Perceptions on Hiring Corps Members and the Training and Support Corps Members Receive.....	30
	Process of Hiring Corps Members.....	30
	Training and Support Provided to Corps Members .....	32
6	Comparisons of Results from 2019 to 2021 on Selected Survey Items.....	34
	Changes in Principals’ Perceptions of Corps Members .....	34
	Changes in Principals’ Overall Satisfaction with Alumni.....	36
7	Conclusions .....	37
	References.....	R-1
 <b><u>Appendixes</u></b>		
A	Survey Sample and Response Rates, by TFA Region .....	A-1
B	2021 National Principal Survey Overall Responses.....	B-1
 <b><u>Figures</u></b>		
1	Gender identity of respondents.....	9
2	Race and ethnicity of respondents .....	10
3	Respondents’ levels of experience working as a K–12 teacher.....	11
4	Respondents’ levels of experience working as a principal with TFA corps members .....	12
5	Respondents’ levels of experience as a principal at current school.....	13
6	Alumni status of respondents .....	13
7	School governance structure of responding schools.....	14

<b><u>Figures</u></b>		<b><u>Page</u></b>
8	Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers in respondent's school building.....	15
9	Aspects of teaching that were reported by principals as a major focus of teacher professional learning in 2020–21 .....	16
10	Status of schools during the 2020–21 school year.....	17
11	Status of TFA corps members during the 2020–21 school year .....	17
12	Respondents' perceptions of corps members' capacities and contributions .....	20
13	Respondents' perceptions of corps members' capacities and contributions, as compared to other novice teachers.....	21
14	Leadership roles taken on by corps members, as reported by principals.....	22
15	Actions taken by corps members, as reported by principals.....	23
16	Respondents' perceptions of corps members' actions, as compared to other novice teachers.....	24
17	Respondents' perceptions of corps members' impacts on students .....	25
18	Respondents' perceptions of corps members' impacts on students, as compared to other novice teachers .....	26
19	Respondents' overall satisfaction with corps members .....	27
20	Respondents' perceptions of the capacities and contributions of alumni.....	28
21	Respondents' perceptions of the impact of alumni on students .....	29
22	Respondents' level of involvement in the process of hiring TFA corps members.....	30
23	Respondents' perceptions of the pool of corps members.....	31

<b><u>Figures</u></b>		<b><u>Page</u></b>
24	Respondents’ levels of familiarity with aspects of training and support provided to TFA corps members.....	32
25	Respondents’ levels of satisfaction with the training and support provided by TFA to corps members .....	33
26	Respondents’ overall satisfaction with corps members (i.e., general), by year .....	34
27	Respondents’ overall satisfaction with corps members (i.e., likelihood of hiring another TFA corps member), by year .....	35
28	Respondents’ overall satisfaction with corps members (i.e., likelihood of recommending hiring TFA corps members to others).....	35
29	Respondents’ overall satisfaction with alumni, by year.....	36

# Executive Summary

---

## Introduction

Teach For America (TFA) is one of the largest educational leadership development organizations in the U.S. and is committed to “ensuring an equitable and excellent education for all children, regardless of zip code.” Founded in 1990, TFA recruits outstanding and diverse leaders to become TFA “corps members.” Corps members commit to teaching for 2 years in a low-income community, where they are employed by local schools and work to expand opportunities for kids. After 2 years, they become part of the TFA alumni network, with many continuing to teach. Others pursue leadership roles in schools and school systems or launch careers in other fields that shape educational access and opportunity.

TFA regularly conducts, sponsors, or supports independent research efforts to assess its impact and inform the continuous development of its programming. TFA’s National Principal Survey serves as one source of evidence about the impact of TFA and provides an important lens on the practices of its corps members and alumni. Principals provide a unique and important perspective on teachers’ preparation, performance, and overall contributions to the schools in which they work. Therefore, the National Principal Survey helps TFA assess principals’ perceptions of corps members’ skills, instructional practices, and effectiveness, as well as the training and support that TFA provides to its corps members. Specifically, the results are used by TFA’s national and regional leadership to plan its corps member and alumni activities and programming and to reflect on its approaches with regard to recruiting, training, and supporting corps members and alumni. For nearly 25 years, TFA has hired external researchers to administer its National Principal Survey. The survey is conducted biennially, with the prior survey conducted in 2019. The 2021 survey was administered by Westat.

## Methods

The survey instrument administered in 2021 was largely the same as what was used in 2019. Prior to administering the 2019 survey, Westat had redesigned the survey instrument, at TFA’s request, to collect information required to meet TFA’s goals of aligning the survey with its then-recently adopted Foundations and Theory of Leadership. Given the extensive redesign of the survey instrument in 2019, and TFA’s position that the 2019 instrument would continue to meet its current

needs, all of the existing items from the 2019 instrument were included again in 2021. However, some additions were made to the instrument, which included several new items that were designed to collect information on the context of school operations and any disruptions to in-person learning that may have occurred due to COVID-19. Included in this set of items was a question that asked principals whether they had adequate opportunity this year to assess the capacities and contributions of the corps members in their building, given any disruptions to in-person learning due to COVID-19. In addition, for several of the existing survey items, response options were added that took into account that many schools were in a virtual setting for at least part of the school year.

The survey was administered beginning in late March 2021 through June 2021. Using TFA administrative data, approximately 450 school districts were identified for the 2021 survey. A total of 2,047 principals were identified as having corps members in their school building and thus were included in the 2021 survey. Of the 2,047 principals, 1,225 responded to the survey, for an overall response rate of 60 percent. This year's response rate is consistent with 2019, in which the response rate was 61 percent.

## Findings

**Overall, principals were very satisfied with TFA corps members.** Ninety-four percent of principals reported that they were satisfied with the corps members in their school. Meanwhile, similar proportions of principals reported that they would hire another corps member to fill a vacancy (91 percent) and would recommend hiring a corps member to other school leaders (93 percent). In addition, nearly 9 out of 10 principals reported that corps members were effective at delivering instruction, and virtually all principals agreed that corps members maintained a positive learning environment in their classrooms and contributed to a positive and collaborative culture in the school (96% and 93%, respectively).

**Principals cited several important contributions made by TFA corps members in their school beyond the classroom.** More than 9 out of 10 principals overall agreed that corps members contribute to a positive, collaborative culture in the school and fit well within the school's culture. Meanwhile, more than 8 out of 10 respondents agreed that corps members demonstrated leadership, formal or informal, in their school. Similarly, virtually all principals (99%) reported that corps members worked to build trusting relationships with students, parents, community members, their

teaching colleagues, and administrators, with nearly two-thirds of principals reporting that corps members worked “to a great extent” to build relationships with these groups.

**Many principals reported that TFA corps members were better than other novice teachers at making impacts on students and other aspects of teaching.** While most principals found no difference between the two groups, approximately one-third of principals felt that corps members were better than other novice teachers at making impacts in areas such as students’ academic growth and students’ personal growth (e.g., socio-emotional development, growth mindset). In contrast, only 3 to 4 percent of principals felt that other novice teachers were better than corps members at making impacts in those areas. Similarly, more than 4 out of 10 principals felt that corps members were better than other novice teachers were better at continuously learning and improving their practice and impact, while 3 out of 10 principals felt that corps members were better than other novice teachers in three other key aspects of teaching: building trusting relationships with their students, parents and community members; choosing their actions or approaches strategically and responsively; and seeking ways to contribute to a wider-reaching or more lasting impact in the broader school or community.

**Generally speaking, principals were familiar with and expressed satisfaction with the training and support provided by TFA to its corps members.** When asked about their familiarity with the various aspects of training and support provided to corps members, about three-fourths of all principals were either very familiar or somewhat familiar with most aspects of training and support. Virtually all principals expressed at least some degree of satisfaction with the training and support provided to corps members, with nearly three-fourths reporting they were satisfied or very satisfied, while 25 percent were somewhat satisfied and only 4 percent were not satisfied.

**Principals who had TFA alumni in their school had very favorable perceptions of their impacts on students and their contributions to the school.** Virtually all principals (98%) who responded to the survey reported being satisfied overall with the alumni in their building. As with corps members, principals’ perceptions of alumni were highest in the areas of effectiveness at delivering instruction, maintaining positive learning environments in their classrooms, and contributing to a positive and collaborative culture in the school. In addition, virtually all principals reported that alumni had positive impacts in each of the areas they were asked to address, which included: students’ academic growth; personal growth; development of positive social identities;

recognition of injustice in the world; and ability to seek out relationships and resources needed to overcome barriers in pursuit of personal goals.

**Although the 2020–21 school year was an unprecedented one given the effects of COVID-19 and the disruptions to in-person learning, this was not a major factor in how principals responded to the survey.** The fact that principals and teachers were not physically together in the building, as they would be in a typical school year, did not preclude principals from feeling capable of assessing corps members’ capacities and contributions. When asked directly about this, nearly 9 out of 10 principals agreed or strongly agreed that they had adequate opportunity this year to assess corps members, despite any disruptions due to COVID-19, which is evidence that COVID-19 and the resulting shift from in-person to virtual learning in schools across the country should not be a major factor in interpreting this year’s survey results.

**Many principals reported that corps members were critical in helping their school shift from in-person to virtual learning.** The 2021 survey contained some new items in response to COVID-19, one of which asked principals about how their school adopted to virtual learning. Principals reported high levels of leadership from corps members in supporting school-wide virtual learning efforts, with nearly 9 of 10 reporting that corps members took on this role either to some extent or to a great extent. In fact, a larger percentage of principals reported that corps members supported virtual learning efforts than any other specific role, such as sponsoring a student group, club, or organization or serving on a school-wide committee.

**Overall, the results from the 2021 National Principal Survey were consistent with those from the 2019 survey, however, the results were more favorable on several key items pertaining to principals’ overall satisfaction with corps members and alumni.** Although principals’ perceptions of both groups were already high in 2019, principals reported even higher levels of satisfaction this year. For example, while 88 percent of principals overall were satisfied with the corps members in their school and 94 percent were satisfied overall with alumni in 2019, these percentages increased to 94 for corps members and 98 for alumni. Similar increases from 2019 to 2021 were also seen in the results on questions about the impacts corps members and alumni had in their classrooms and on the overall school culture. Since the overall survey response rates and the makeup of the principals (e.g., similar proportions of principals who were TFA alumni and similar distribution of public charter schools versus traditional public schools) who responded were

consistent across the years, this suggests that the increasingly favorable perceptions expressed by principals in the survey this year are shared by a broad set of principals across the country who partner with TFA. Examining more precisely why these perceptions have increased could provide useful information to TFA that could help inform the training and support it provides to its corps members both prior to and during the 2-year commitment. One approach would be to interview principals to inquire about the specific areas in which they are seeing enhancements in more recent cohorts of corps members, as this could help determine the extent to which recent modifications to TFA's approach to training and preparing its corps members have resulted in benefits for schools and students or whether other factors may explain the increasingly favorable perceptions among principals.

# 1. Introduction

---

This report presents results from the 2021 Teach For America (TFA) National Principal Survey. For nearly 25 years, TFA has administered a survey to all principals who supervise corps members. The survey is conducted biennially, with the prior survey conducted in 2019. The purpose of the present survey, conducted in 2021 by Westat, is to hear directly from the principals with whom TFA partners about their experiences with TFA corps members and alumni. The survey results are used by TFA’s national and regional leadership to plan its corps member and alumni activities and programming and to reflect on its approaches with regard to recruiting, training, and supporting corps members and alumni.

## Background

TFA is one of the largest educational leadership development organizations in the U.S. and is committed to “ensuring an equitable and excellent education for all children across the U.S., regardless of zip code.” Founded in 1990, TFA recruits outstanding and diverse leaders to become TFA “corps members.” Teach For America recruits outstanding and diverse leaders to become TFA “corps members.” Corps members commit to teaching for two years in a low-income community, where they are employed by local schools and work to expand opportunities for kids. After 2 years, they become part of the TFA alumni network, with many continuing to teach. Others pursue leadership roles in schools and school systems or launch careers in other fields that shape educational access and opportunity.

TFA’s approach to teacher leadership development includes four key components:<sup>1</sup>

- **Finding Promising Leaders.** TFA recruits outstanding and diverse leaders early in their careers and asks them to make a commitment that begins with 2 years of teaching in a public school, partnering with children and families most impacted by educational inequity. TFA seeks people who have the values and experience necessary to expand opportunity and access for children. Among the leadership traits TFA looks for are a deep belief in the potential of every child, a strong record of achievement, and perseverance in the face of challenges. Since 1990, 64,000 leaders have joined TFA. Today, nearly half come from low-income backgrounds, and more than 1,000 corps

---

<sup>1</sup> This description of TFA’s approach was adapted from its website at <https://www.teachforamerica.org/what-we-do>.

members and alumni were themselves taught by a TFA corps member when they were students.

- **Supporting Educators in Classrooms.** TFA aims to develop teachers who go beyond traditional expectations to advance students' academic and personal growth while helping to strengthen their schools. In partnership with schools, local universities, other organizations, and businesses in the communities where TFA works, corps members are provided with initial training, ongoing professional development, and access to a support network and other resources. Today, 5,450 corps members reach 367,011 students in 2,280 schools in 51 regions throughout the U.S. They teach all grade levels and subject areas. TFA is among the largest and most diverse sources of educators serving schools in low-income communities. More than half of new corps members identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC). In addition, TFA is among the largest sources of teachers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).
- **Developing Systems-Change Leaders.** TFA supports corps members as they form relationships with children, families, and fellow educators. Ideally, their impact with students deepens their conviction and allows them to develop a richer understanding of what students need to learn and thrive. At the same time, corps members better understand the institutional barriers that limit access to opportunity and the unique assets and challenges in their communities. TFA's vision is for its alumni to remain lifelong advocates for educational excellence and equity. While many choose to continue teachers, many others take on school and district leadership roles, launch enterprises, or enter other fields that shape the opportunities available to children, such as law, healthcare, and policymaking. Today, over 63 percent of TFA alumni work full-time in education, and four out of five work in education or careers serving low-income communities.
- **Fostering Collective Leadership.** TFA views its alumni and corps members as colleagues working alongside others toward shared goals in schools and driving progress in communities. The TFA network is part of a broad and diverse coalition united around educational excellence and equity. TFA works to strengthen the network by bringing alumni together to learn from one another and debate ideas. This takes many forms, including sharing stories of progress, triumphs, and setbacks; recognizing outstanding educators, leaders, and schools; connecting alumni to each other; and sparking conversations on how to accelerate the pace of change in communities.

In addition to its National Principal Survey, TFA regularly conducts, sponsors, or supports independent research efforts to assess its impact and inform the continuous development of its programming. The research literature about TFA's instructional impact spans multiple regions, subject areas, and grade levels, and two points about it stand out. That is, the findings indicate that corps members outperform both novice and experienced teachers in the same school, and the positive effects on students associated with TFA have been consistent over time. A 2015 study conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (Clark et al., 2015), which employed a randomized

controlled trial, considered the “gold standard” research methodology for impact evaluations, found that TFA corps members teaching in elementary grades were as effective as other teachers in the same schools. TFA teachers included in this study averaged less than 2 years of experience whereas the comparison teachers had nearly 14 years of experience on average. The study also found that students of corps members in pre-K through second grade outperformed their peers in reading by the equivalent of an additional 1.3 months of learning. Two more recent studies have found positive effects of Teach For America on achievement in North Carolina were sustained and even increased over time, especially in middle school math, high school science, and high school social studies (Penner, 2019) and that students of corps members in Texas were on average as likely or more likely to pass the Texas state assessment than students of non-TFA affiliated teachers (Wright et al., 2019). This set of findings should not suggest that classroom experience is unrelated to student achievement. TFA teachers and others must climb a well-documented learning curve during their initial years of teaching, but the body of research leads one to expect students in the classrooms of corps members—recruited, trained, and supported by TFA—to learn as much or more than they would if assigned a more experienced teacher in the same school.

TFA’s National Principal Survey serves as an additional source of evidence about the impact of TFA and provides another lens on the practices of its corps members and alumni, one that is designed to inform TFA’s approach to teacher leadership development. Principals provide a unique and important perspective on teachers’ preparation, performance, and overall contributions to the schools in which they work. Thus, the National Principal Survey is designed to help TFA assess principals’ perceptions of corps members’ skills, instructional practices, and effectiveness, as well as the training and support that TFA provides to its corps members. The information gained through the survey is important to TFA’s national and regional leadership in planning for partnerships with schools, refining its corps member programming, and reflecting on its approaches with regard to recruiting, training, and supporting corps members and alumni.

## Outline of This Report

This report comprises six chapters. Chapter 2, which follows this introductory chapter, provides an overview of the study approach and methods. Chapter 3 presents data collected from the survey on the characteristics of the responding principals and the characteristics and context of participating schools. Chapter 4 provides findings on principals’ perceptions of and satisfaction with TFA corps

members and alumni, and Chapter 5 addresses principals' perceptions on the process of hiring corps members and the training and support provided by TFA to its corps members. Chapter 6 presents comparisons of results on selected survey items from 2019 to 2021. Chapter 7 provides conclusions and suggestions for future research.

Additional information is provided in the appendices to this report. Appendix A provides information on the survey sample and response rates by TFA region, and Appendix B presents the overall results for each item in the survey.

## 2. Study Approach and Methods

---

This chapter provides an overview of the study approach and methods used to conduct the 2021 National Principal Survey, as well as the survey response rates.

### Instrument Development

The survey instrument administered in 2021 was largely the same as what was used in 2019. Prior to administering the 2019 survey, Westat had redesigned the survey instrument, at TFA's request, to collect information required to meet TFA's goals of aligning the survey with its then-recently adopted Foundations and Theory of Leadership. The Foundations and Theory of Leadership was part of an effort by TFA to bring a systems-change orientation to how it recruits and prepares corps members to become effective teachers and leaders. The Foundations informed a variety of organizational and individual changes, including redefining the knowledge and competencies TFA corps members need to become effective in their classrooms, schools, and communities, which guide the development of training for corps members that can foster such knowledge and competencies. Meanwhile, TFA's Theory of Leadership lays out specific practices that are expected of corps members along three spheres of influence, which include self, group, and systems, and four practice areas, including relationships, vision, strategic action, and learning.

Westat's survey instrument redesign work in 2019 included several important steps. First, Westat and TFA reviewed the survey items to ensure they were addressing relevant, up-to-date concepts and that the items in the instrument were meeting TFA's overall need for information for use in improving induction and support for corps members. Second, Westat worked to identify new lines of analysis that TFA might be interested in, determining the extent to which existing survey items allowed for such analyses, and constructing new questions for which principals could provide valid data (e.g., documenting the specific ways in which corps members have demonstrated various aspects of leadership). Third, Westat examined the formatting of the existing survey instrument to ensure that the redesigned instrument would be intuitive and formatted in a way that helps elicit valid and reliable responses, minimizes respondent burden, and maximizes response rates.

Throughout the redesign process, Westat received input from TFA's National Principal Survey Steering Committee, made up of TFA staff members from regional and national teams, which

provided recommendations based on their experiences working with corps members, alumni, and principals.

Given the extensive redesign of the survey instrument in 2019, and TFA's position that the 2019 instrument would continue to meet its current needs, all of the existing items from the 2019 instrument were included again in 2021. However, some additions were made to the instrument, which included several new items that were designed to collect information on the context of school operations and any disruptions to in-person learning that may have occurred due to COVID-19 (questions 19 through 22). Included in this set of items was a question that asked principals whether they had adequate opportunity this year to assess the capacities and contributions of the corps members in their building, given any disruptions to in-person learning due to COVID-19. In addition, for several of the existing open-ended questions, language was added to encourage principals to provide examples that illustrate how corps members and alumni have responded this year to the unprecedented challenges as a result of COVID-19 (questions 8 and 17, respectively), as well as to describe the extent to which the training and support provided by TFA to corps members met the needs of this unprecedented school year. Lastly, for several of the existing survey items, we added response options that took into account that many schools were in a virtual setting for at least part of the school year. These include question 5g, which asked if corps members took on a role in supporting school-wide virtual learning efforts, and question 24f, which addressed whether delivering virtual instruction was a focus of teacher professional learning at the school. The specific wording of the questions pertaining to COVID-19 are shown in Appendix B.

As in 2019, Westat developed a web-based version of the modified survey instrument using its proprietary SurveyBuilder platform, which provides respondents a secure and convenient environment for completing surveys on their computer or mobile device. SurveyBuilder includes features such as edit and logic checks; grouping of questions and responses in different formats on a single screen page; built-in branching capabilities; a seamless, integrated survey management system and built-in security safeguards; the capability of processing the survey data into datasets in various formats (e.g., SAS, R, ASCII, MS Excel); and convenient, real-time monitoring, measurement, and reporting.

## Institutional Review Board and School District Research Approval

Once TFA approved the redesigned survey instrument, we subsequently obtained approval to conduct the survey from Westat’s institutional review board (IRB). Westat’s IRB reviewed information about the project, including the survey instrument, informed consent language, and recruitment letters, to ensure that principals would be provided sufficient opportunity and adequate information to actively consent to the survey.

Following approval from Westat’s IRB, Westat sought formal approval from “special clearance” school districts; i.e., those that require that external research be reviewed and approved. Of the approximately 450 school districts (provided by TFA) that would be included in the 2021 principal survey, 43 were special clearance districts that required formal approval. In January 2020, Westat began the process of preparing and submitting research applications to all of the special clearance districts, with the first applications submitted in June 2020. Approval was obtained from all of these districts, with the exception of nine districts, six of which did not approve the survey and three of which did not conduct its review of our application (or did not respond to repeated inquiries about the status of our application) by June 2021. There were a total of 98 principals (less than 5 percent of the overall population) represented in the nine districts that were not included in the survey.

## Survey Administration

In most districts, the survey was administered beginning in late March 2021 and through June 2021. The process for obtaining district approval for conducting the survey in some districts resulted in the survey being conducted in two waves. The first wave included all of the districts that did not require district approval to conduct the survey and all but two of those in which approval to conduct the survey was required. In June, the survey was opened to the remaining two districts as approval to conduct the survey was obtained from those individual districts.

After receiving clearance from the school districts, Westat proceeded with notifying principals about the survey. As in 2019, Westat worked with national and regional TFA staff to develop the message and approach to recruit principals to participate in the survey. In the weeks preceding the survey administration window, an awareness campaign was conducted by TFA’s national and regional leadership. This effort was designed to raise principals’ awareness of the survey, highlight the

importance of the data being collected, and determine how TFA intends to use the information being collected.

Several days prior to the start of data collection, Westat sent a survey announcement via email to all principals using the email addresses of TFA regional leaders. These email addresses were provided by TFA. This announcement, which included an endorsement from TFA, was designed to reinforce messaging from the awareness campaign conducted by TFA and its regional leaders and to alert principals to the upcoming survey administration. This announcement also provided an opportunity for Westat to test the principal email addresses that were provided by TFA (i.e., to ensure the list of principals contained no duplications, investigate any emails that were undeliverable, and update our records accordingly). At the start of the survey administration window, principals received an email from Westat with a unique link to the web survey.

## Response Rates

A total of 2,047 principals were identified as having corps members in their school building and thus were included in the survey. This total excludes principals in those districts that did not approve the survey (described above) and approximately 100 principals that responded to email notifications about the survey and indicated that they were on extended leave (e.g., maternity leave), had recently left their principal position, or did not currently have any corps members in their building. Of the 2,047 principals, 1,225 responded to the survey, for an overall response rate of 60 percent. Regional response rates ranged from 29 percent to 100 percent. With regard to the prior years' overall response rates, this year's overall response rate was consistent with 2019, in which the response rate was 61 percent, and higher than the 2017 and 2015 surveys, in which the response rates were 43 and 54 percent, respectively.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> The response rate of 60 percent is also consistent with other major national surveys of principals. For example, on the National Teacher and Principal Survey, which is conducted every 2 years by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and the U.S. Census Bureau and serves as ED's primary source of information on teacher and principal perspectives in K-12 schools, response rates in recent years have ranged from 58 percent to 70 percent. See, for example, <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ntps/methods-procedures1718.asp#response>.

### 3. Principal Characteristics and School Characteristics and Context

---

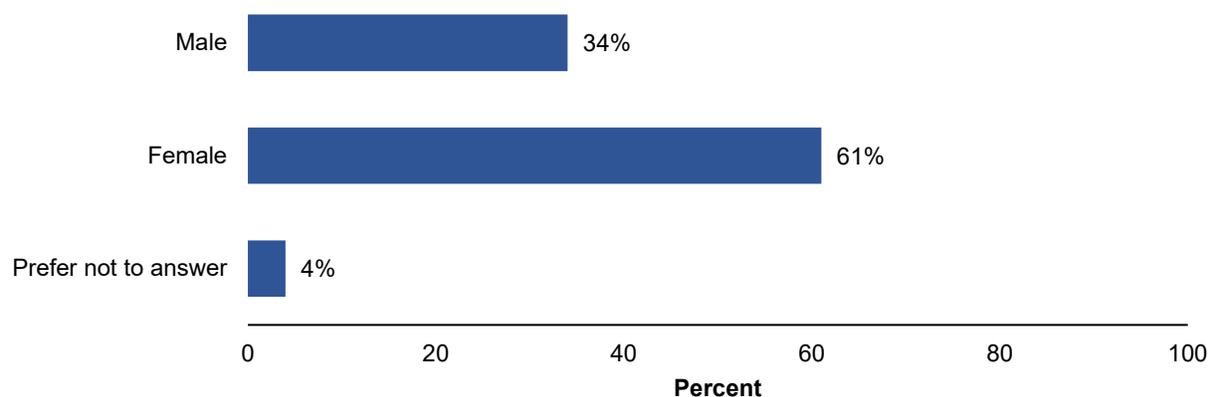
This chapter presents information obtained through the survey and from administrative data provided by TFA about individual characteristics of the principals who completed the survey and characteristics and context of the schools that responded.

#### Principal Characteristics

##### Demographics

Principals were asked in the survey to provide demographic information, including their gender identity and race/ethnicity. With regard to gender identity, as Figure 1 shows, 61 percent of respondents were female and 34 percent were male, while 4 percent chose not to answer this question. Less than 1 percent identified as non-binary (not shown in figure).

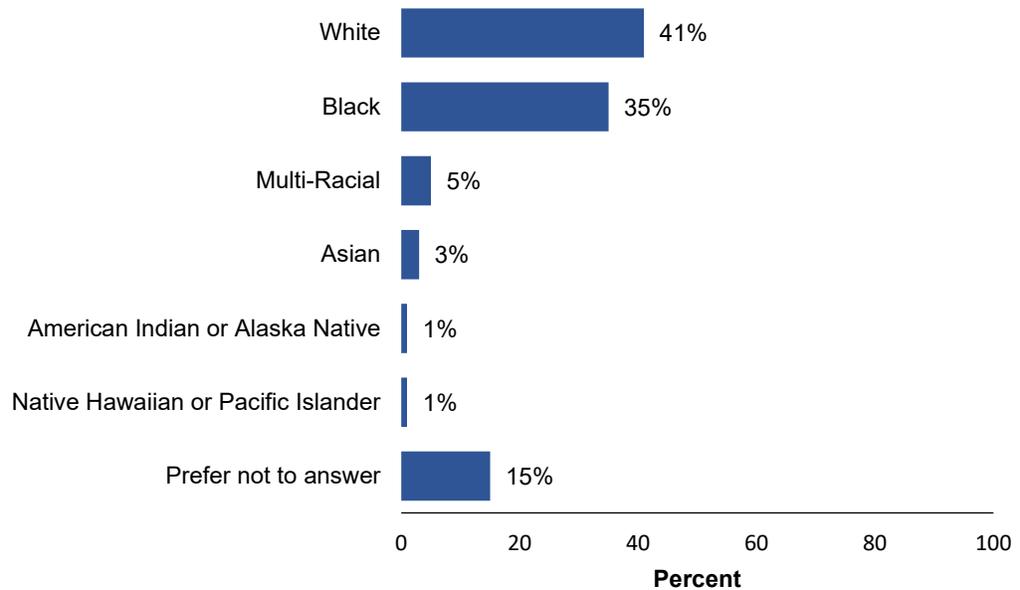
**Figure 1. Gender identity of respondents**



Principals were also asked if they identify as transgender, and less than 1 percent indicated yes, 95 percent indicated no, while 5 percent preferred not to answer (not shown in figure).

Principals were asked several questions about their race and ethnicity. First, they were asked if they identify as a member of the Latinx community, and 14 percent indicated “yes.” Next, they were asked about which race(s) they most closely identify with, and these results are shown in Figure 2. Forty-one percent identified as White, followed by 35 percent who identified as Black. Five percent identified as multi-racial, while smaller percentages were found in the remaining categories. Fifteen percent of respondents indicated that they preferred not to answer this question.

**Figure 2. Race and ethnicity of respondents**

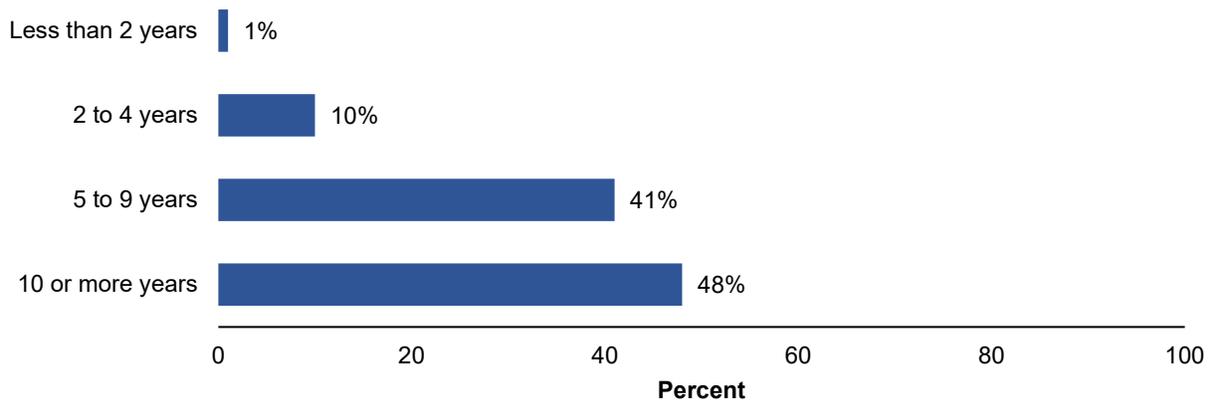


In addition, principals were asked if they identify as a person of color, and 51 percent indicated “yes,” 40 percent indicated “no,” while 10 percent indicated that they prefer not to answer (not shown in figure).

## Work Experience

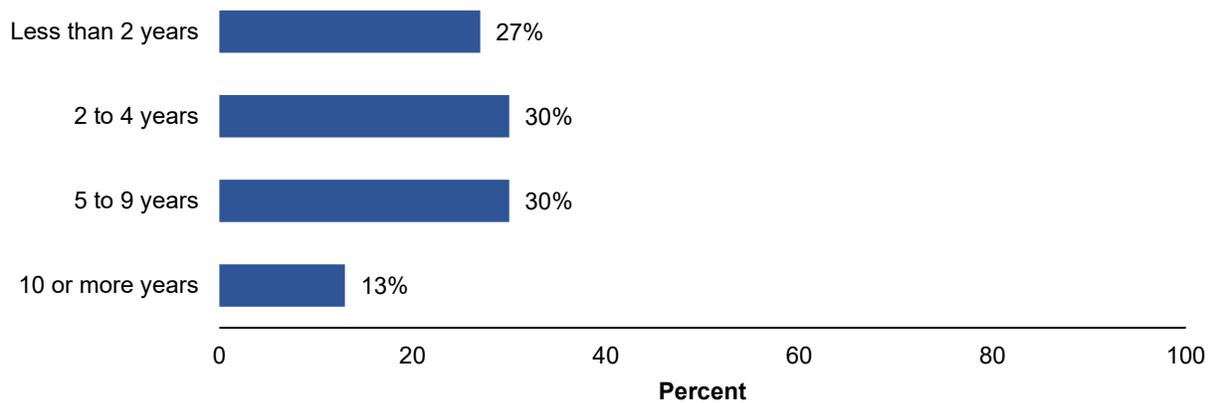
Principals were asked about their years of experience as a K-12 teacher prior to becoming a principal. As shown in Figure 3, most respondents had at least 5 years of experience as a teacher, with 48 percent reporting 10 or more years of experience in the classroom and 41 percent reporting 5 to 9 years.

**Figure 3. Respondents' levels of experience working as a K-12 teacher**



When asked about their years of experience as a principal working with corps members—i.e., either at their current school or at other schools—respondents reported slightly higher levels of experience (Figure 4). While 27 percent had worked in this capacity for less than 2 years, 30 percent reported 2 to 4 years of experience, with another 30 percent reporting 5 to 9 years. Meanwhile, 13 percent reported 10 or more years.<sup>3</sup>

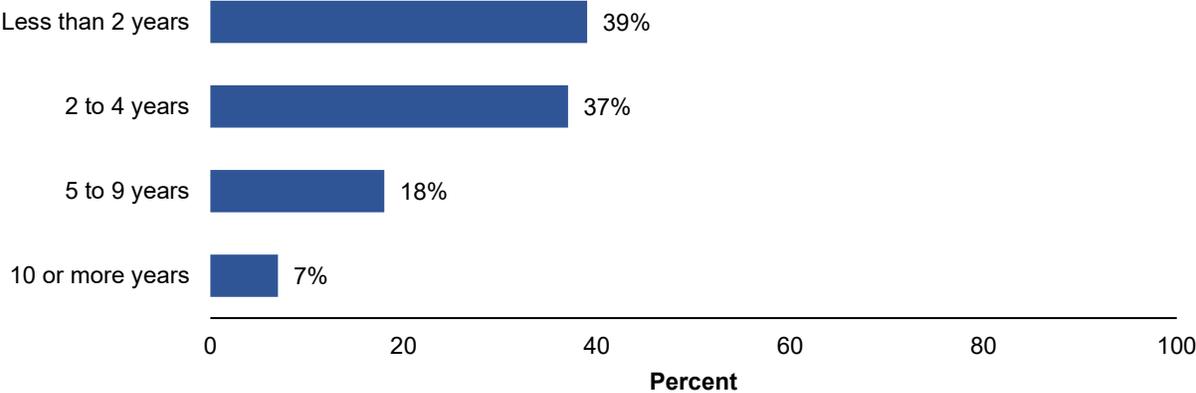
**Figure 4. Respondents’ levels of experience working as a principal with TFA corps members**



<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that because of the way in which the survey items on principals were framed, these data may not reflect the overall experience levels of principals. That is, while the first item on experience asks about the number of years as principal at their current school, the second item asks about the number of years in which they have worked as a principal with TFA corps members. As a result, respondents’ years of experience working as a principal at schools other than their current school and/or working in schools that did not include any TFA corps members are not accounted for in the data provided here.

As shown in Figure 5, respondents in general had relatively low levels of experience as a principal at their current school. Thirty-nine percent had been principal for less than 2 years, while 37 percent had been serving at their school for between 2 to 4 years. Nearly one-fifth reported serving for between 5 to 9 years, while only 7 percent reported 10 or more years at their current school.

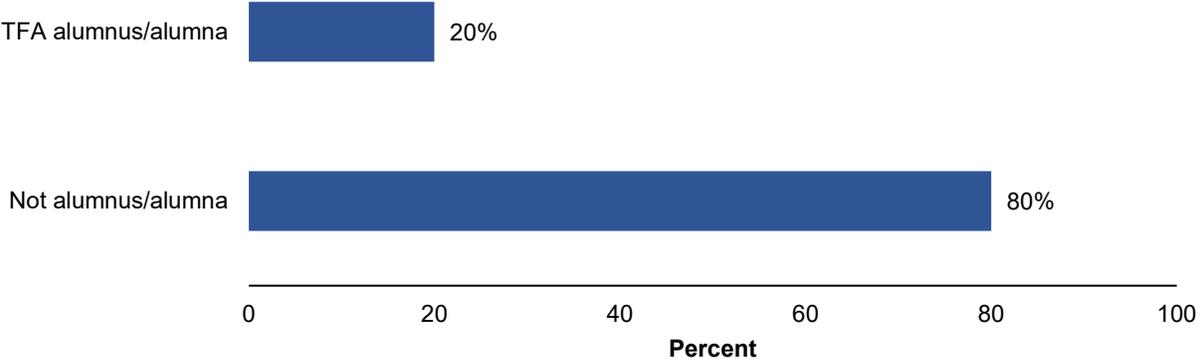
**Figure 5. Respondents' levels of experience as a principal at current school**



### TFA Alumni Status

In addition to being asked about their demographics and work experience, principals were asked whether they themselves were an alumnus or alumna of TFA. As Figure 6 shows, 20 percent of respondents indicated “yes” to this question.

**Figure 6. Alumni status of respondents**

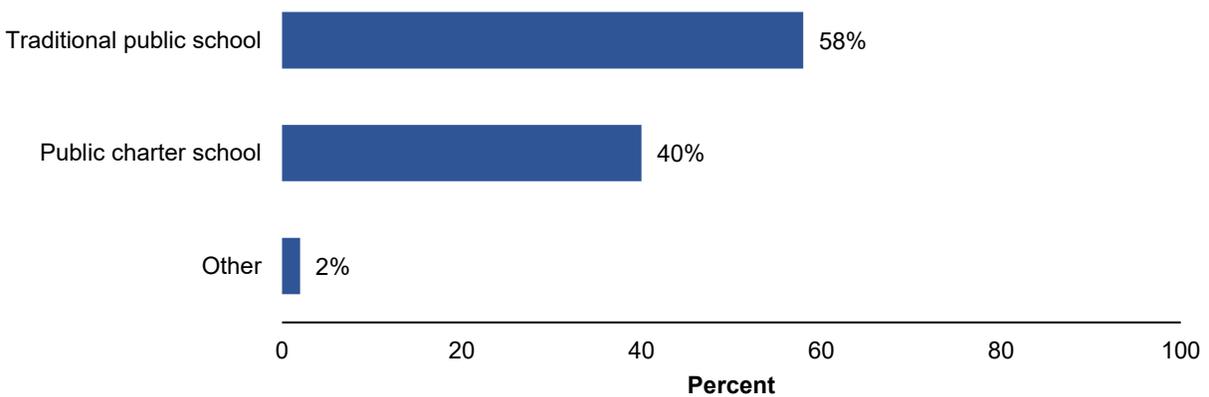


## School Characteristics and Context

### School Governance Structure

Figure 7 shows the type of school governance structure for the 1,225 schools that responded to the survey.<sup>4</sup> As shown, 58 percent of schools that responded to the survey were traditional public schools, while 40 percent were public charter schools. Two percent of schools were categorized as “Other” and included Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools, early childhood education centers, and private schools.

**Figure 7. School governance structure of responding schools**

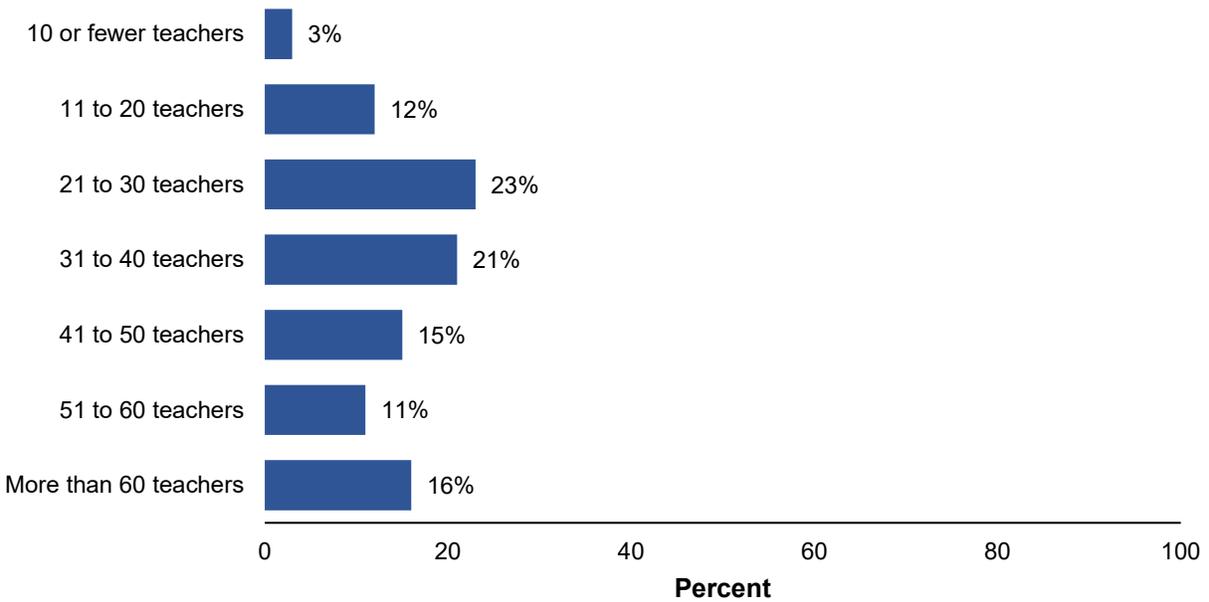


<sup>4</sup> The data in Figure 7 were drawn from administrative data provided by TFA.

## School Size

Principals were asked in the survey about the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers in their building, as an indication of their school's size. As shown in Figure 8, the schools responding to the survey were fairly evenly distributed with regard to the number of FTE teachers, with the most common response being 21 to 30 teachers.

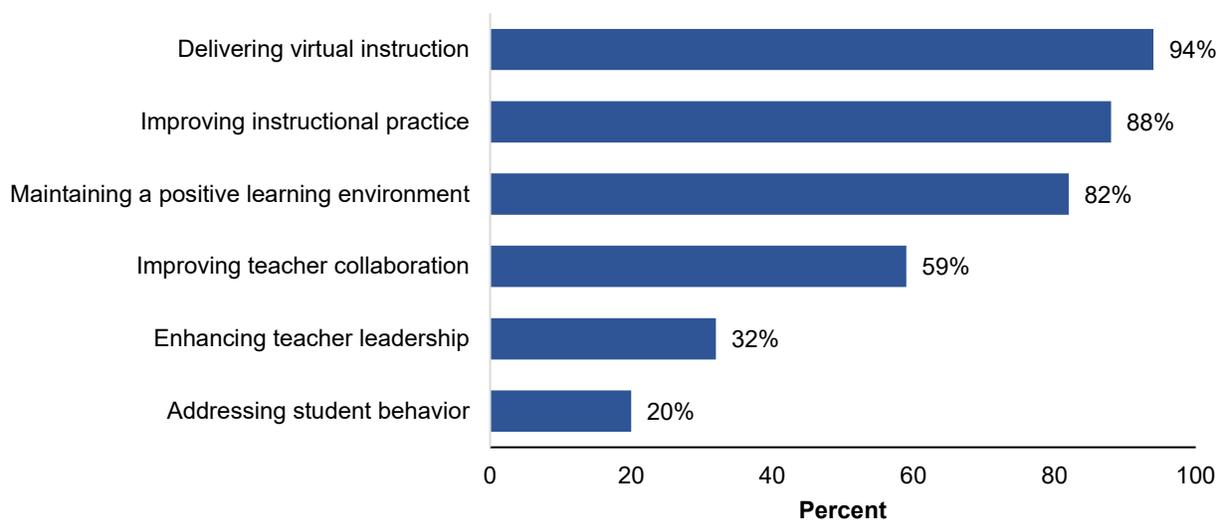
**Figure 8. Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers in respondent's school building**



## Focus of Teacher Professional Learning

Principals were asked about which aspects of teaching were a major focus of teacher professional learning during the 2020–21 school year. Figure 9 shows the percentages of principals who reported that each aspect was a major focus of learning. Most principals reported more than one focus of learning, with nearly all (94 percent) reporting a focus on delivering virtual instruction. Large majorities also reported improving instructional practice (88 percent) and maintaining a positive learning environment (82 percent), while more than half reported improving teacher collaboration (59 percent). Enhancing teacher leadership and addressing student behavior were reported as a major focus by 32 percent and 20 percent, respectively.

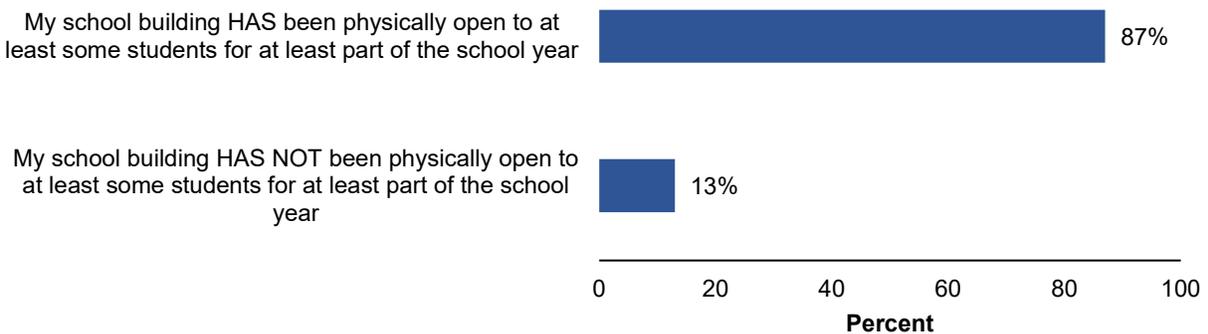
**Figure 9. Aspects of teaching that were reported by principals as a major focus of teacher professional learning in 2020–21**



## COVID-19

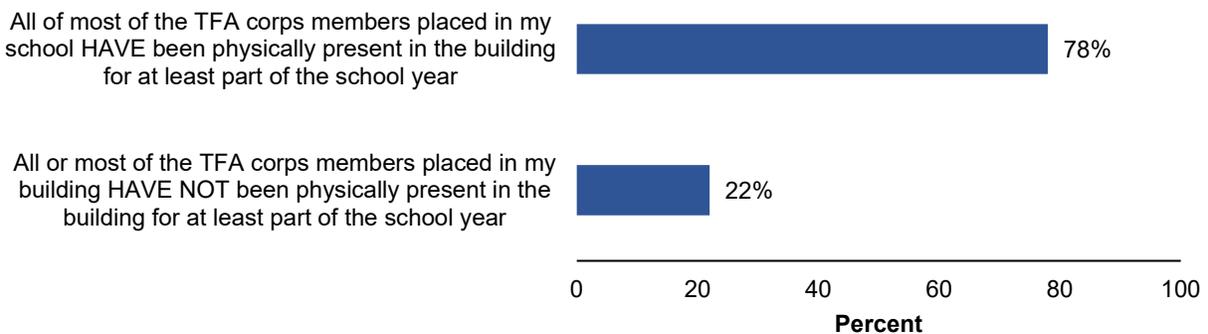
This year's survey included a section with a few questions about the effects of COVID-19. The first question asked about the extent to which the principal's school building has been physically open (i.e., with in-person instruction) to students in the 2020–21 school year. As shown in Figure 10, 87 percent indicated their building had been open to at least some students for at least part of the year.

**Figure 10. Status of schools during the 2020-21 school year**



The second question pertaining to COVID-19 asked about the extent to which the TFA corps members placed in the principal's school building have been physically present (i.e., conducting in-person instruction) in the 2020–21 school year. As shown in Figure 11, 78 percent of principals reported that all or most of the TFA corps members placed in their building had been physically present for at least part of the year.

**Figure 11. Status of TFA corps members during the 2020-21 school year**



In addition, principals were asked about whether COVID-19 and any resulting disruptions to in-person learning had an impact on their ability to assess the capacities and contributions of the TFA corps members in their building. A large majority of principals reported that COVID-19 did not affect their ability to assess corps members, with 87 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing that they had adequate opportunity to do so. With regard to the remaining 13 percent, 11 percent disagreed and 2 percent strongly disagreed.

## 4. Findings on Principals' Perceptions of and Satisfaction with Corps Members and Alumni

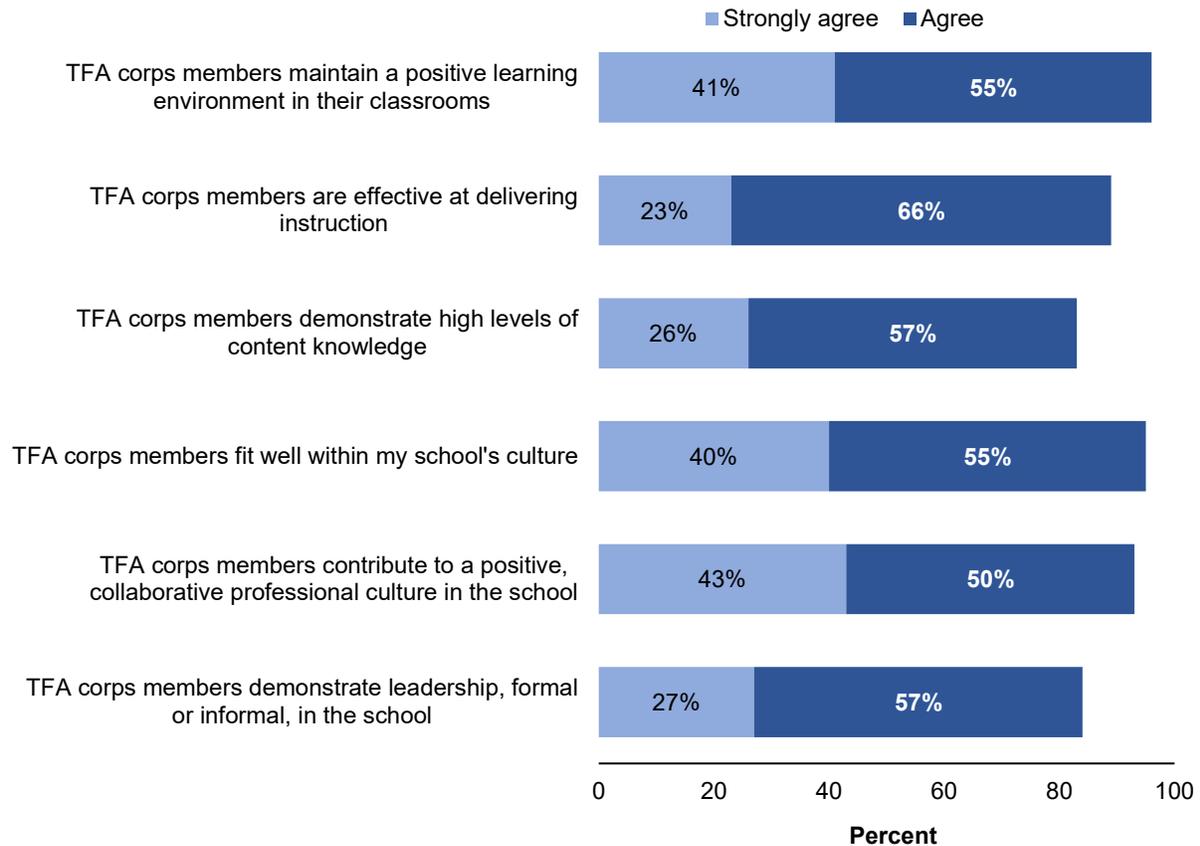
---

This chapter discusses principals' perceptions of and satisfaction with corps members and alumni.

### Capacities and Contributions of Corps Members

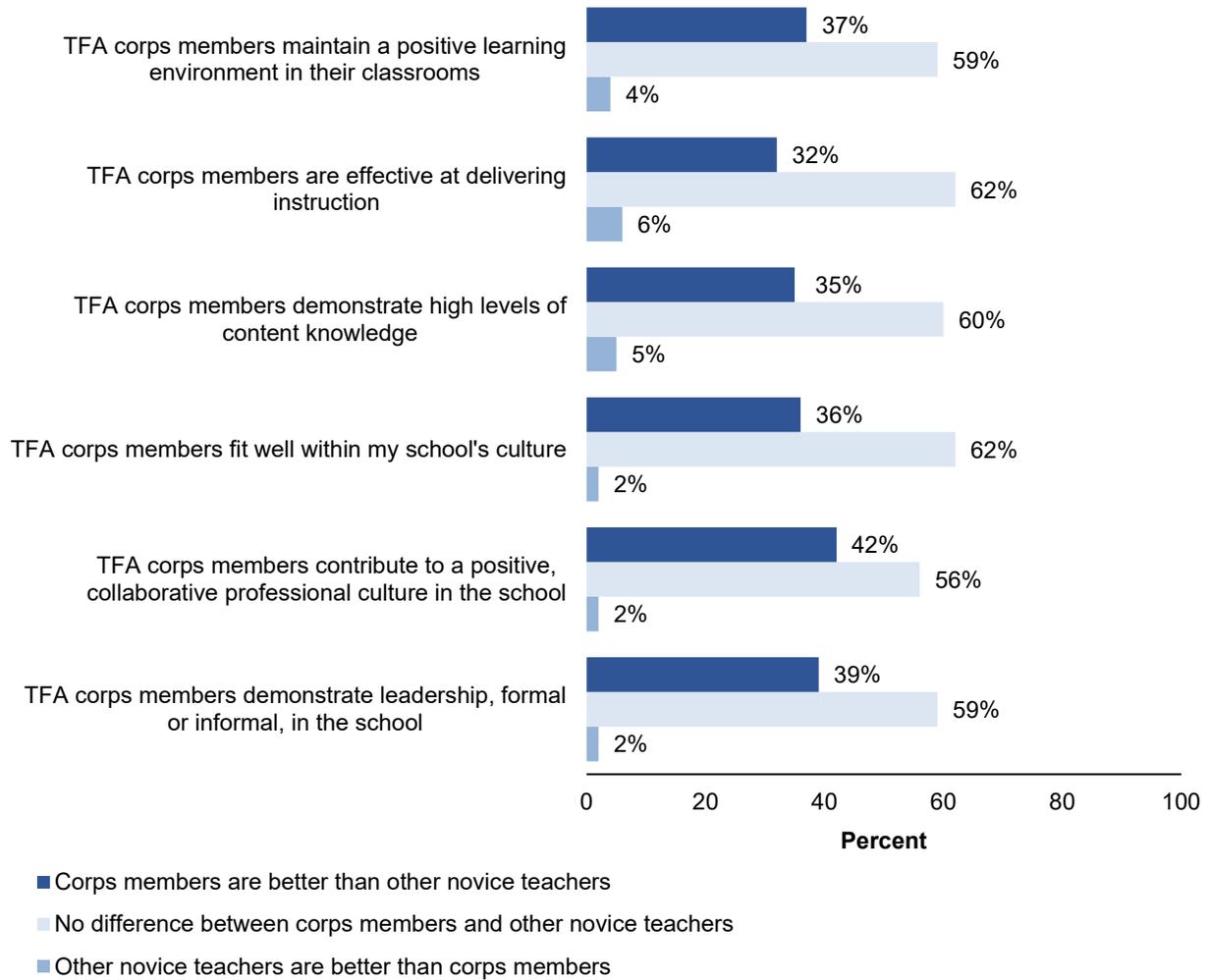
Principals were asked about the extent to which corps members have demonstrated various capacities and contributions at their school. The results in Figure 12 indicate that principals were most likely to agree or strongly agree that corps members maintain a positive learning environment (96% agreed or strongly agreed), that corps members fit well into their school's culture (95% either agreed or strongly agreed), and that corps members contributed to a positive, collaborative professional culture at their school (93% either agreed or strongly agreed). Notably, at least four-fifths of principals either agreed or strongly agreed with each of the other three statements.

**Figure 12. Respondents' perceptions of corps members' capacities and contributions**



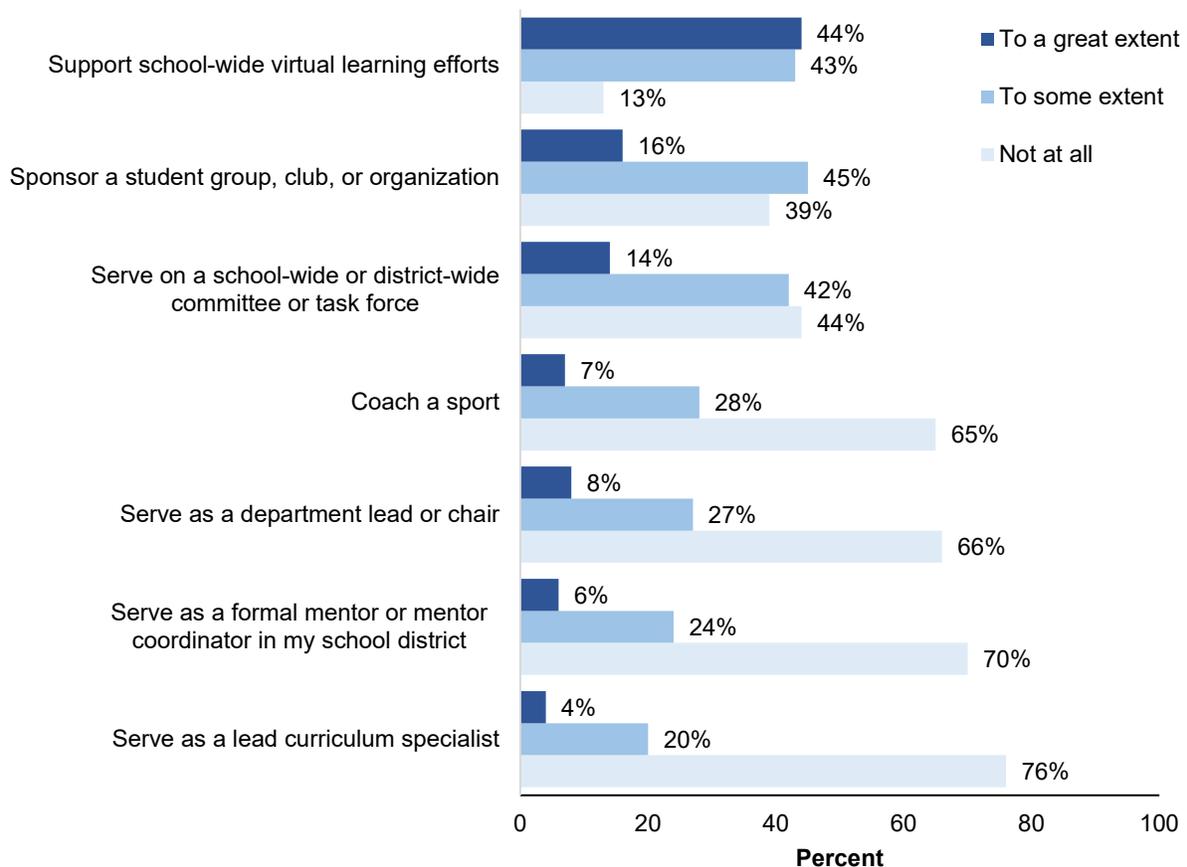
When asked to address the extent to which corps members at their school have demonstrated various capacities and contributions, principals were also asked to make comparisons between corps members and other novice teachers, and the results for these items are shown in Figure 13. While a majority of principals found no difference between corps members and other novice teachers on each of the specific types of capacities and contributions, between 32 and 42 percent of principals indicated that corps members were better than other novice teachers on each item. Perhaps most notable is that 42 percent of principals indicated that corps members were better than other novice teachers at contributing to a positive, collaborative culture in the school and that 39 percent of principals indicated that corps members were better than other novice teachers at demonstrating leadership, formal or informal, in their school.

**Figure 13. Respondents' perceptions of corps members' capacities and contributions, as compared to other novice teachers**



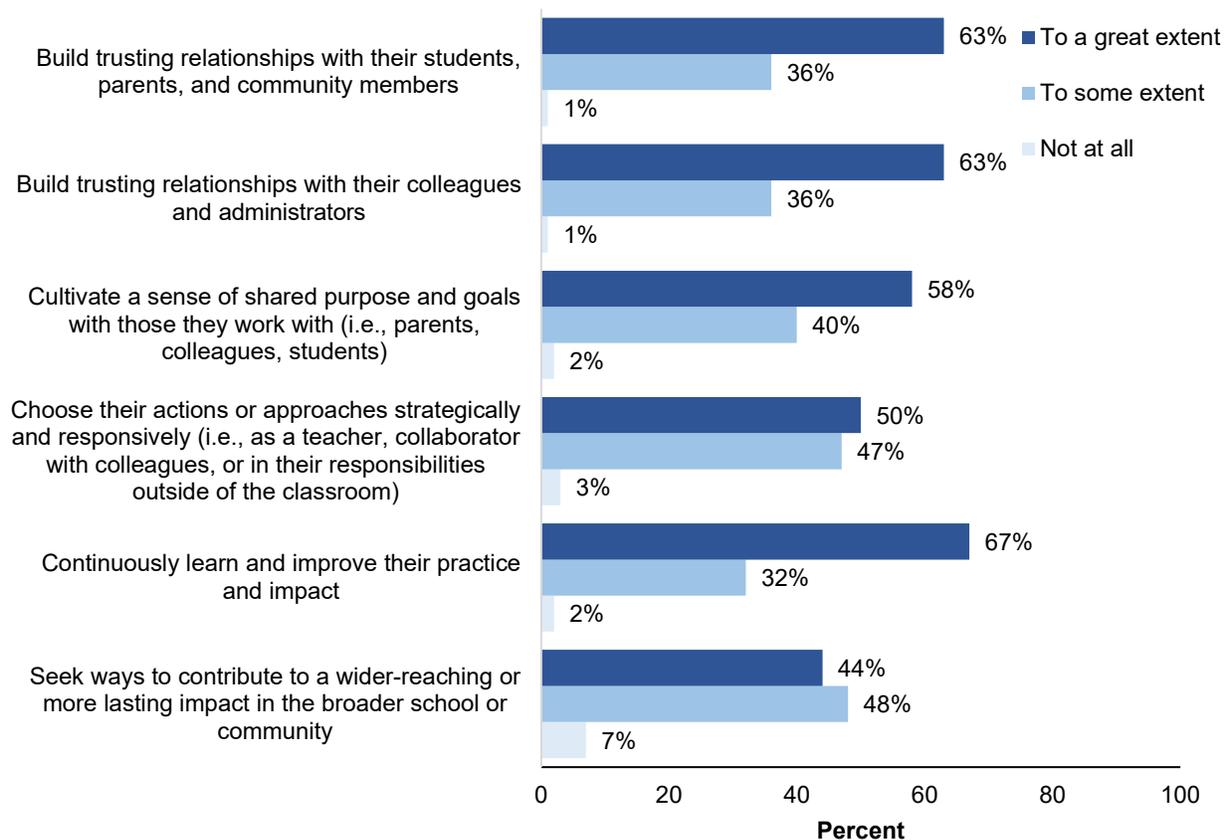
With regard to leadership, principals were asked about the specific types of leadership roles that corps members had taken on during the 2020–21 school year. As Figure 14 shows, 87 percent of principals indicated that corps members had supported school-wide virtual learning efforts either to a great extent or to some extent. In addition, more than half of principals indicated that corps members had either sponsored a student group, club, or organization (61% indicated either to a great extent or to some extent) or served on a school-wide or district-wide committee or task force (56% indicated either to a great extent or to some extent). Smaller proportions of principals indicated that corps members had coached a sport (35%), had served as a department lead or chair (35%), had served as a mentor or mentor coordinator (32%), or had served as a lead curriculum specialist (24%).

**Figure 14. Leadership roles taken on by corps members, as reported by principals**



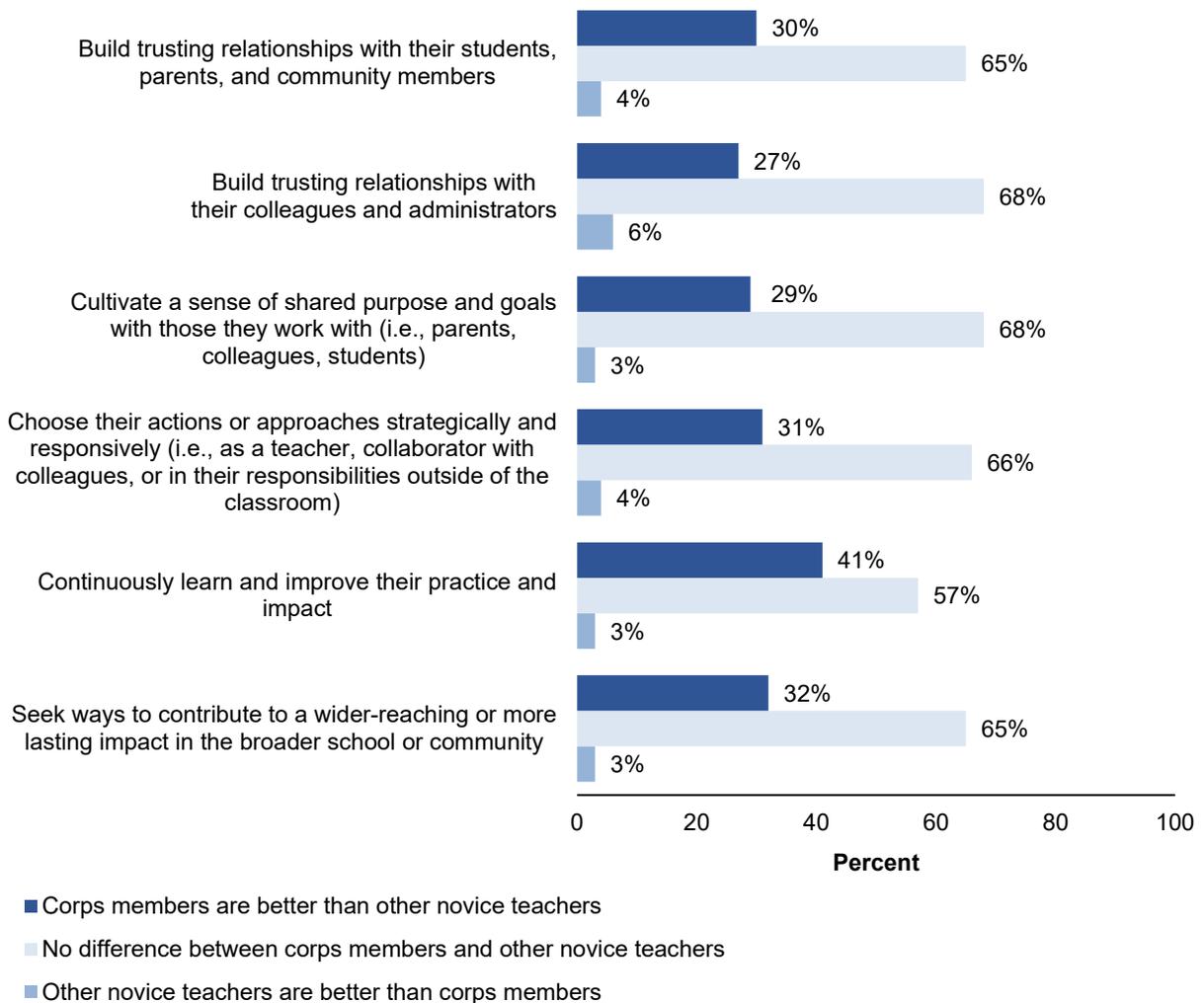
In addition to leadership roles taken on by corps members, principals were asked about specific actions taken by corps members. These pertain to such areas as building relationships with others, improving their practice, and seeking ways to make lasting impacts at their school. As Figure 15 shows, for each of the specific areas that principals were asked to address in the survey, 90 percent or more reported that corps members had demonstrated that action either to a great extent or to some extent. More than half of principals reported that corps members demonstrated three actions to a great extent, namely, continuously learning and improving their practice and impact (67%), building trusting relationships with their students, parents, and community members (63%), and building trusting relationships with their colleagues and administrators (63%).

**Figure 15. Actions taken by corps members, as reported by principals**



With regard to actions taken by corps members, principals were also asked to make comparisons between corps members and other novice teachers, and the results for these items are shown in Figure 16. While a majority of principals found no difference between corps members and other novice teachers on each of the specific types of actions, between 27 and 41 percent of principals did indicate that corps members were better than other novice teachers on each of the items. Among these actions, principals were most likely to report that corps members were better at continuously learning and improving their practice and impact (41% indicated corps members were better).

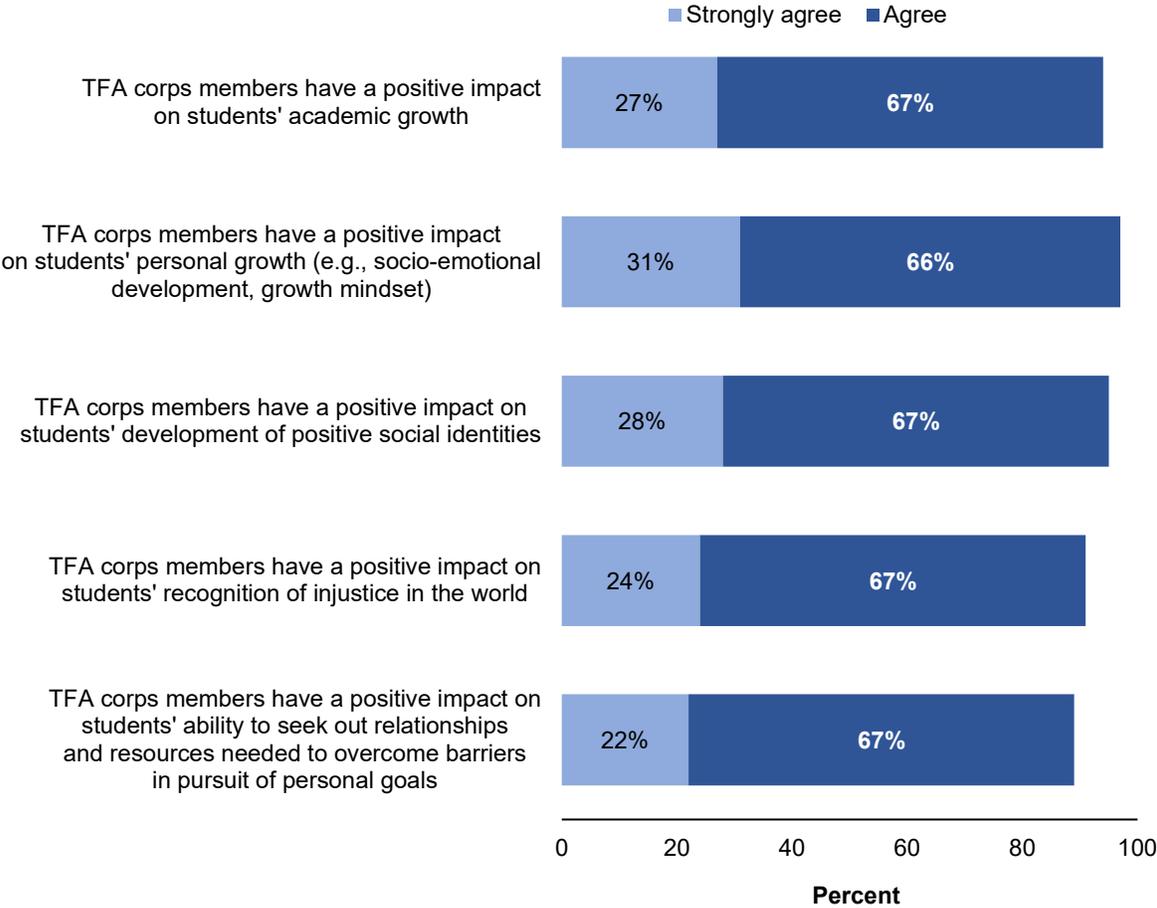
**Figure 16. Respondents' perceptions of corps members' actions, as compared to other novice teachers**



# Impacts of Corps Members on Students

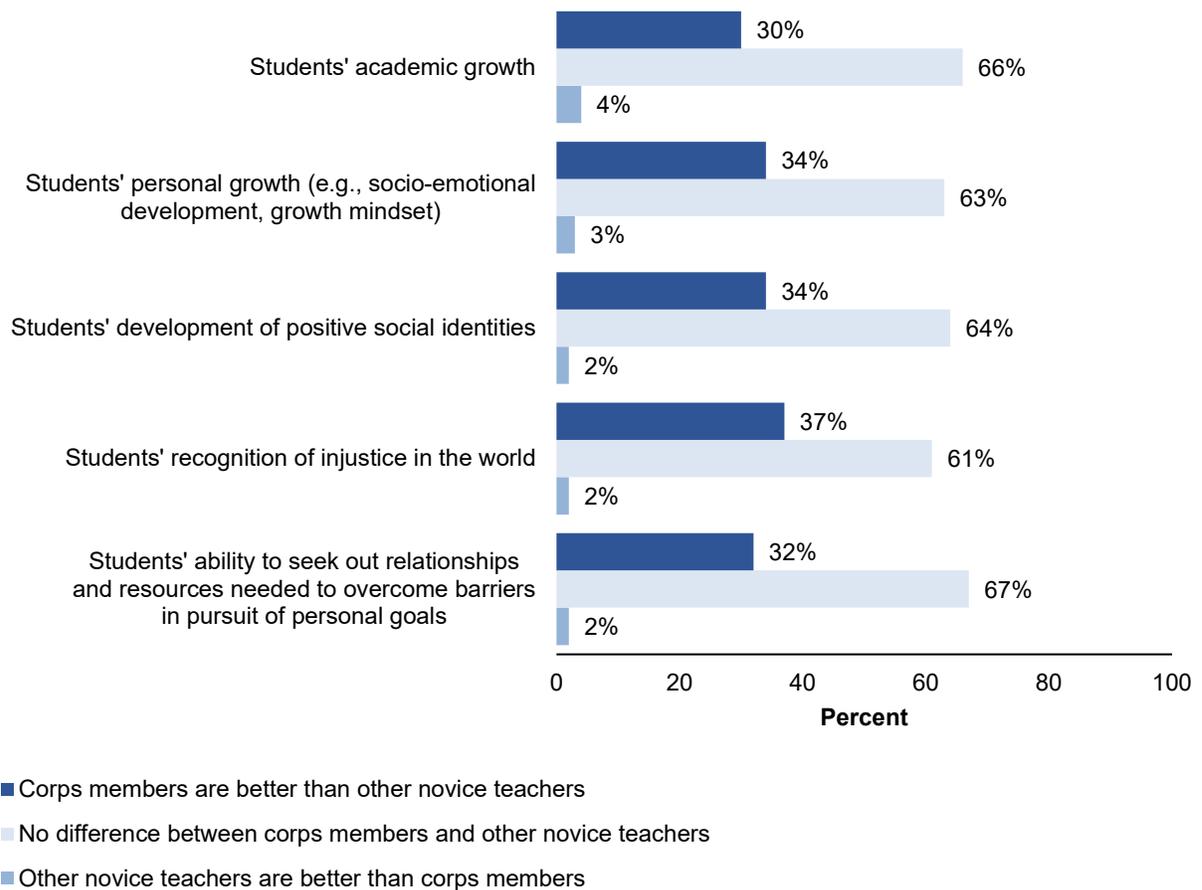
With regard to the impacts that corps members have on students, principals had very favorable perceptions, as shown in the results in Figure 17. While principals had very favorable perceptions of corps members' impacts in each of the areas they were asked to address in the survey, virtually all principals indicated that corps members had a positive impact in three areas, including students' personal growth (e.g., socio-emotional development, growth mindset) (97% agreed or strongly agreed), students' development of positive social identities (95% agreed or strongly agreed), and students' academic growth (94% agreed or strongly agreed).

**Figure 17. Respondents' perceptions of corps members' impacts on students**



When addressing the impacts of corps members on students, principals were asked to make comparisons between corps members and other novice teachers, and the results for these items are shown in Figure 18. While a majority of principals found no difference between corps members and other novice teachers on each of the specific areas of impact, between 30 and 37 percent of principals did indicate that corps members were better than other novice teachers on each item.

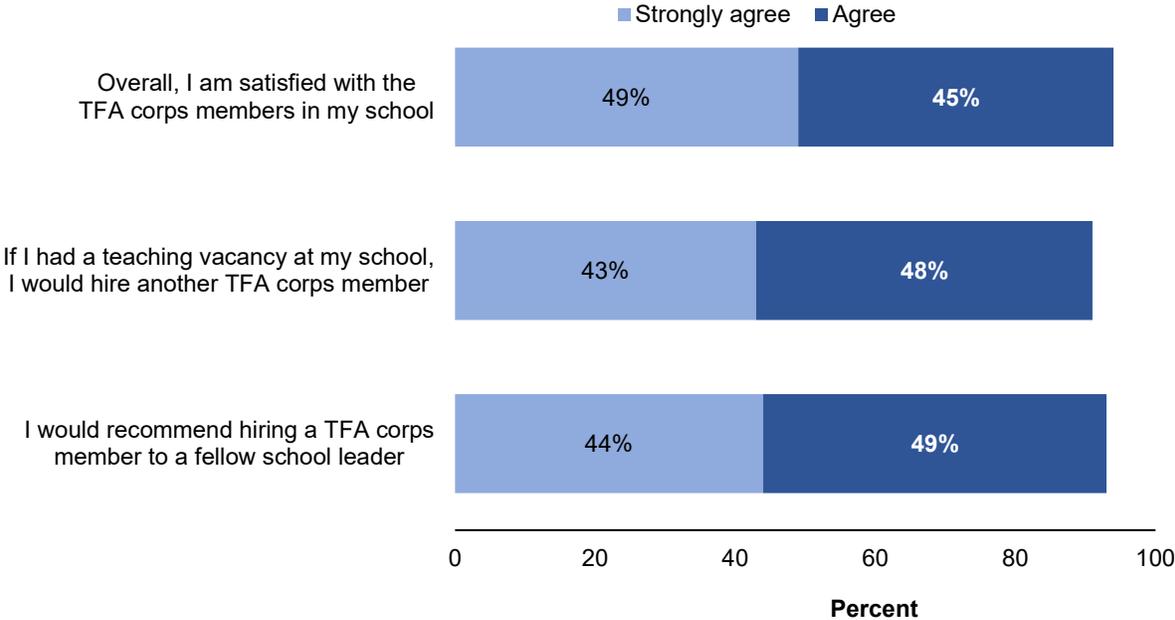
**Figure 18. Respondents' perceptions of corps members' impacts on students, as compared to other novice teachers**



# Overall Satisfaction with Corps Members

When asked about their overall satisfaction with corps members, principals responded very favorably, as shown in Figure 19. Ninety-four percent agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the corps members in their school, while 91 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they would hire another TFA corps members to fill a vacancy, and 93 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend hiring a TFA corps member to other school leaders.<sup>5</sup>

**Figure 19. Respondents' overall satisfaction with corps members**

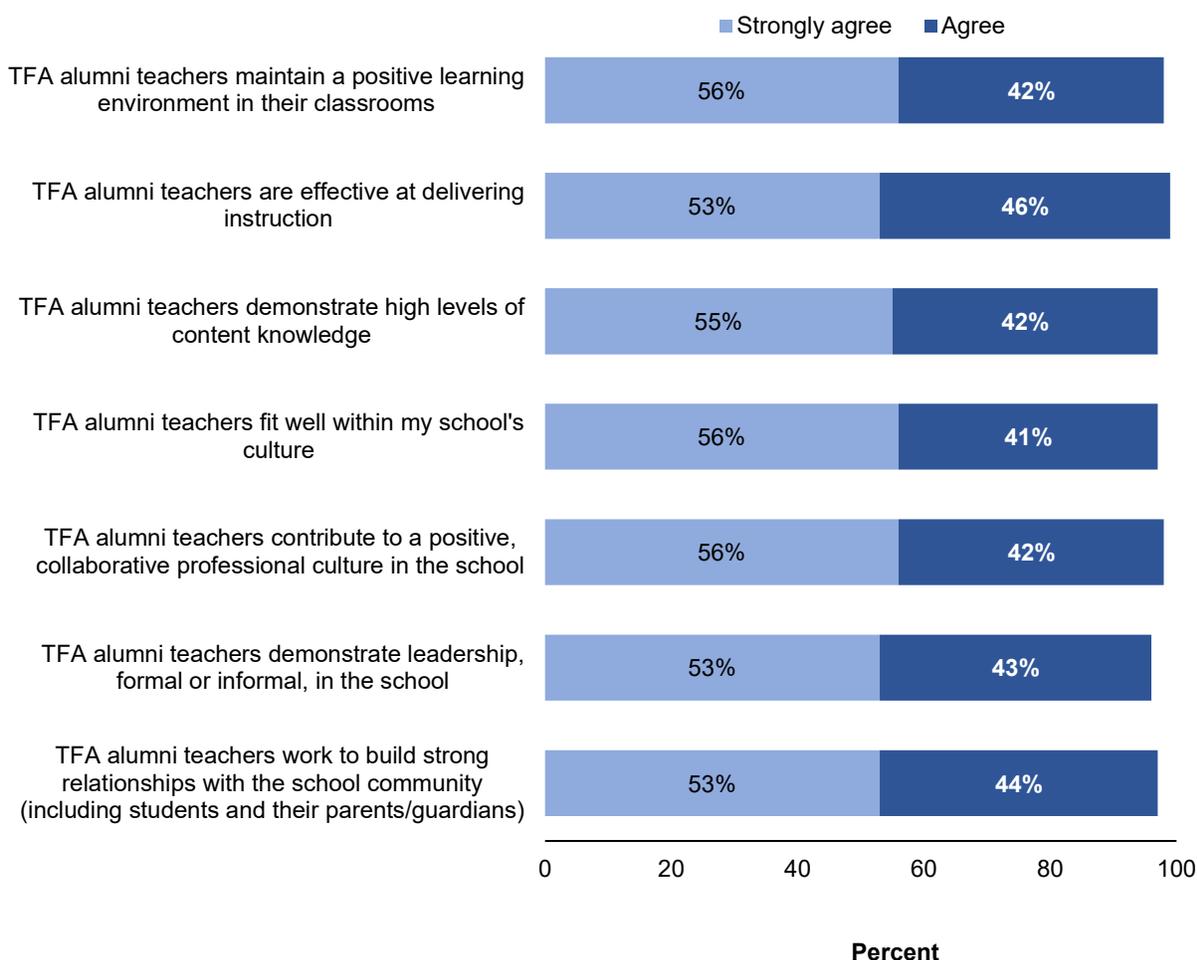


<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that although principals were asked in the survey to compare TFA corps members with other novice teachers in specific areas, as shown above in Figures 13, 16, and 18, they were not asked about the extent to which they were satisfied overall with non-TFA corps members.

## Capacities and Contributions of Alumni

Approximately three-quarters of respondents indicated in the survey that they had TFA alumni teaching in their school in 2020–21, and those principals were asked a similar set of questions about the capacities and contributions of TFA alumni in their school as they were about corps members. As Figure 20 shows, principals had highly favorable perceptions of the capacities and contributions of alumni, with at least 96 percent of principals either agreeing or strongly agreeing with each of the statements that were asked to address, and with at least 50 percent of principals strongly agreeing on each item.

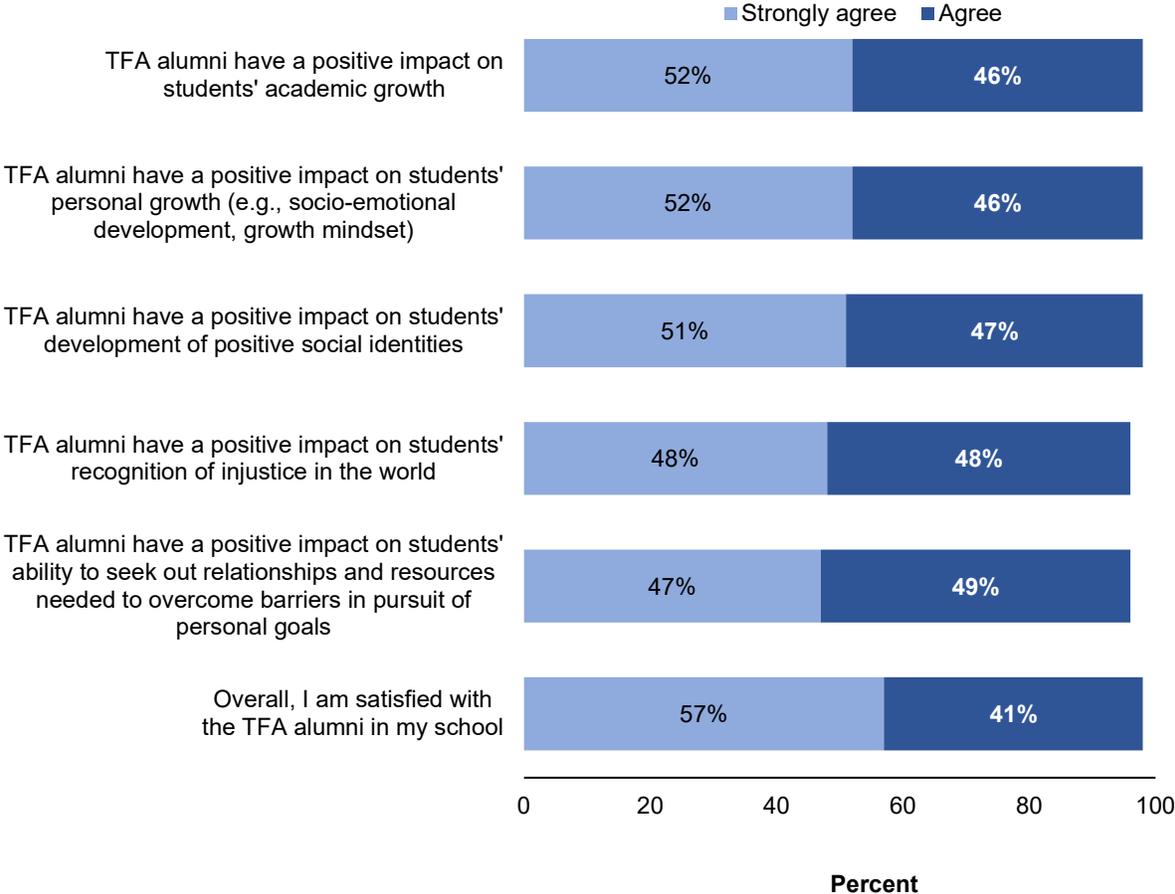
**Figure 20. Respondents' perceptions of the capacities and contributions of alumni**



# Impacts of and Overall Satisfaction with Alumni

Principals who reported having TFA alumni in their school in 2020–21 also had very favorable perceptions of the impacts of alumni on students. As shown in Figure 21, between 96 and 98 percent of principals agreed or strongly agreed with each of the five statements pertaining to the impacts of alumni. In addition, 98 percent of principals were satisfied with the alumni in their school, with 57 percent strongly agreeing with that statement.

**Figure 21. Respondents’ perceptions of the impact of alumni on students**



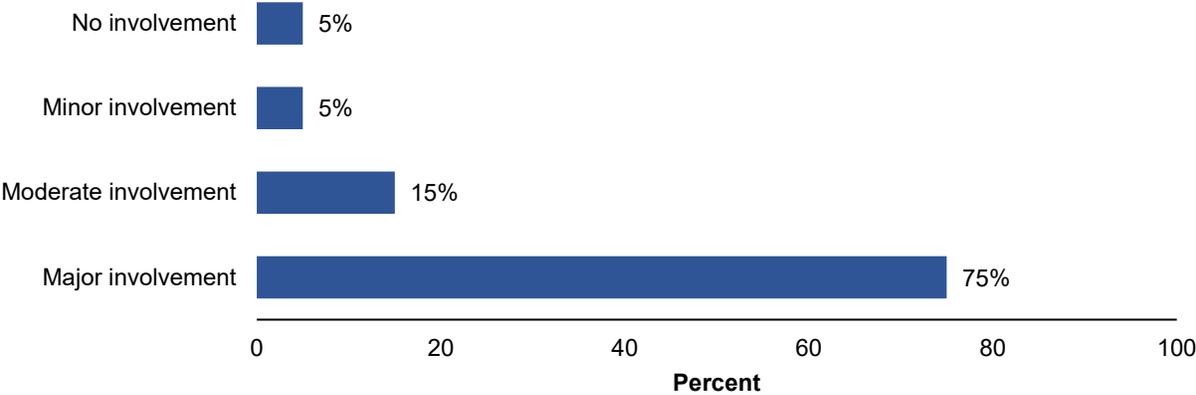
# 5. Findings on Principals' Perceptions on Hiring Corps Members and the Training and Support Corps Members Receive

This chapter presents the findings on principals' perceptions on the process of hiring TFA corps members and the training and support provided by TFA to its corps members.

## Process of Hiring Corps Members

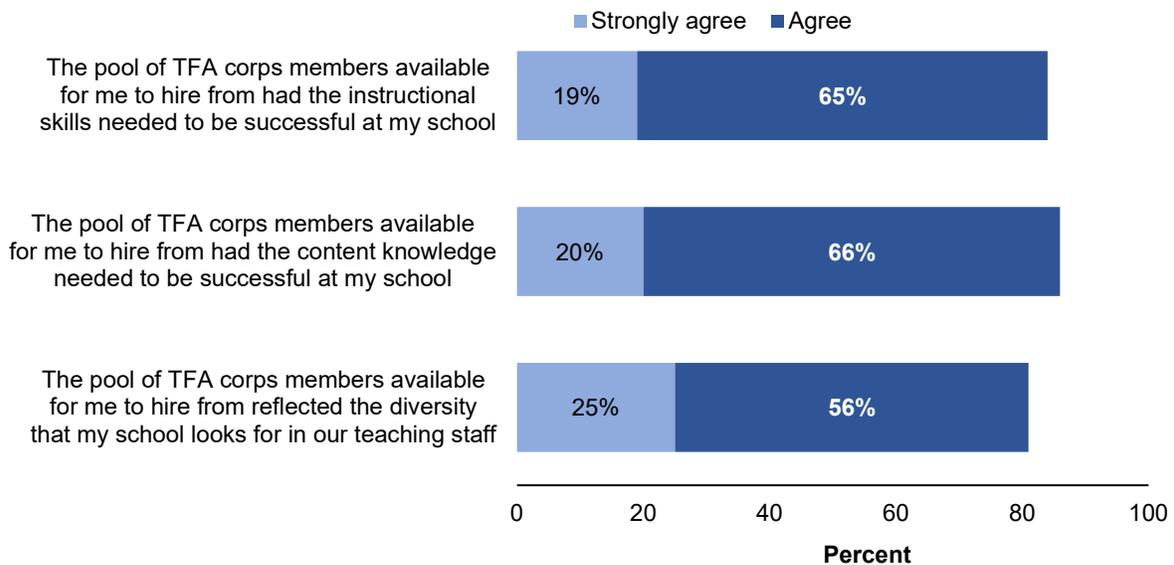
Principals were asked about their level of involvement in the process of hiring corps members. Figure 22 shows that nearly all principals (95%) reported some level of involvement in the hiring process, with three-quarters (75%) reporting major involvement. Another 15 percent reported moderate involvement, while 5 percent reported minor involvement.

Figure 22. Respondents' level of Involvement in the process of hiring TFA corps members



Principals who indicated that they had any level of involvement in the process of hiring corps members (as shown above in Figure 22) were asked about their perceptions of the pool of corps members that were available to hire from. As Figure 23 shows, a large majority of principals who indicated that they were involved in the hiring process had very favorable perceptions of the pool of available corps members, with 84 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing that the pool of corps members had the instructional skills needed to be successful, 86 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing that they had the content knowledge needed, and 81 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing that the pool reflected the diversity that their school looks for.

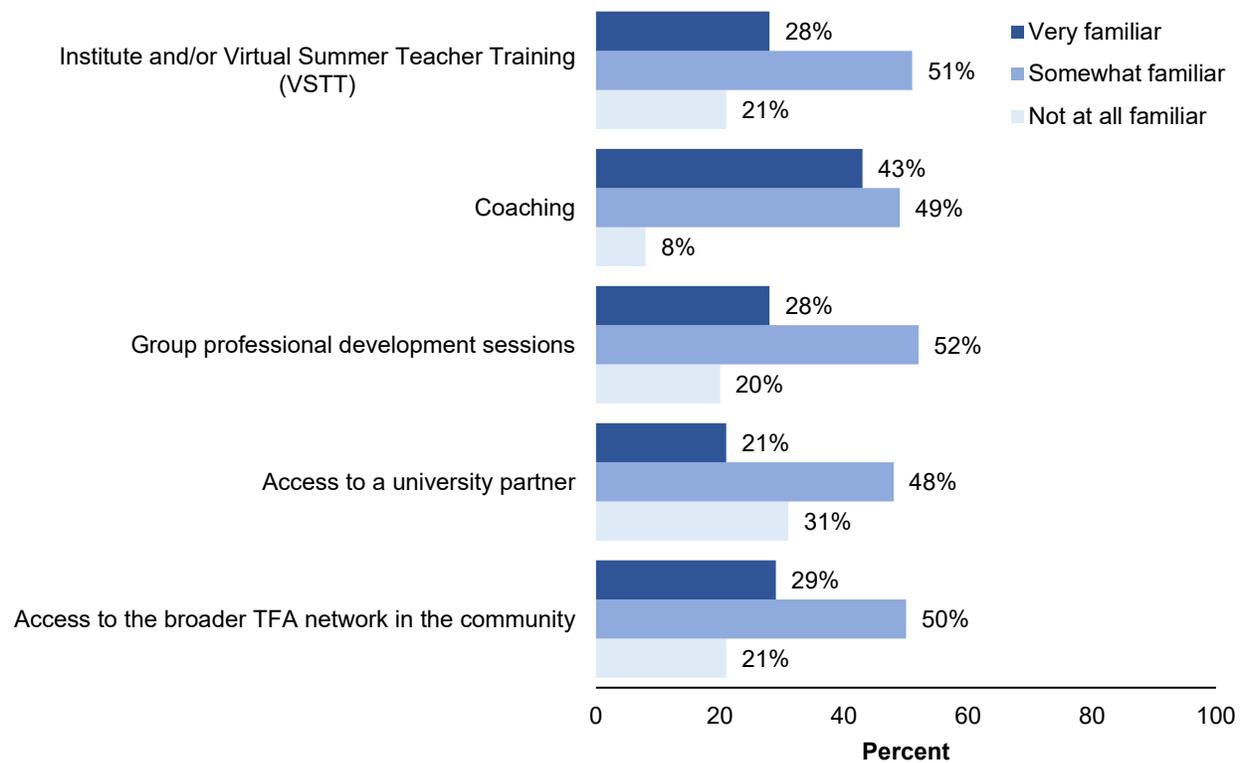
**Figure 23. Respondents' perceptions of the pool of corps members**



## Training and Support Provided to Corps Members

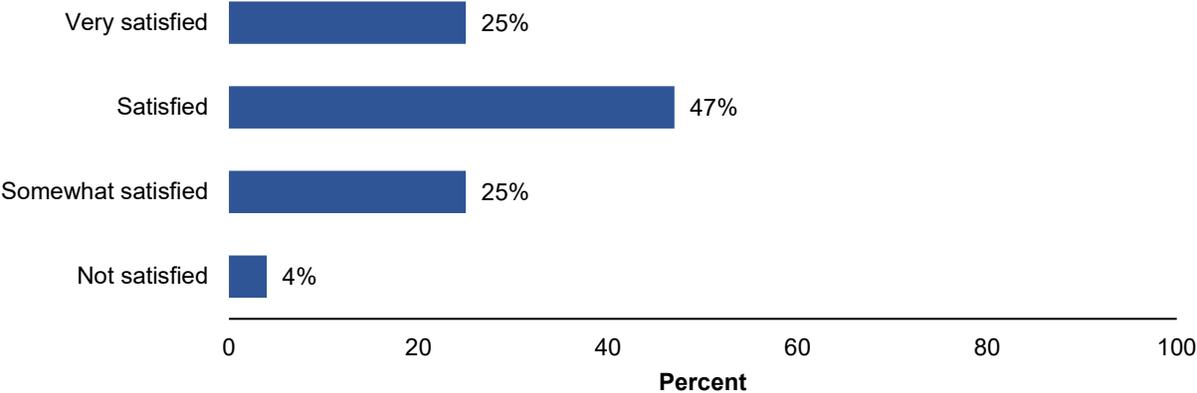
Principals were asked about their level of familiarity with various aspects of training and support provided by TFA to corps members. Figure 24 shows that at least two-thirds of respondents were either very familiar or somewhat familiar with each of the aspects of training and support they were asked about. Overall, principals were most familiar with coaching (92% were very familiar or somewhat familiar), Institute and/or Virtual Summer Teacher Training (VSTT) (79% were very familiar or somewhat familiar), and access to the broader TFA network in the community (79%).

**Figure 24. Respondents' levels of familiarity with aspects of training and support provided to TFA corps members**



Principals who indicated that they were familiar with the training and support provided to corps members (as shown above in Figure 24) were asked about their overall level of satisfaction with the training and support. As Figure 25 shows, virtually all respondents (97%) reported some degree of satisfaction, with 25 percent indicating they were very satisfied, 47 percent reporting they were satisfied, and 25 percent stating they were somewhat satisfied.

**Figure 25. Respondents' levels of satisfaction with the training and support provided by TFA to corps members**



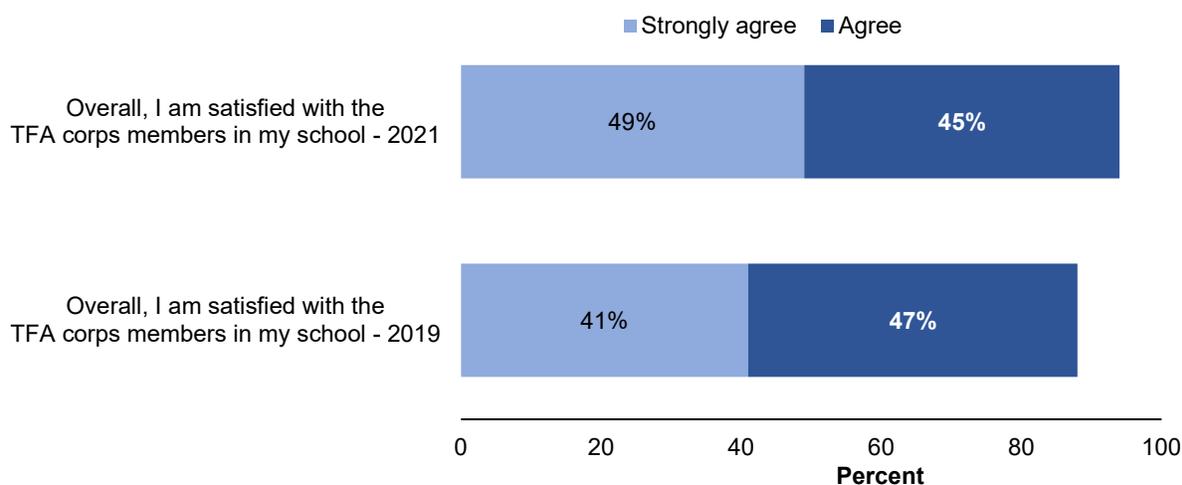
## 6. Comparisons of Results from 2019 to 2021 on Selected Survey Items

This chapter presents comparisons of results from 2019 to 2021 on a select set of key survey items, which include those pertaining to principals' overall satisfaction with corps members and alumni.

### Changes in Principals' Perceptions of Corps Members

As shown in Figure 26, principals reported higher levels of overall satisfaction with corps members in 2021 than in 2019, with 94 percent of principals agreeing or strongly agreeing that they were satisfied with the corps members in their school. This six-point increase is especially notable given that overall satisfaction was already high in 2019, in which 88 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Much of the increase from 2019 to 2021 was driven by the proportion of principals who strongly agreed with the statement, which was six points higher in 2021, while the proportion of principals who agreed was more consistent across the years.

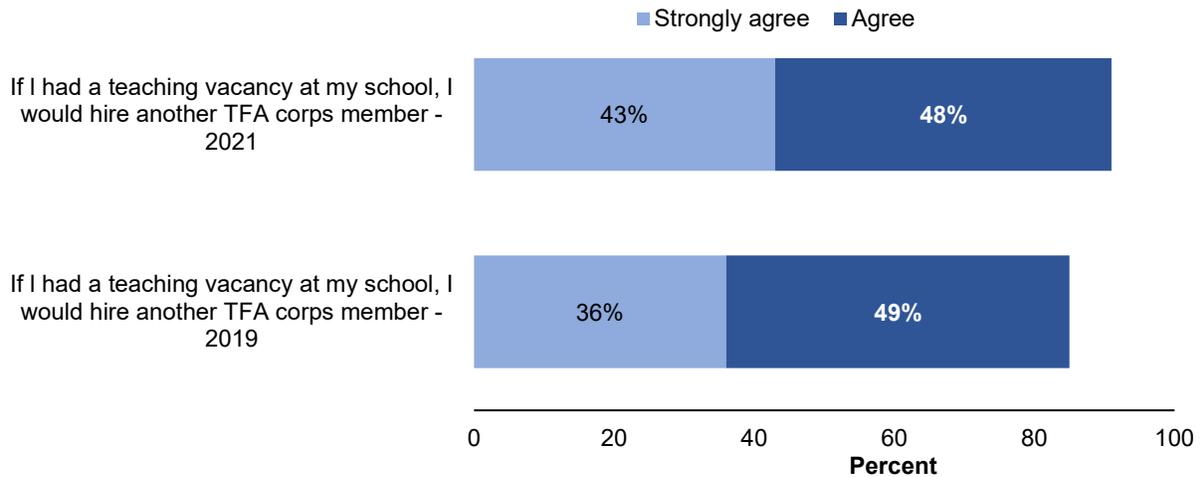
**Figure 26. Respondents' overall satisfaction with corps members (i.e., general), by year**



As Figure 27 shows, there was a six-point increase from 2019 to 2021 in the percentage of principals who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they would hire another TFA corps member if they had a teaching vacancy at their school. As with the question on overall satisfaction, shown above in Figure 26, much of the increase from 2019 to 2021 on this question was driven by the

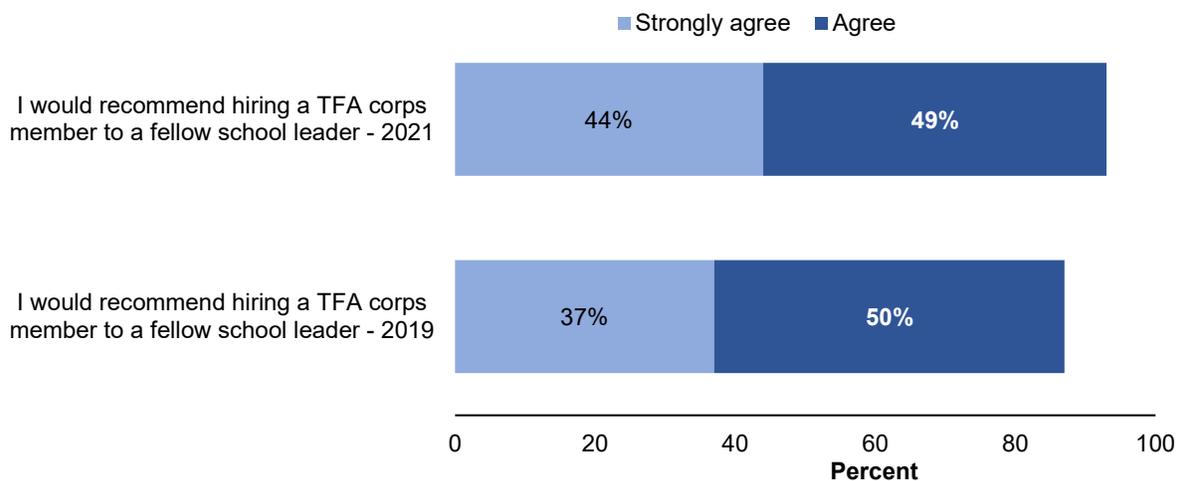
proportion of principals who strongly agreed with the statement, which was seven points higher in 2021, while the proportion of principals who agreed was more consistent over time.

**Figure 27. Respondents' overall satisfaction with corps members (i.e., would hire another TFA corps member), by year**



There was also a six-point increase from 2019 to 2021 in the percentage of principals who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they would recommend hiring a TFA corps member to a fellow school leaders, as shown in Figure 28. As with the prior two questions on overall satisfaction, shown above in Figures 26 and 27, most of the increase from 2019 to 2021 on this question was driven by the proportion of principals who strongly agreed with the statement, which was seven points higher in 2021, while the proportion of principals who agreed changed by one point.

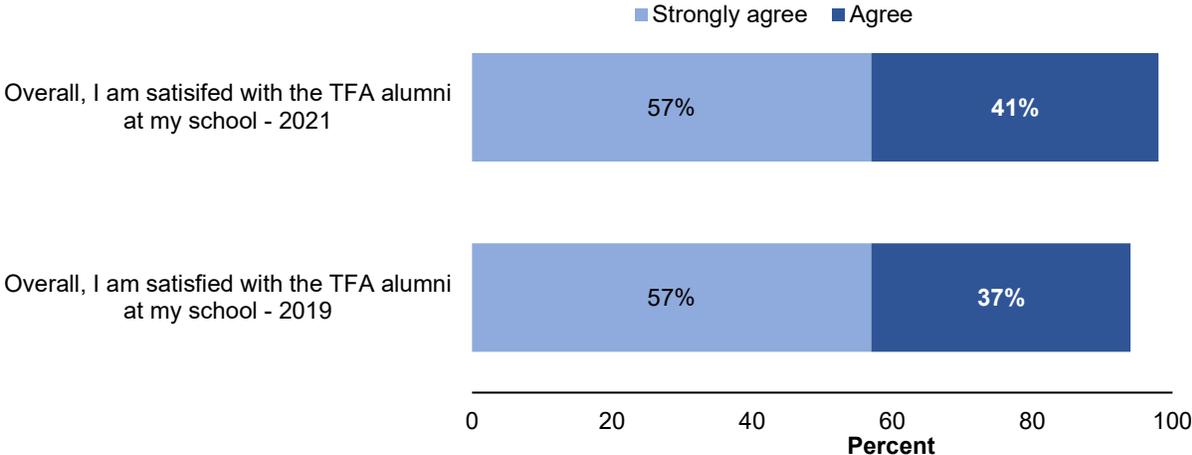
**Figure 28. Respondents' overall satisfaction with corps members (i.e., would recommend hiring TFA corps members to others), by year**



# Changes in Principals' Overall Satisfaction with Alumni

As shown in Figure 29, principals reported a higher level of overall satisfaction with alumni in 2021 than in 2019, with 98 percent of principals agreeing or strongly agreeing that they were satisfied with the corps members in their school in 2021, which represents a four-point increase since 2019. Although the increase over time in principals' overall satisfaction was somewhat smaller for alumni than for corps members (i.e., four points versus six points, respectively), it is important to consider that 94 percent of principals had agreed or strongly agreed with the statement in 2019. Therefore, the four-point increase from 2019 to 2021 is noteworthy, given that virtually all principals reported being satisfied with the alumni in their building in 2021.

**Figure 29. Respondents' overall satisfaction with alumni, by year**



## 7. Conclusions

---

The results from this year's survey provide evidence that, overall, principals have very favorable perceptions and very high levels of satisfaction with TFA corps members and alumni. With regard to corps members, more than 9 out of 10 principals reported that they were satisfied with the corps members in their school. Meanwhile, similar proportions of principals reported that they would hire another corps member to fill a vacancy and would recommend hiring a corps member to other school leaders. In addition, nearly 9 out of 10 principals reported that corps members were effective at delivering instruction, and virtually all principals agreed that corps members maintained a positive learning environment in their classrooms and contributed to a positive and collaborative culture in the school.

Perceptions of alumni were especially high, with virtually all principals (98%) who responded to the survey being satisfied overall with the alumni in their building. As with corps members, principals' perceptions of alumni were highest in the areas of: effectiveness at delivering instruction; maintaining positive learning environments in their classrooms; and contributing to a positive and collaborative culture in the school. Additionally, virtually all principals (96% or more) reported that alumni had positive impacts in each of the areas they were asked to address, which included students' academic growth, personal growth (e.g., socio-emotional development, growth mindset), development of positive social identities, recognition of injustice in the world, and ability to seek out relationships and resources needed to overcome barriers in pursuit of personal goals.

As in the 2019 survey, one set of results from this year's survey was particularly noteworthy, and this included items that asked principals to make direct comparisons between corps members and other novice teachers (i.e., those with less than 2 years of experience) about making positive impacts on students and other aspects of teaching. While most principals found no difference between the two groups, approximately one-third of principals felt that corps members were better than other novice teachers at making impacts in areas such as students' academic growth and students' personal growth (e.g., socio-emotional development, growth mindset). In contrast, only 3 to 4 percent of principals felt that other novice teachers were better than corps members at making impacts in those areas. Similarly, more than 4 out of 10 principals felt that corps members were better than other novice teachers at continuously learning and improving their practice and impact, while 3 out of 10

principals felt that corps members were better than other novice teachers in three other key aspects of teaching—building trusting relationships with their students, parents and community members, choosing their actions or approaches strategically and responsively, and seeking ways to contribute to a wider-reaching or more lasting impact in the broader school or community.

The overall results from this year’s survey were generally consistent with those from the 2019 survey, however, the results were more favorable on several key items pertaining to principals’ overall satisfaction with corps members and alumni. Although principals’ perceptions of both groups were already high in 2019, principals reported even higher levels of satisfaction this year. For example, while 88 percent of principals overall were satisfied with the corps members in their school and 94 percent were satisfied overall with alumni in 2019, these percentages increased to 94 for corps members and 98 for alumni. Similar increases from 2019 to 2021 were also seen in the results on questions about the impacts corps members and alumni had in their classrooms and on the overall school culture. In addition, the overall survey response rate this year was consistent with 2019, and the makeup of the principals who responded was largely the same as well (e.g., similar proportions of respondents in both 2019 and 2021 indicated they were TFA alumni, and the proportion of public charter schools to traditional public schools was similar across the years), which suggests that the increasingly favorable perceptions expressed by principals in the survey this year are shared by a broad set of principals across the country who partner with TFA.

Although the 2020–21 school year was an unprecedented one given the effects of COVID-19 and the disruptions to in-person learning for most schools, the fact that principals and teachers were not physically together in the building, as they would be in a typical school year, did not preclude principals from feeling capable of assessing corps members’ capacities and contributions. When asked directly about this, nearly 9 out of 10 principals agreed or strongly that they had adequate opportunity this year to assess corps members, despite any disruptions due to COVID-19. This serves as strong evidence that COVID-19 and the resulting shift from in-person to virtual learning in schools across the country should not be a major factor in interpreting this year’s survey results. Moreover, when considering the items in the survey that were modified to capture the fact that schools had to adapt to virtual learning for at least part of the year, principals reported high levels of leadership from corps members in supporting school-wide virtual learning efforts. In fact, a larger percentage of principals reported that corps members supported virtual learning efforts more than

any other specific role, such as sponsoring a student group, club, or organization or serving on a school-wide committee.

When considering the results of this year's survey in general and a comparison of results from 2019 to 2021, we have identified one area to consider exploring in more detail. That is, it would be useful to determine the specific reasons for the reported increases in principals' level of overall satisfaction with corps members and perceptions of corps members' capacities and contributions in several key areas. As indicated above, perceptions were already high in 2019, nonetheless, there were notable increases in the number of principals who reported overall satisfaction with and positive impacts made by corps members, to the point that virtually all principals reported being satisfied.

Furthermore, principals also reported higher levels of satisfaction this year with the pool of corps members that are available to them to hire from, with more than 8 of 10 indicating that the pool of available corps members had the instructional skills and content knowledge needed to be successful and reflected the diversity that the school looks for in its teaching staff. Given this interesting combination of developments, determining more precisely why these perceptions have increased could provide useful information to TFA that could help inform the training and support it provides to its corps members both prior to and during the 2-year commitment. One approach to exploring this issue would be to interview principals who have high levels of experience working with corps members (i.e., those with at least 5 years as a principal) to inquire about the specific areas in which they are seeing enhancements in more recent cohorts of corps members. This could help determine whether more recent cohorts of corps members have adapted to teaching during their first two years and thus experienced a more rapid rate of growth during this window or whether newer corps members are coming into their first year in the classroom better prepared than in prior years, which would suggest that recent modifications to TFA's approach to training and preparing its corps members have resulted in clear benefits for schools and students.

## References

---

- Chiang, H.S., Clark, M.A., & McConnell, S. (2016). Supplying disadvantaged schools with effective teachers: Experimental evidence on secondary math teachers from Teach For America. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 36(1).
- Clark, M.A., Isenberg, E., Liu, A.Y., Makowsky, L., & Zukiewicz, M. (2015). *Impacts of the Teach For America Investing in Innovation scale-up*. Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research.
- Penner, E. (2019). Teach For America and teacher quality: Increasing achievement over time. *Educational Policy*, 1-38. DOI. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904819843595>.
- Wright, A., Farmer, D., Kara, Y, Zannou, Y., & Ware, A. (2019). *TEXAS IMPACT: Evaluation Report for Teach for America*. Dallas, TX: Center on Research and Evaluation, Southern Methodist University.
- Xu, Z., Hannaway, J., & Taylor, C. (2011). Making a difference? The effects of Teach For America in high school. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 30(3), 447-469.

## Appendix A.

# Survey Sample and Response Rates, by TFA Region

Table A-1. Survey sample and response rates, by TFA region

TFA region	Number of schools contacted in the region	Percentage of principals responding
Alabama	32	66
Appalachia	9	89
Baltimore	66	38
Bay Area	101	51
Buffalo	20	55
California Capital Valley	21	29
Central Florida	8	50
Charlotte-Piedmont Triad	26	100
Chicago-Northwest Indiana	95	52
Colorado	35	34
Connecticut	38	63
D.C. Region	55	40
Dallas-Fort Worth	71	66
Delaware	10	40
Detroit	22	64
Eastern North Carolina	43	58
Greater Delta: Mississippi and Arkansas	43	70
Greater New Orleans	59	61
Greater Philadelphia	36	50
Greater Tulsa	31	58
Hawai'i	27	78
Houston	85	73
Idaho	22	68
Indianapolis	28	57
Jacksonville	15	80
Kansas City	24	75
Las Vegas	50	68
Los Angeles	128	50
Massachusetts	63	68
Memphis	90	69
Metro Atlanta	60	70
Miami-Dade	35	74
Milwaukee	23	61
Nashville-Chattanooga	25	40
New Jersey	38	58
New Mexico	20	70
New York	135	50
Ohio	42	48
Oklahoma City	14	86
Phoenix	50	68
Rhode Island	19	84
Rio Grande Valley	32	75

**Table A-1. Survey sample and response rates, by TFA region (continued)**

<b>TFA region</b>	<b>Number of schools contacted in the region</b>	<b>Percentage of principals responding</b>
San Antonio	50	74
San Diego	33	33
South Carolina	30	77
South Dakota	10	70
South Louisiana	14	79
St. Louis	26	46
Twin Cities	11	55
Washington	27	67
Overall	2,047	60

# Appendix B.

## 2021 National Principal Survey Overall Responses

### Section 1: Teacher Hiring

The questions in this section ask about your experiences hiring Teach For America (TFA) corps members and your perceptions about TFA’s pool of teacher candidates.

**Q1. To what extent are you involved in the process of hiring new *TFA corps members* for teaching positions at your school? (N=1,225)**

Response	Percent
No involvement	5.14
Minor involvement	5.06
Moderate involvement	14.45
Major involvement	75.35

**Q2. Please tell us the extent to which you agree with the following statements about the pool of TFA corps members made available to your school during the hiring process.**

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Q2A. The pool of TFA corps members available for me to hire from had the instructional skills needed to be successful at my school (N=1,162)	18.59%	64.72%	14.89%	1.81%
Q2B. The pool of TFA corps members available for me to hire from had the content knowledge needed to be successful at my school (N=1,162)	20.05	65.75	12.22	1.98
Q2C. The pool of TFA corps members available for me to hire from reflected the diversity that my school looks for in our teaching staff (N=1,162)	24.87	56.37	15.66	3.10

## Section 2: About Teach For America Corps Members

The questions in this section ask about your perceptions of and experiences with TFA corps members. A TFA corps member is someone who is currently completing their 2-year teaching commitment through the TFA program. When responding to the questions in this section, please **only** consider staff who teach in your school during the **current** (2020–2021) school year.

### Q3. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about TFA corps members' capacities and contributions?

*If you are not familiar enough with corps members' capacities and contributions, please feel free to ask others in your school who are more familiar for their input on this question.*

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Q3A. TFA corps members maintain a positive learning environment in their classrooms (N=1,225)	41.39%	54.86%	3.02%	0.73%
Q3B. TFA corps members are effective at delivering instruction (N=1,225)	23.43	66.04	9.55	0.98
Q3C. TFA corps members demonstrate high levels of content knowledge (N=1,125)	26.20	57.14	15.27	1.39
Q3D. TFA corps members fit well within my school's culture (N=1,125)	40.33	54.53	4.24	0.90
Q3E. TFA corps members contribute to a positive, collaborative professional culture in the school (N=1,125)	43.18	50.20	5.71	0.90
Q3F. TFA corps members demonstrate leadership, formal or informal, in the school (N=1,125)	27.18	56.65	14.78	1.39

### Q4. For each of the capacities and contributions in question 3 in which you agreed or strongly agreed, please indicate whether you feel there is a difference between corps members and other novice teachers in your building:

Statement	Corps members are better than other novice teachers	No difference between corps members and other novice teachers	Other novice teachers are better than corps members
Q4A. TFA corps members maintain a positive learning environment in their classrooms (N=1,179)	36.73%	59.20%	4.07%
Q4B. TFA corps members are effective at delivering instruction (N=1,096)	32.12	62.41	5.47
Q4C. TFA corps members demonstrate high levels of content knowledge (N=1,021)	34.77	60.33	4.90
Q4D. TFA corps members fit well within my school's culture (N=1,162)	35.97	61.70	2.32
Q4E. TFA corps members contribute to a positive, collaborative professional culture in the school (N=1,144)	41.52	56.12	2.36
Q4F. TFA corps members demonstrate leadership, formal or informal, in the school (N=1,027)	39.44	59.01	1.56

**Q5. To what extent do corps members take on the following roles in your school?**

*If you are not familiar enough with the types of roles corps members may have taken on, please feel free to ask others in your school who are more familiar for their input on this question.*

Type of role	To a great extent	To some extent	Not at all
Q5A. Coach a sport (N=1,225)	7.02%	27.76%	65.22%
Q5B. Sponsor a student group, club, or organization (N=1,225)	16.33	44.49	39.18
Q5C. Serve as a department lead or chair (N=1,225)	7.84	26.69	65.47
Q5D. Serve as a lead curriculum specialist (N=1,225)	4.33	19.76	75.92
Q5E. Serve on a school-wide or district-wide committee or task force (N=1,225)	14.37	41.63	44.00
Q5F. Serve as a formal mentor or mentor coordinator in your school or district (N=1,225)	6.04	23.84	70.12
Q5G. Support school-wide <i>virtual</i> learning efforts	43.92	43.27	12.82

**Q6. To what extent do corps members demonstrate the following actions?**

*If you are not familiar enough with the types of actions corps members demonstrated, please feel free to ask others in your school who are more familiar for their input on this question.*

Type of action	To a great extent	To some extent	Not at all
Q6A. Build trusting relationships with their students, parents, and community members (N=1,225)	63.18%	35.84%	0.98%
Q6B. Build trusting relationships with their colleagues and administrators (N=1,225)	62.94	35.84	1.22
Q6C. Cultivate a sense of shared purpose and goals with those they work with (i.e., parents, colleagues, students) (N=1,225)	58.20	40.24	1.55
Q6D. Choose their actions or approaches strategically and responsively (i.e., as a teacher, collaborator with colleagues, or in their responsibilities outside of the classroom) (N=1,225)	50.12	47.18	2.69
Q6E. Continuously learn and improve their practice and impact (N=1,225)	66.45	31.84	1.71
Q6F. Seek ways to contribute to a wider-reaching or more lasting impact in the broader school or community (N=1,225)	44.33	48.41	7.27

**Q7. For each of the actions in question 6 in which you indicated “to a great extent” or “to some extent,” please indicate whether you feel there is a difference between corps members and other novice teachers in your building:**

<b>Type of action</b>	<b>Corps members are better than other novice teachers</b>	<b>No difference between corps members and other novice teachers</b>	<b>Other novice teachers are better than corps members</b>
Q7A. Build trusting relationships with their students, parents, and community members (N=1,213)	30.42%	65.21%	4.37%
Q7B. Build trusting relationships with their colleagues and administrators) (N=1,210)	26.53	67.77	5.70
Q7C. Cultivate a sense of shared purpose and goals with those they work with (i.e., parents, colleagues, students) (N=1,206)	29.27	67.66	3.07
Q7D. Choose their actions or approaches strategically and responsively (i.e., as a teacher, collaborator with colleagues, or in their responsibilities outside of the classroom) (N=1,192)	30.54	65.86	3.61
Q7E. Continuously learn and improve their practice and impact (N=1,204)	40.86	56.48	2.66
Q7F. Seek ways to contribute to a wider-reaching or more lasting impact in the broader school or community (N=1,136)	31.87	64.79	3.35

**Q8. TFA is interested in learning more about the specific ways in which TFA corps members demonstrate leadership in your school. In the box below, please describe some examples or highlights (without using individual teachers’ names) of leadership demonstrated by corps members at your school. Please feel free to provide examples that illustrate how corps members have responded this year to the unprecedented challenges as a result of COVID-19.**

**NOTE: RESPONSES TO THIS QUESTION WERE OPEN-ENDED AND ARE NOT SHOWN HERE**

**Q9. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about TFA corps members' impacts on students?**

*If you are not familiar enough with the impacts corps members may have had on students, please feel free to ask others in your school who are more familiar for their input on this question.*

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Q9A. TFA corps members have a positive impact on students' academic growth (N=1,225)	27.53%	67.43%	4.90%	0.24%
Q9B. TFA corps members have a positive impact on students' personal growth (e.g., socio-emotional development, growth mindset) (N=1,225)	30.45	65.88	3.51	0.16
Q9C. TFA corps members have a positive impact on students' development of positive social identities (N=1,225)	28.00	67.43	4.41	0.16
Q9D. TFA corps members have a positive impact on students' recognition of injustice in the world (N=1,225)	23.92	66.78	8.82	0.49
Q9E. TFA corps members have a positive impact on students' ability to seek out relationships and resources needed to overcome barriers in pursuit of personal goals (N=1,225)	22.12	67.02	10.37	0.49

**Q10. For each of the impacts in question 9 in which you agreed or strongly agreed, please indicate whether you feel there is a difference between corps members and other novice teachers in your building:**

Type of impact	Corps members are better than other novice teachers	No difference between corps members and other novice teachers	Other novice teachers are better than corps members
Q10A. Academic growth (N=1,162)	29.95%	65.75%	4.30%
Q10B. Personal growth (e.g., socio-emotional development, growth mindset) (N=1,180)	34.32	62.80	2.88
Q10C. Development of positive social identities (N=1,169)	33.62	63.90	2.48
Q10D. Recognition of injustice in the world (N=1,111)	36.81	61.39	1.80
Q10E. Ability to seek out relationships and resources needed to overcome barriers in pursuit of personal goals (N=1,092)	31.78	66.67	1.56

**Q11. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?**

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Q11A. Overall, I am satisfied with the TFA corps members in my school (N=1,225)	49.22%	44.90%	4.82%	1.06%
Q11B. If I had a teaching vacancy at my school, I would hire another TFA corps member (N=1,225)	43.27	48.41	6.86	1.47
Q11C. I would recommend hiring a TFA corps member to a fellow school leader (N=1,225)	43.92	49.14	5.96	0.98

## Section 3: Training and Support

The questions in this section ask about your awareness and perceptions of the training TFA corps members receive and the support network that TFA provides to corps members.

**Q12. Please indicate your level of familiarity with each aspect of training and support provided to TFA corps members:**

Aspect of training and support	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Not at all familiar
Q12A. Institute and/or Virtual Summer Teacher Training (VSTT) (N=1,225)	28.33%	50.61%	21.06%
Q12B. Coaching (N=1,225)	42.86	49.14	8.00
Q12C. Group professional development sessions (N=1,225)	28.41	52.00	19.59
Q12D. Access to a university partner (N=1,225)	21.31	48.08	30.61
Q12E. Access to the broader TFA network in the community (N=1,225)	28.65	50.20	21.14

**Q13. Overall, to what extent are you satisfied with the training and support provided by TFA to the corps members at your school? (N=1,161)**

Response	Percent
Not satisfied	3.79
Somewhat satisfied	24.55
Satisfied	47.20
Very satisfied	24.46

[For those who indicated “somewhat familiar” or “very familiar” to at least one item in Q12a – Q12e]:

**Q14. TFA is interested in learning more about principals’ satisfaction with the training and support provided to corps members. In the text box below, please provide any additional comments on what you consider strengths and/or weaknesses of the training and support provided. In particular, TFA would like to learn about whether or not their training and support met the needs of this unprecedented school year.**

**NOTE: RESPONSES TO THIS QUESTION WERE OPEN-ENDED AND ARE NOT SHOWN HERE**

## Section 4: About Teach For America Alumni

While the previous sections focused on TFA *corps members*, the questions in this section ask specifically about TFA *alumni teachers*—teachers who entered the profession through TFA and have already completed their 2-year teaching commitment, regardless of where they may have initially taught.

**Q15. How many TFA *alumni teachers* are teaching in your school this school year (2020–21)?**  
(N=1,225)

Response	Percent
None	28.08
1–3	48.49
4–6	13.22
7–9	4.00
10 or more	2.45
I'm unsure	3.76

**Q16. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the capacities and contributions of TFA *alumni teachers*?**

*If you are not familiar enough with the capacities and contributions of TFA alumni teachers, please feel free to ask others in your school who are more familiar for their input on this question.*

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Q16A. TFA alumni teachers maintain a positive learning environment in their classrooms (N=835)	56.17%	42.16%	1.56%	0.12%
Q16B. TFA alumni teachers are effective at delivering instruction (N=835)	52.57	45.51	1.80	0.12
Q16C. TFA alumni teachers demonstrate high levels of content knowledge (N=835)	54.49	42.16	3.23	0.12
Q16D. TFA alumni teachers fit well within my school's culture (N=835)	56.05	41.32	2.51	0.12
Q16E. TFA alumni teachers contribute to a positive, collaborative professional culture in the school (N=835)	55.81	41.56	2.40	0.24
Q16F. TFA alumni teachers demonstrate leadership, formal or informal, in the school (N=835)	52.93	42.75	3.95	0.36
Q16G. TFA alumni teachers work to build strong relationships with the school community (including students and their parents/guardians) (N=835)	53.29	43.83	2.63	0.24

[For those who indicated “agree” or “strongly agree” to at least one item in Q16]:

**Q17. TFA is interested in learning more about the specific ways in which TFA alumni teachers demonstrate leadership in your school. In the text box below, please describe some examples or highlights (without using individual teachers’ names) of leadership demonstrated by TFA alumni teachers at your school. Please feel free to provide examples that illustrate how alumni have responded this year to the unprecedented challenges as a result of COVID-19.**

**NOTE: RESPONSES TO THIS QUESTION WERE OPEN-ENDED AND ARE NOT SHOWN HERE**

**Q18. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the impacts of TFA alumni teachers on students?**

*If you are not familiar enough with the impacts TFA alumni teachers may have had on students, please feel free to ask others in your school who are more familiar for their input on this question.*

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Q18A. TFA alumni have a positive impact on students’ academic growth (N=835)	52.10	45.99	1.80	0.12
Q18B. TFA alumni have a positive impact on students’ personal growth (e.g., socio-emotional development, growth mindset) (N=835)	52.10	46.35	1.44	0.12
Q18C. TFA alumni have a positive impact on students’ development of positive social identities (N=835)	50.66	47.31	1.92	0.12
Q18D. TFA alumni have a positive impact on students’ recognition of injustice in the world (N=835)	47.90	48.02	3.95	0.12
Q18E. TFA alumni have a positive impact on students’ ability to seek out relationships and resources needed to overcome barriers in pursuit of personal goals (N=835)	47.43	48.86	3.59	0.12
Q18F. Overall, I am satisfied with the TFA alumni in my school (N=835)	57.01	41.20	1.68	0.12

## Section 5: COVID-19

TFA is interested in learning more about how COVID-19 may have influenced how you responded to the items in this survey. Given that a range of instructional approaches have been adopted by schools this year (2020–21) (e.g., some students physically attend school while others attend remotely), this set of questions asks about the status of your school and any potential effects of COVID-19.

**Q19. My school building has been physically open (i.e., with in-person instruction) to at least *some* students for at least *part* of the school year (2020–21) so far: (N=1,225)**

Response	Percent
Yes	87.02
No	12.98

**Q20. All or most of the TFA corps members placed in my school have been physically present in the building (i.e., conducting in-person instruction) for at least *part* of the school year (2020–21) so far: (N=1,225)**

Response	Percent
Yes	77.71
No	22.29

**Q21. I have had adequate opportunity this year (2020–21) to assess the capacities and contributions of the TFA corps members in my building, despite any disruptions due to COVID-19: (N=1,225)**

Response	Percent
Strongly agree	35.18
Agree	52.41
Disagree	10.45
Strongly disagree	1.96

**Q22. In the text box below, please provide any additional comments or describe any factors pertaining to COVID-19 and its effects that you would like to share with TFA.**

**NOTE: RESPONSES TO THIS QUESTION WERE OPEN-ENDED AND ARE NOT SHOWN HERE**

## Section 6: About Your School and Your Professional Background

The questions in this last section of the survey first ask about characteristics of your school, followed by several questions about your individual and professional background.

**Q23. Approximately how many full-time equivalent teachers are currently employed at your school? (Please select only one) (N=1,225)**

Response	Percent
10 or fewer teachers	2.61
11–20 teachers	12.08
21–30 teachers	22.61
31–40 teachers	20.73
41–50 teachers	14.53
51–60 teachers	11.02
More than 60 teachers	16.41

**Q24. During the 2018–19 school year, what aspects of teaching were a focus of teacher professional learning offered in your school? (N=1,225)**

Aspect of teaching	A major focus	A minor focus	Not a focus at all
Q24A. Maintaining a positive learning environment	82.37%	16.82%	0.82%
Q24B. Improving instructional practice (general)	87.59	11.84	0.57
Q24C. Addressing student behavior	20.16	61.80	18.04
Q24D. Improving teacher collaboration	58.45	37.63	3.92
Q24E. Enhancing teacher leadership	31.59	58.94	9.47
Q24F. Delivering <i>virtual</i> instruction	94.12	5.71	0.16

**Q25. Are you an alumnus/alumna of Teach For America? (N=1,225)**

Response	Percent
Yes	19.59
No	80.41

**Q26. Prior to the 2020–21 school year, how many years did you serve as the principal of this school? (Please select only one) (N=1,225)**

Response	Percent
Less than 2 years	38.69
2 – 4 years	36.49
5 – 9 years	18.29
10 or more years	6.53

**Q27. Prior to the 2020–21 school year, how long had you worked with TFA *corps members* in your capacity as a principal (either in your current school or in a previous role)? (Please select only one) (N=1,225)**

Response	Percent
Less than 2 years	27.02
2 – 4 years	30.37
5 – 9 years	29.96
10 or more years	12.65

**Q28. Before you became a principal, how many years of K-12 teaching experience did you have? (Please select only one) (N=1,225)**

Response	Percent
Less than 2 years	0.90
2 – 4 years	9.88
5 – 9 years	41.22
10 or more years	48.00

**Q29. Do you identify as a member of the Latinx community? (Please select only one) (N=1,225)**

Response	Percent
Yes	13.55
No	80.00
Prefer not to answer	6.45

**Q30. What is your race/ethnicity? (Please select all that apply) (N=1,225)**

Response	Percent
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.22
Asian American	3.02
Black	34.53
Multi-Racial	4.98
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.49
White	40.82
Prefer not to answer	14.94

**Q31. Do you identify as a person of color? (Please select only one) (N=1,225)**

Response	Percent
Yes	50.53
No	40.00
Prefer not to answer	9.47

**Q32. Please feel free to provide more information about how you would self-identify your *race*:**

**NOTE: RESPONSES TO THIS QUESTION WERE OPEN-ENDED AND ARE NOT SHOWN HERE**

**Q33. Please feel free to provide more information about how you would self-identify your *ethnicity*:**

**NOTE: RESPONSES TO THIS QUESTION WERE OPEN-ENDED AND ARE NOT SHOWN HERE**

**Q34. How do you currently describe your gender identity? (N=1,225)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Female	61.39
Male	34.04
Non-binary	0.33
Prefer not to answer	4.24

**Q35. Do you identify as transgender? (N=1,225)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	0.24
No	94.94
Prefer not to answer	4.82