Performance Review
Program for Initial Licensure (PRPIL)

ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017
CLASS MEASURES
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The Performance Review Program for Initial Licensure (PRPIL) is an alternative licensure program for Massachusetts teachers who need to advance from a Provisional (previously called Preliminary) license to an Initial license. The program has historically been Route 4 in the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education’s Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval but PRPIL was recently changed to Route 2. Class Measures administers this program on behalf of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Since 2003, more than 3,000 teachers have earned their Initial license through the PRPIL program.

Massachusetts’ teachers holding a Provisional license must advance to an Initial license within three to five years of beginning to teach in the license subject area. The PRPIL program is designed to offer teachers a framework for demonstrating that they have gained the pedagogical skills needed to remain in the classroom as described in the Candidate Assessment of Performance published by DESE. The PRPIL framework includes a prerequisite requirement of 120 hours of coursework in pedagogy, as well as classroom observations and a portfolio completed during the program.

Teachers enrolled in PRPIL work closely with two experienced education professionals: a mentor chosen by the teacher and an Instructional Consultant assigned by Class Measures. The teacher, mentor, and Instructional Consultant work together to complete a total of four classroom observations (two with the mentor and two with the Instructional Consultant). Each teacher must also compile a portfolio including a one-page reflection for each standard in the Candidate Assessment of Performance and two pieces of hard evidence for each selected element in each standard. The goal is to demonstrate that the teacher is exhibiting competence in the standards through his/her regular classroom teaching.

As part of our ongoing efforts to measure and improve the quality of the PRPIL program, Class Measures has gathered program information from several sources: our participant database, our Instructional Consultant database, and Program Quality Surveys. This Annual Report includes a summary of this information as well the improvements we hope to make in the coming year.

In summer 2017 the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education made changes to the regulations that impact PRPIL. In addition to the license name change (Preliminary to Provisional) and Route change (from 4 to 2), additional subject area licenses have been added to PRPIL’s repertoire. PRPIL is now able to support teachers with all non-vocational teacher licenses.

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1 The text from the regulations can be found at http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html?section=05.
2 These teachers passed the Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure (MTEL) in Communication & Literacy as well as their subject area(s) but have not completed a student teaching practicum.
Cohort Overview

General Process

The PRPIL program utilizes a rolling admissions process. Therefore, we consider each cohort to include all teachers accepted into the program between March 1 and the following February 28, plus any teachers accepted earlier who declare their intent to begin the program with this cohort. Teachers work through the program at their own pace resulting in a variety of completion intervals. While most teachers complete the program within the cohort into which they were accepted (4-6 months), some teachers continue the program into the following cohort. Teachers who complete by September 30 are considered to have finished within their assigned cohort.

Program quality information is collected via optional electronic survey after a teacher has completed PRPIL. Survey data is reported here for teachers, mentors, and principals completing the program between October 1, 2016 and September 30, 2017. The majority of data collected during this time reflects teachers finishing within their assigned cohort. However, some survey data also reflects teachers from earlier cohorts who finished the program within the current year.

Class Measures gathers certain demographic data from information provided on the program application. However, some data is not ascertainable in every case. Accordingly, the aggregated demographic data reported below includes the category “Unknown” where applicable.

2016-2017 Cohort Statistics & Demographic Data

The 2016-2017 cohort consisted of 285 teachers. Three teachers withdrew from the program\(^3\) leaving a cohort of 282. Of these, 253 (90%) completed the program within the 2016-2017 cohort (i.e. on or before September 30, 2017). The remaining 29 teachers continued the program into the 2017-2018 cohort. The 2016-2017 cohort included teachers from 151 school districts. The teachers represented 26 license subject areas. The cohort has somewhat more women than men.

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\(^3\) These teachers withdrew from the program voluntarily.
The STEM subject areas (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) represent 38% of this cohort, supporting the need for alternative licensure to increase the number of teachers in STEM subjects. If arts is included (STEAM) the total percentage jumps to 48%, almost half the program participants. Foreign Language also shows strong use of PRPIL, representing 23% of participants this year.

Despite often being within their first five years of teaching, PRPIL teachers are well-educated, with over half (53%) of this year’s cohort having earned a Master’s Degree and nine percent having earned a Doctorate. However, the majority of degrees (66%) earned by this cohort were not in Education. This emphasizes the high level of knowledge and expertise brought to Massachusetts classrooms by PRPIL graduates. It also demonstrates the need for alternative avenues to licensure (such as PRPIL) designed for teachers whose education was not specifically in the field of teaching.
One important goal of PRPIL is to provide teachers who were delayed entrants (career changers) a means of earning an Initial license. Slightly more than half the cohort (54%) reported teaching as their first profession, with the other half self-reporting as delayed entrants.

Applicants are asked to identify their ethnicity, however answering is optional. This year 95% chose to answer. Among those who answered the question, most are Caucasian. However, several other ethnicities are represented in the cohort as well.
**2016-2017 Program Quality Survey Results**

All teachers, mentors and principals involved with the program (except those who have previously opted out of all Class Measures surveys) are sent an electronic Program Quality Survey once the teacher has completed the program and has been endorsed for his/her license. In the table below, the number of surveys delivered is the number attempted minus those that bounced due to an incorrect or inactivated email address. The response rates are calculated as a percentage of the surveys delivered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Mentors</th>
<th>Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attempted</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>272*</td>
<td>252*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivered</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bounced</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opted Out**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial Responses</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Responses</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Rate</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The number of mentors and principals is lower than the number of teachers due to multiple teachers with the same mentor and/or principal.

**This number represents individuals who received the survey invitation but chose to opt out of this and all future surveys.

### Application Process

Teachers who are interested in applying to PRPIL have several options for gathering information about the program. The Class Measures website offers detailed descriptions of all aspects of the program, the office is staffed regularly to field questions over the phone, and questions can be answered via email as well. The PRPIL program is listed on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s website with a link to the Class Measures website, and promotional materials are periodically sent to schools and districts. Teachers can choose to apply using a paper application or an online application, both of which are available on our website. Most applications are reviewed within one week of being received.

“I had a very positive experience applying to the program. The website was helpful and when I called with a specific question, the people I spoke with were friendly and also helpful.”

–PRPIL Teacher
Overall, teachers were pleased with the application process. The majority found the process to be clear and easy to negotiate while 96% found our website at least somewhat useful for gathering information about the program.

Was our paper application (Word or PDF) clear and easy to complete?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn't use the paper application</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2016-2017

Was our online application clear and easy to complete?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn't use the online application</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2016-2017

Was our website a useful tool for learning about the PRPIL program?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn't look at the website</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2016-2017
INSTRUCTIONAL CONSULTANTS

Every teacher in the PRPIL program works closely with an Instructional Consultant. Instructional Consultants are experienced educators who are continually trained by Class Measures in the specifics of the PRPIL process. After an initial introductory training, all consultants attend a refresher training at least every other year. In addition, our consultants bring a high level of education and experience to inform their work with PRPIL teachers. All consultants have earned a Master’s Degree or National Board Certification. Twenty-four percent have earned a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS) or a Doctorate. Many are retired teachers and/or administrators with many years experience in the field of education. Please see the graph below for more information regarding the educational achievements of the Instructional Consultants.

Instructional Consultants conduct classroom observations, provide written reports, support the teacher’s compilation of an evidentiary portfolio, and serve as the teacher’s primary resource throughout the program. For most teachers the Instructional Consultant acts as their primary representative of Class Measures once the application process has been completed.

Class Measures currently utilizes 130 Instructional Consultants. When pairing a teacher with an Instructional Consultant, availability, physical location, subject area expertise, and grade level experience are taken into consideration.

Teachers’ survey responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with the assigned Instructional Consultants. Ninety-five percent (95%) rated their Consultant’s support as “Excellent” or “Good.”
MENTORS

During the application process each teacher chooses a mentor who acts as a cooperating teacher during this process. The mentor is ideally a teacher at his/her school who is licensed in the same subject area. The mentor conducts classroom observations, provides written reports, supports the teacher’s compilation of an evidentiary portfolio, and serves as a local source of support throughout the program.

Mentors are offered an online training prior to beginning the program. Of the 312 mentors who have completed the training since its inception, 78% rated it as “Very Useful.” An additional 21% rated it as “Somewhat Useful.”

Teachers reported high levels of satisfaction with their mentors: 99% rated the support they received from their mentor as “Excellent” or “Good.”

“[My mentor] was a tremendous help and was readily available for any questions or concerns I had. Her feedback from her observations were very helpful and her insight into my teaching approach was appreciated.”

-PRPIL Teacher
**PORTFOLIOS**

A significant aspect of the PRPIL program is the portfolio compiled by all teachers who participate in the program. Portfolios are organized around the *Candidate Assessment of Performance* and include two pieces of hard evidence for each selected element, as well as a one-page reflection for each of the four Standards.

Opinions regarding portfolios have historically been positive. This held true for the 2016-2017 cohort. Ninety-eight (98%) of teachers considered the portfolio to be at least a somewhat useful reflective process and 85% agreed that the portfolio process increased their familiarity with the Massachusetts expectations for classroom pedagogy.

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**Teachers**

Did compiling the portfolio increase your familiarity with the Massachusetts expectations for classroom pedagogy?

- Yes: 85%
- No: 15%

*2016-2017*

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**Teachers**

Was compiling the portfolio a useful reflective process?

- Yes: 73%
- No: 2%
- Somewhat: 25%

*2016-2017*

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“I found the portfolio process to be incredibly beneficial; it allowed me to reflect on the work I have done to date and what I need to focus upon as an educator as I move forward with my career.”

-PRPIL Teacher
OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

Both teachers and mentors demonstrated a high level of satisfaction with their PRPIL experience: the vast majority rated their overall experience in the PRPIL program and the clarity of the program’s expectations as “Excellent” or “Good.” In addition, 99% of teachers considered PRPIL to be user-friendly.

“PRPIL allows busy educators to utilize the work they have already accomplished when building their portfolios. The process also allows for a great deal of reflection which inevitably allows the educator to grow professionally.”

- PRPIL Teacher
The majority of teachers and mentors were pleased with the support they received from Class Measures staff. Almost all participants (98% of teachers and 96% of mentors) would recommend this program to other teachers.

Principals also look favorably upon the program: 96% consider an alternative licensure program such as PRPIL to be a valid option for teachers in Massachusetts.

“Alternative pathways to licensure that maintain high standards are critical to ensuring we have talented and diverse teachers from our communities.”

-PRPIL Principal
The data reported here shows that participants in the Performance Review Program for Initial Licensure (PRPIL) are pleased with the service that Class Measures provides. There is a great need in Massachusetts for alternative licensure routes such as this one, and teachers are often relieved to discover this option. The PRPIL program offers a realistic means for quality teachers to remain in this profession regardless of the path they took to get here.

While Class Measures is encouraged by the positive response to PRPIL, we always remain cognizant of the ways in which we can improve the program moving forward. We have made significant progress toward last year’s goals, including a full review of our program processes and revisions to all online and printed materials, as well as full implementation of the online Mentor Training.

In the coming year, Class Measures plans to continue to adapt our program to the changing needs and requirements of the CAP process. Specific goals include:

1. Adaptation of marketing materials to include the additional subject areas recently added by the Board of Education as well as other relevant changes;
2. Recruitment of Instructional Consultants in the newly added subject areas;
3. Investigation of potential partnership opportunities with districts, colleges, collaboratives, etc.; and
4. Continued improvement of training materials for Instructional Consultants and mentors.

Class Measures applauds the excellent work being done by PRPIL participants in classrooms across the state each day, and looks forward to working with many more teachers, mentors, and principals in the coming years.