



Teacher Background Questionnaire

2002
Grade 8

Part I: Background, Education, & Training

For several questions on this survey, you are asked to fill in numbers. For these questions, please print the appropriate number in each of the boxes provided. Please print legibly with a No. 2 pencil. Keep all printing within the boxes, and erase any stray marks.

Using one number per box, fill in every box. For example, 95 students would be written as:

0	9	5
---	---	---

Questions 1-2. For the next two questions, include any full-time teaching assignments, part-time teaching assignments, and long-term substitute assignments, but not student teaching.

VB337243

1. Counting this year, how many years have you worked as an elementary or secondary teacher? If less than 4 months total experience, enter "00."

--	--

 Years

VB380355

2. Counting this year, how many years have you taught reading, writing, or language arts in grades 6 through 12? If less than 4 months total experience, enter "00."

--	--

 Years

VB333654

3. What type of teaching certificate do you hold?

- A Regular or standard state certificate or advanced professional certificate
- B Probationary certificate (the initial certificate issued after satisfying all requirements except the completion of a probationary period)
- C Provisional or other type of certificate given to persons who are still participating in what the state calls an "alternative certification program"
- D Temporary certificate (requires some additional college coursework and/or student teaching before regular certification can be obtained)
- E Emergency certificate or waiver (issued to persons with insufficient teacher preparation who must complete a regular certification program in order to continue teaching)
- F No certificate

VB345716

4 Are you working toward or have you received certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (National Board Certification)?

- A I do not have National Board Certification and I am not currently working toward National Board Certification.
- B I am currently working toward National Board Certification.
- C I have received National Board Certification.
- D I am not familiar with the National Board Certification process.

VB333658

5 Did you have a major, minor, or special emphasis in any of the following subjects as part of your **undergraduate** coursework? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Yes, a major	Yes, a minor or special emphasis	No	
a Reading, language arts, or literacy education	A	B	C	VB378391
b English	A	B	C	VB378392
c Other language arts-related subject	A	B	C	VB378394

VB345619

6 Did you have a major, minor, or special emphasis in any of the following subjects as part of your **graduate** coursework? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Yes, a major	Yes, a minor or special emphasis	No	
a Reading, language arts, or literacy education	A	B	C	VB378395
b English	A	B	C	VB378396
c Other language arts-related subject	A	B	C	VB378398

7. Do you have special leadership responsibilities for reading, writing, or language arts education at your school (for example, responsibilities as a mentor teacher, lead teacher, resource specialist, departmental chair, or master teacher)?

A Yes

B No

Part II: Classroom Organization and Language Arts Instruction

The following questions ask about the organization of your classroom and language arts instruction. **Language arts** instruction includes reading, writing, literature, and related topics.

VB345728

1. Which best describes your role in teaching language arts?

- A I teach all or most subjects, including language arts.
- B The only subject I teach is language arts.
- C We team teach, and I have primary responsibility for teaching language arts.

VB379296

2. Which best describes how language arts instruction is organized for 8th-grade students at this school?

- A Language arts is taught primarily as a discrete subject with little or no integration with instruction in other subjects.
- B Some language arts instruction is integrated with other subjects, and some language arts instruction is presented as a discrete subject.
- C Language arts lessons are primarily integrated with instruction in other subjects.

VB345730

3. About how much time in total do you spend with ONE of your 8th-grade language arts classes in a typical week?

- A Less than 3 hours
- B 3 - 4.9 hours
- C 5 - 6.9 hours
- D 7 - 9.9 hours
- E 10 or more hours

VB426851

- 4 During what percentage of your language arts instruction time is your primary focus on each of the following? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	None	1-10%	11-40%	41-60%	61-90%	More than 90%	
a Reading skills and strategies	A	B	C	D	E	F	VB426852
b Appreciation and analysis of literature	A	B	C	D	E	F	VB426853
c Student writing	A	B	C	D	E	F	VB426854

VB429594

- 5 What types of materials form the core of your 8th-grade reading program?

- A Primarily basal
- B Primarily trade books
- C Both basal and trade books
- D Other

VB429601

- 6 How often do you ask students in your 8th-grade language arts classes to do the following when you ask them to write about something? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	
a Plan their writing	A	B	C	D	VB429662
b Define their purpose and audience	A	B	C	D	VB429663
c Make a formal outline before they write	A	B	C	D	VB429664
d Write more than one draft of a paper	A	B	C	D	VB429665
e Check for proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation themselves	A	B	C	D	VB429666

Part III: Professional Development

This part of the survey asks about professional development activities. Professional development activities are activities intended to improve teachers' pedagogical skills and/or increase teachers' knowledge of subject content.

Throughout this section, **language arts** refers to reading, writing, literature, and related topics.

Section A: Professional Development in Language Arts

VB345735

1. **During the last two years**, did you participate in or lead any of the following professional development activities **related to the teaching of language arts**? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Yes	No	
a College course taken after your first certification	A	B	VB345736
b Workshop or training session	A	B	VB345737
c Conference or professional association meeting	A	B	VB345738
d Observational visit to another school or classroom	A	B	VB345739
e Mentoring and/or peer observation and coaching as part of a formal arrangement	A	B	VB345740
f Committee or task force focusing on curriculum, instruction, or student assessment	A	B	VB378142
g Regularly scheduled discussion or study group	A	B	VB378143
h Teacher collaborative or network (such as one organized by an outside agency or over the Internet)	A	B	VB378144
i Individual or collaborative research	A	B	VB378145
j Independent reading on a regular basis (for example, education journals, books, or the Internet)	A	B	VB378146
k Co-teaching/team teaching	A	B	VB378147
l Consultation with language arts specialist	A	B	VB378148

- 2 Among the activities you selected in question 1, think about the **single professional development activity** that most influenced your teaching of language arts. Into which category or categories in question 1 did you code this **single professional development activity**? Fill in **one or more** ovals.

a b c d e f g h i j k l

M I have not participated in a professional development activity focused on language arts in the last two years. → *Skip to Section B (Question 9).*

- 3 Approximately how many hours total did you spend in the professional development activity you identified in question 2, including any follow-up activities? (Follow-up activities include such things as the activity leader helping you implement what you learned, the activity leader meeting with you after the end of the activity to answer questions, etc.)

A 0 - 8 hours
B 9 - 16 hours
C 17 - 24 hours
D 25 - 40 hours
E 41 - 80 hours
F More than 80 hours

VB378151

- 4 To what extent did the professional development experience you identified in question 2 focus on any of the following? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Not at all	Small extent	Moderate extent	Large extent	
a. Use of language arts across the curriculum	A	B	C	D	VB378152
b. Interpreting and analyzing literature	A	B	C	D	VB378153
c. Understanding the process of reading or writing	A	B	C	D	VB378154
d. Instructional strategies for teaching language arts	A	B	C	D	VB378155
e. Classroom management to enable effective instruction	A	B	C	D	VB378156
f. Ways to use assessment data	A	B	C	D	VB378157
g. Ways to link instruction to standards	A	B	C	D	VB378158

VB378159

5. Did the professional development experience you identified in question 2 include any of the following activities? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Yes	No	
a. Coaching or mentoring another teacher or student teacher	A	B	VB378160
b. Being coached or mentored	A	B	VB378161
c. Collaborating with other teachers from your school	A	B	VB378122
d. Follow-up support to help implement what you learned	A	B	VB378123

VB380124

6. In the professional development experience you identified in question 2, did you do any of the following? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

Yes

No

a Analyze student work

A

B

VB380125

b Analyze a real or hypothetical teaching situation

A

B

VB380126

VB380127

7. Did the professional development experience you identified in question 2 include any of the following activities? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

Yes

No

a A demonstration of how to teach a particular lesson or curricular unit

A

B

VB380128

b Development of lesson plans or curricular units

A

B

VB380129

c Development of materials for classroom use

A

B

VB380130

d Use of textbook supplemental material in print or electronic/Internet format (for example, a teacher's guide or edition, etc.)

A

B

VB380131

VB380132

- 8 To what extent did the professional development experience you identified in question 2 help you do each of the following? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Not at all	Small extent	Moderate extent	Large extent	
a Better adjust classroom instruction to meet the needs of students with diverse characteristics (such as students with different learning styles, students with special needs, etc.)	A	B	C	D	VB380133
b Increase your confidence as a teacher	A	B	C	D	VB380134
c Increase your enthusiasm about teaching	A	B	C	D	VB380135
d Increase your collaboration with other teachers	A	B	C	D	VB380136
e Improve your knowledge of the language arts content you teach	A	B	C	D	VB380137
f Improve the way you teach language arts	A	B	C	D	VB429667

Section B: Context for Professional Development in Your School

Unless otherwise specified, please think about professional development activities **in general** when responding to questions in this section, not just professional development activities related to teaching language arts.

VB380138

9. Please indicate the extent to which you DISAGREE or AGREE with the following statements about professional development activities offered to teachers in your school. Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	
a. Teachers have influence over the content of professional development activities offered to teachers in this school.	A	B	C	D	VB380139
b. Professional development activities offered to teachers in this school usually include follow-up activities or experiences to help teachers implement what they have learned.	A	B	C	D	VB380140
c. This school provides teachers with adequate resources and materials to implement what they learn in professional development activities.	A	B	C	D	VB380141
d. In this school, teachers are encouraged by school leadership to try out new ideas in their teaching.	A	B	C	D	VB380182
e. Professional development activities offered to teachers in this school provide opportunities for teachers to receive feedback on their teaching.	A	B	C	D	VB380183

VB380184

10. During the current school year, have you received the following types of support from your school or district for professional development activities? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Yes	No	
a. Release time from classes or other responsibilities	A	B	VB380185
b. Travel expenses	A	B	VB380186
c. Stipends for participation	A	B	VB380187
d. Tuition and/or class fees	A	B	VB380188

VB380191

11. How frequently do you do each of the following? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	
a. Observe another teacher teaching	A	B	C	D	VB380192
b. Discuss your teaching with another teacher who has observed you	A	B	C	D	VB380193
c. Teach lessons with a colleague	A	B	C	D	VB380194
d. Discuss books or articles on education with other teachers	A	B	C	D	VB380195
e. Discuss with other teachers what you or they learned at a workshop or conference	A	B	C	D	VB380196
f. Share and discuss student work with other teachers	A	B	C	D	VB380197
g. Work with colleagues to develop curricula, lessons, or assessment	A	B	C	D	VB380198

Part IV: Accountability

Throughout this part of the survey, **language arts** refers to reading, writing, literature, and related topics.

Section A: Language Arts Content Standards

VB380263

1. In your teaching, do you use a set of language arts content standards in any way? (**Content standards** are formal statements of what students should know and be able to do; they may also be referred to as student expectations or core objectives. These standards may be developed by your state, district, or school.)

A Yes → *Go to Question 2*

B No → *Skip to Section B (Question 4)*

VB380264

2. To what extent do you use these language arts content standards for the following purposes? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Not at all	Small extent	Moderate extent	Large extent	
a To guide my curriculum	A	B	C	D	VB380265
b To guide my day-to-day instructional practice	A	B	C	D	VB380266
c To select or prepare my instructional materials	A	B	C	D	VB380267
d To develop or revise my classroom tests and assessments	A	B	C	D	VB380268

VB380269

- 3 Please indicate the extent to which you DISAGREE or AGREE with the following statements about the language arts content standards that you use. Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	
a The standards address the content that I think is important.	A	B	C	D	VB380270
b The standards are clear and specific enough to be useful in guiding curriculum and instruction.	A	B	C	D	VB380271
c The standards limit my ability to tailor instruction to students' individual learning needs.	A	B	C	D	VB380272
d I am provided with adequate instructional materials to implement the standards in my classroom.	A	B	C	D	VB380273
e I receive adequate training in the use of standards.	A	B	C	D	VB380274
f The standards support good teaching.	A	B	C	D	VB380275

Section B: State Language Arts Assessment

VB378400

- 4 Will students who go to your school take a **state** language arts assessment in grades 7 or 8?
- A Yes → *Go to Question 5*
- B No → *Skip to Section C (Question 8)*
- C Don't know → *Skip to Section C (Question 8)*

5. Throughout the school year, about how many hours do you spend in test preparation to prepare your students for the **state** language arts assessment? Test preparation refers to special review or practice sessions aimed at helping your students do well on the assessment. If you teach more than one 8th-grade language arts class, please pick a single one of these classes to use as the basis for answering this question.

- A None
- B 1 - 5 hours
- C 6 - 10 hours
- D 11 - 20 hours
- E 21 - 50 hours
- F 51 - 80 hours
- G 81 - 120 hours
- H More than 120 hours

6. To what extent do you use the results from the state language arts assessment for the following purposes? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Not at all	Small extent	Moderate extent	Large extent	
a To group students for instruction in my classroom	A	B	C	D	VB380279
b To make decisions about how to focus curriculum and instruction for the whole class	A	B	C	D	VB380280
c To make decisions about how to focus curriculum and instruction for individual students	A	B	C	D	VB380281

VB380344

7. Please indicate the extent to which you DISAGREE or AGREE with the following statements about the state language arts assessment. Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	
a The state assessment is a good measure of students' language arts knowledge and skill.	A	B	C	D	VB380345
b The time students spend preparing for and taking the state assessment uses too much classroom instructional time.	A	B	C	D	VB380346
c I receive adequate training on how to use state assessment results for decision-making.	A	B	C	D	VB380347
d The state assessment has had a positive impact on student learning at this school.	A	B	C	D	VB380348

Section C: State Accountability System

Questions 8 and 9. These questions ask about the influence of a **state accountability system** on your school. Please answer about the whole accountability system, whether or not it is tied (exclusively or at all) to language arts.

VB380343

- 8 Does your state have an accountability system? (State accountability systems require the reporting of information about **school or district performance**. Such information may take the form of report cards on schools or districts, ratings of individual schools or districts, etc. State accountability systems **may** also include rewards, technical assistance, and sanctions for performance.)
- A Yes, my state has an accountability system that monitors performance in at least one subject. → *Go to Question 9*
- B No, my state has no accountability system for any subject. → *Stop here. Thank you for your time.*
- C Don't know → *Stop here. Thank you for your time.*

VB380349

- 9 Please indicate the extent to which you DISAGREE or AGREE with the following statements about your state accountability system. Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	
a The state accountability system is a good way to motivate teachers.	A	B	C	D	VB380350
b The requirements of the state accountability system are clear.	A	B	C	D	VB380351
c I have the resources I need to meet the requirements of the state accountability system.	A	B	C	D	VB380352
d I am under great pressure (such as from the School Board, principal, parents) to improve student performance on the state assessment.	A	B	C	D	VB380353
e Overall, the state accountability system has had a positive impact on my school.	A	B	C	D	VB380354