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State’s top teachers value mentoring, training, public support

AUSTIN – More training and support from school districts, administrators and teacher preparation programs will help retain better teachers in the classroom, according to a 2012-13 Texas Regional Teachers of the Year focus group report. The 17 teachers who participated in the focus groups recommend that every campus in the state have a teacher mentoring program, develop programs to bring the community into the classrooms and that teacher preparation programs allow student teachers more time in the classroom to observe teaching in action.

“At my campus, we’ve lost a few that were early teachers, less than five years of experience, and I think part of that is because of a lack of leadership or a lack of support that they really needed to keep them in the profession,” said a focus group participant.

The focus groups were part of the Texas Regional Teacher of the Year Gathering held over the summer by the ATPE Foundation, a charitable nonprofit established by the Association of Texas Professional Educators to advance public education through literacy initiatives, technology programs and educator recruitment and retention efforts. The focus groups were conducted by Creative Consumer Research to gather information and discuss the teacher’s opinions on teacher support and retention, literacy, technology and trending topics in public education. The report was released this week to help education organizations, state agencies, school districts and legislators improve public education.

The report found that participants feel that colleges, university and alternative certification programs in education need to do a better job of training future educators for the classroom. Watching teachers teach and interact with students will help student teachers better decide if teaching is truly for them, a participant said.

To view the full report, visit atpefoundation.org/RegionalTeacher.aspx.

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The ATPE Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) charitable nonprofit established in 2000 by the Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE), the state's leading educators' association and the largest independent association for public school educators in the nation. The foundation is dedicated to the advancement of public education and the success of Texas schoolchildren through literacy initiatives, technology programs and educator recruitment and retention efforts.