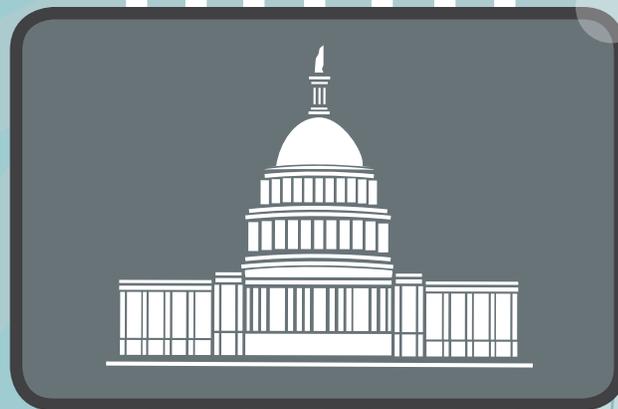


# PREPARING AND ADVANCING TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS

## A NEW APPROACH FOR FEDERAL POLICY



### TO THE POINT

- ▶ Too many of today's teacher and leader preparation programs don't address the demands educators will face once they graduate or the needs of the districts that will hire them.
- ▶ These failings are unfair to teachers and devastating to students, especially the low-income students and students of color who are most likely to have newly minted teachers.
- ▶ Federal policy can help change this by requiring more useful information on prep programs, promoting meaningful action in low-performing programs, and sparking innovation in how districts and states manage educator pipelines.



The Education Trust

As states, districts, and leading education organizations begin to address the problems with teacher and leader preparation, so too must the federal government.

It must play its part by bolstering states' efforts to address the quality of educator preparation, and encouraging and enabling states to follow the examples of the leaders.

# PREPARING AND ADVANCING TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS

## A NEW APPROACH FOR FEDERAL POLICY

SARAH ALMY, MELISSA TOOLEY, AND DARIA HALL

Teachers are the most important in-school factor for student learning. And principals hold the next biggest influence. Together, they are critical to raising student achievement and closing the gaps that separate low-income students and students of color from their peers. But to do this, they need systems that do at least three things: equip them with rigorous learning standards, prepare them to support their students in meeting those standards, and provide them with meaningful feedback on how they are doing.

In recent years, there has been remarkable — and much needed — policy activity in two of these areas. Governors and chief state school officers have worked together to develop a set of common standards that are streamlined and much more closely aligned with the demands of college and the workforce. And states and districts across the country have implemented new educator evaluation systems that aim to identify real differences in effectiveness and generate information that triggers targeted supports, professional opportunities, and smart district staffing decisions.

There has not, however, been widespread policy activity in how we prepare teachers and school leaders. Far too many teacher and principal preparation programs fail to address either the demands educators will face once they graduate or the needs of the districts that will hire them. And too many programs take in huge numbers of public dollars and churn out unprepared candidates with impunity. Moreover, many state licensure systems and district compensation systems actually encourage this disconnect and lack of accountability.

This inattention is unfair to educators, who are sent into schools without the knowledge and skills they need to educate all students to college- and career-ready levels. And it's devastating to students, especially the low-income students and students of color who are most likely to have newly minted teachers. In too many cases, the kids who most desperately need the very best teachers are assigned those that are least equipped to move the needle on student achievement. Holding preparation programs accountable for producing effective teachers and leaders will help break this pattern.

Fortunately, education leaders are speaking up on the issue of poor educator preparation. The American Federation of Teachers, for example, has called for elevating program entrance requirements and developing tools to assess candidates' potential for success before issuing a credential.

The Council of Chief State School Officers has called on states to align licensure standards with college- and career-ready standards and implement program approval standards and accountability systems that reward exemplary programs and close those that are consistently low performing. And the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation has adopted more rigorous accreditation review standards — including evidence of student learning growth — to raise the bar for accreditation.

A handful of leading states are doing more than just talking. For the last several years, Louisiana has examined the link between teacher preparation programs and the effectiveness of their graduates, and is using these data to demand improvements in program performance. New York is preparing profile reports on teacher and school leader preparation programs that, among other data points, will include teacher employment and retention data, as well as data on where program graduates are teaching and how effective they are in the classroom or school. Florida requires preparation institutions to align curricula with the state's college- and career-ready standards in order to gain and maintain approval.

All of this activity is very promising, but it is not enough to truly address our educator preparation deficiencies. Yes, some states are stepping up, but waiting for each state to move on its own has not worked in the past and is unlikely to work now. Similarly, relying on the field to police itself has not yielded the kind of universal high-quality preparation programs that our teachers — and their students — need and deserve.

As states, districts, and leading education organizations begin to address the problems with teacher and leader preparation, so too must the federal government. It must play its part by bolstering states' efforts to address the quality of educator preparation, and encouraging and enabling states to follow the examples of the leaders.

Right now, the federal government is enabling just the opposite by sending large numbers of taxpayer dollars into teacher preparation programs and asking little of substance in return. Through the Higher Education Act (HEA), the federal government sends billions of dollars, largely in the form of student aid, into teacher preparation programs.

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# A reauthorized HEA should generate more useful information on teacher and leader preparation programs, prompt meaningful action in low-performing programs, and spark innovation in the ways districts and states manage their educator pipelines.

In return, it asks preparation programs and states to report on hundreds of indicators — some as seemingly meaningless as whether applicants must take the Myers-Briggs personality test — but it does not require programs to show meaningful outcomes related to their graduates' effectiveness.

To make matters worse, the problem is much the same on the K-12 side. Through Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the federal government pours \$2.5 billion annually into largely scattershot and ineffective professional development to try to help current teachers improve their performance.

It's time for Congress to take a new approach, one that builds on the good work occurring in some states while asserting the federal government's role as steward of federal tax dollars and champion of the low-income students and students of color who are far too often assigned our least prepared teachers and leaders.

Congress should reauthorize Title II of the Higher Education Act to accomplish two things:

1. Require states to assess the performance of traditional and alternate route teacher and principal preparation programs on metrics that matter — most important, program graduate performance in the years soon after exiting the program, alignment with the college- and career-ready standards teachers will encounter in the classroom, and coordination with actual district needs — and use this information to truly hold programs accountable for preparing good teachers and school leaders.
2. Redesign the use of federal competitive dollars currently allocated in HEA Title II — and supplement these dollars with additional resources from Title II of the ESEA — to enable a small number of states, in coordination with districts and programs, to redesign the pipeline and incentive systems that are currently so dysfunctional.

## WHAT'S WRONG WITH TODAY'S PREPARATION PROGRAMS?

The problems with today's teacher and principal preparation programs are well documented, most recently in the National Council on Teacher Quality's (NCTQ) comprehensive review of the nation's teacher preparation programs.<sup>1</sup>

As illustrated in NCTQ's review and elsewhere, the leading problems with teacher preparation programs are:

- Low expectations for who is accepted and who graduates — both for initial licensure and especially for the graduate degrees that, under most current salary structures, translate into significant pay increases.<sup>2</sup>
- Curricula that are disconnected from the new college- and career-ready standards that teachers need to know, as well as inconsistent across the field. Even for a subject area like reading instruction, for which there is clear, research-based evidence as to what works, the strategies used to teach it are all over the map, with teacher candidates often being asked to develop their own "personal philosophy of reading."<sup>3</sup>
- Course work that is heavy on theory, but often lacks instruction in the practical skills, such as classroom management, that teachers need on day one.
- A lack of quality control in choosing the supervising teachers who guide teacher candidates during their clinical practice.<sup>4</sup>
- Little regard for school districts' actual staffing needs, resulting in a glut of certified teachers in some areas and not nearly enough in others.<sup>5</sup>

And among the problems with school leader programs:

- They churn out graduates who take advantage of the salary bump that comes with an administrator license but never pursue administrative positions.<sup>6</sup>
- They are not keeping pace with the changing demands of the principal role.<sup>7</sup>

Certainly not all programs are bad; some are doing phenomenal work. But currently, there is very little data on which programs are developing effective teachers and school leaders or on where graduates of different programs are teaching. So, it is incredibly difficult for states to discern which programs to learn from and which to encourage to improve or close, for district and school leaders to determine which programs they should be trying to hire from rather than avoid, and for prospective educators to know which program will best prepare them to be effective in raising student achievement.

## WHAT'S WRONG WITH TODAY'S SYSTEMS FOR TEACHER COMPENSATION AND LICENSURE RENEWAL?

The systems that states and districts have created for teachers to maintain licensure and advance professionally are as flawed as those for initial teacher and school leader preparation. These systems contribute to the quality issues we see in preparation institutions in the following ways:

- Rewarding educators for accumulating credits and degrees, rather than improving their performance in the classroom. Current teacher compensation systems motivate teachers to take — and colleges to offer — courses that provide the easiest route to earning credits, rather than the (often more challenging) route to improving practice.
- Requiring teachers to obtain course work credits as part of the licensure renewal process that too often are not useful. Continued education is a prerequisite for maintaining a teaching license in many states, yet there is no regard for whether the course content actually helps teachers grow professionally.
- Rewarding teachers who obtain an administrative license, even if that license is not used. Many salary systems encourage large numbers of teachers who may never intend to pursue school leadership to go through an administrative preparation program. In turn, this encourages schools of education to create such programs and admit any interested candidate.
- Limiting teachers' professional growth opportunities to graduate degrees or administrative licenses. Too many teachers who are genuinely interested in advancing their professional knowledge and developing new skills have little opportunity to do so aside from pursuing an advanced degree, which research shows is generally not linked to increased classroom effectiveness.<sup>8</sup> But without other teacher leadership roles or career ladder opportunities, teachers turn to higher education as their one means of professional advancement.

Teachers and school leaders take their cues on how to grow professionally and advance on salary scales from the systems that states and districts establish. When these systems are based on meaningless measures rather than what matters for increasing educators' actual effectiveness, it leads to decisions that may be in the best interest of adults and schools of education but are not in the best interest of students.

## WHAT'S WRONG WITH TODAY'S HIGHER EDUCATION ACT?

Title II of HEA focuses on teacher preparation and requires data reporting by any teacher preparation institution serving students who receive federal financial aid. In addition to this reporting, states are required to describe

criteria for assessing program performance and to create a definition of a low-performing program. The most recent reauthorization outlined important steps toward improving transparency and accountability, yet these steps have not led to better information about program quality, or action to improve it, for a number of reasons:

- The required reporting is burdensome — institutions report on 440 indicators — and, far too often, not useful. For example, under current reporting, we may know the number of candidates who obtained certification in each subject area, but we don't have any information about their actual success growing student learning once in the classroom. Or we may know how many people completed the program, but we don't know how many went on to actually start teaching.
- There are no parameters for the criteria that states must use either to assess programs or to identify low-performing programs. As a result, definitions vary tremendously. Some states make it nearly impossible for any program to fall under the "low-performing" label, and some rely on metrics seemingly unrelated to program quality. Still others have not articulated a definition at all.

Not surprisingly, under this hodge-podge of approaches, in 2010, states identified only 37 programs out of thousands as low-performing, and 39 states didn't identify a single low-performing program.<sup>9</sup>

- The accountability provisions have no real teeth. Although these provisions include legitimate sanctions like ineligibility for professional development funds or to administer federal financial aid, these sanctions only apply if a program is identified as low-performing *and* the state withdraws its approval or terminates funding. Since states rarely pull approval or funding, there is little incentive for programs to change.
- There are some minimal state reporting requirements on alternate route programs, but for the most part, these programs are exempt from reporting and accountability provisions. Four out of 10 new teachers now enter the profession through alternate route programs; therefore, we need better information about the programs preparing them.<sup>10</sup>
- The law is focused entirely on teacher preparation, making no mention of the programs that prepare school leaders. Given the importance of school leaders — both in their effectiveness on student learning and in the critical role they play in hiring, developing, supporting, and retaining strong teachers — this is a serious omission.

Title II also authorizes Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) Grants, which, aside from student financial

aid, provide the majority of federal funds that flow to teacher preparation institutions. These grants support partnerships between institutions and other stakeholders, including districts, nonprofit organizations, and others, to design and implement innovative preparation programs. However, TQP grants are not effectively leveraging available federal preparation dollars. The \$43 million currently allocated to TQP enables only a handful of institutions and program partners (about 40 in 2009 and 2010 combined) to recruit and train a relatively small number of new teachers. Thus, such grants are not broadly influencing the teacher preparation field.

## WHAT SHOULD A REAUTHORIZED HEA TITLE II LOOK LIKE?

A reauthorized HEA should generate more useful information on teacher and leader preparation programs, prompt meaningful action in low-performing programs, and spark innovation in the ways districts and states manage their educator pipelines.

An overview of our recommendations for how the federal government can carry its weight in the effort to improve teacher and leader preparation and spark innovation in educator pipelines follows.

## RECOMMENDATIONS IN BRIEF

### RECOMMENDATION ONE: PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

As a condition of federal funding, require states to assess the performance of teacher and principal preparation programs on a range of output metrics and use this information to truly hold programs accountable for preparing good teachers and school leaders.

- Radically pare back the useless and burdensome reporting requirements for educator preparation programs, and require states, instead, to assess the performance of programs on a small number of measures that provide more meaningful information on differences in program quality;
- Require states to use these measures to design a performance assessment and accountability system that holds teacher and principal preparation programs responsible for preparing good candidates that meet district needs;
- Require the alignment of licensure exams and approved preparation course content with college- and career-ready standards and the instructional strategies necessary to teach a wide range of students to those standards; and
- Give weight to the threat of pulling federal financial aid dollars from consistently low-performing programs by making the performance designation count, regardless of state approval or funding status. This would correct a flaw of the previous authorization that only withdrew federal funds for low-performing programs after the state had terminated their approval or financial support — a scenario that almost never occurred.

### RECOMMENDATION TWO: FEDERAL COMPETITIVE FUNDS AND OTHER RESOURCES

Reimagine the use of federal competitive dollars currently allocated in Title II — and supplement these dollars with additional resources from ESEA Title II — to enable a select number of states each year, in coordination with districts and programs, to redesign the pipeline and incentive systems that are currently so dysfunctional.

- Reallocate the \$43 million that currently funds Teacher Quality Partnership Grants to a competitive funding stream that funds state grants for comprehensive redesigns of pipeline and advancement systems; and
- Link Title II of HEA with Title II of ESEA in order to provide those states awarded a competitive grant the capacity to truly overhaul systems. States that receive money through the competitive grant would be permitted to set aside a portion of the state's ESEA Title II dollars to use in conjunction with their HEA dollars.

## DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

Many of these recommendations, which we detail below, require a full HEA reauthorization, and we urge Congress to pursue this approach promptly. However, the U.S. Department of Education also has the authority to address some of these areas, such as reporting and required performance measurement, through regulation. Until full reauthorization moves forward, we encourage the department to release regulations pertaining to these areas and start the critically important work of ensuring that a focus on educator quality begins where it should — at the point of preparation.

### RECOMMENDATION ONE: PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In the same way that states and districts are increasingly holding individual teachers and leaders to higher expectations for performance, states must implement a real system of performance measurement and accountability that holds programs preparing those teachers and leaders to a high standard. States deserve flexibility in how they go about this, but to ensure consistency and coherence and provide useful levers for action, all systems should include some common features.

In order for a state's educator preparation entities (defined as the overarching school of education or alternate route organization) to be eligible for federal funds, including Title IV student financial aid, the state must:

- Define at least four performance levels that differentiate the performance of preparation programs.
- Develop a system to assess all preparation programs — both traditional and alternate route — on the following:
  - A small number of quantifiable metrics, as outlined in *Figure A* (teacher programs) and *Figure B* (school leader programs).
  - Whether the program maintains meaningful district partnerships with the leadership of those K-12 districts representing the largest proportion of recent program graduate employment, as evidenced by regular communication and demonstration of district input in program design.
  - Whether the program's pedagogical and content course work aligns with the state's K-12 college- and career-ready standards.
- Use this data to categorize programs into the four performance levels.
- Have meaningful sanctions for bottom-performing programs, as outlined in *Figure C*, that result in phased-in consequences that intensify the longer a program languishes without adequate improvement.

The metrics included in Figures A and B are based on what matters most to our students' achievement — whether the teachers and school leaders coming out of a preparation program are adequately equipped to grow student learning and whether they enter and remain in the profession. One such metric must be a measure of program graduates' impact on student learning. The weighting of different measures should be left to state discretion, but no program should be rated as effective if it is not rated as effective on this critical measure. Also, while we'd like to see programs setting a high bar for candidate entry qualifications, the characteristics of who comes into programs matters less than the performance of those who successfully graduate. That said, if programs are not selective at the point of entry and are producing less effective teachers, they should have their performance rating reduced by one level and be expected to improve.

In addition to the metrics outlined in Figures A and B, the inclusion of district partnership and course work alignment in any program performance assessment system is critically important. Current issues with the supply, demand, and retention of teachers and school leaders have stemmed, in part, from the absence of meaningful partnerships, coordination, and alignment between most preparation programs and the districts where many of their graduates ultimately teach. If programs did a better job of consulting districts about their anticipated teacher and school leader needs and then structured their own recruitment and selection processes as well as curricular content around this information, it would lead to a much more coordinated human capital system. The quality of these partnerships could be measured by a regular needs assessment to evaluate how well programs are preparing program graduates to meet district needs, as well as concrete demonstration of district input on selection, program delivery, curricular planning and design, and the clinical experience.

Assessment and differentiation of program performance should be done at the most detailed level possible without jeopardizing teacher privacy — ideally the program level. For example, a university's elementary educator program should be assessed separately from its secondary math program. At a minimum, states should assess any program preparing teachers to teach core subject areas, and should also roll up the performance of individual programs within a preparation entity to assign a supplementary overall performance rating to the entire entity.

## FIGURE A

### REQUIRED METRICS FOR ASSESSING TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

- A statewide measure of teacher impact on student learning for recent graduates (defined here as those who either graduated within the last three years or completed state requirements to be the teacher of record within the last three years) who are employed as full-time teachers
  - For states that require all districts to have a multi-measure teacher evaluation system that includes a statewide measure of teacher impact on student growth as a significant part of the evaluation, percent of recent program graduates falling in each evaluation category
  - For states without such an evaluation, program graduates' average impact on student growth (defined as a change in student achievement between two or more points in time) in statewide tested subject areas
- Number and percent of recent graduates employed as full-time teachers who are identified as well-prepared based on state-administered principal (or other supervisor) surveys
- Number and percent of recent graduates employed as full-time teachers who, based on state-administered recent graduate surveys, felt prepared to be effective in producing student learning and raising student achievement
- Number and percent of recent graduates (from the most recent academic year) who are teaching in full-time positions
- Number and percent who remain in full-time positions at least three years
- For the most recent class, whether the average SAT/ACT score is within the bottom third of the national range of all college students AND program graduates are not performing at least as well as other recent graduates within the state on the measure of teacher impact on student learning

## FIGURE B

### REQUIRED METRICS FOR ASSESSING PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

- A measure of principal impact on student learning for recent principal preparation program graduates (those who completed the program within the last three years) who are serving as a principal or assistant principal
  - For states that require all districts to have a multi-measure principal evaluation system that includes impact on student growth as a significant part of the evaluation, percent of recent program graduates falling in each evaluation category
  - For states without such an evaluation, percent of recent program graduates whose annual school-wide growth exceeded or matched the district-wide or statewide (whichever allows for a fairer comparison) growth average for schools with similar grade spans
- Number and percent of recent graduates employed in a school leadership role who, based on state-administered recent graduate surveys, felt prepared to be effective in producing student learning and raising student achievement
- Number and percent of recent principal prep program graduates (those who completed the program within the last three years) who are working full time in a school leadership role
- Number and percent who remain in full-time school leadership positions at least three years

## FIGURE C

### RECOMMENDED SANCTIONS FOR POOR PERFORMING PREPARATION PROGRAMS

- Individual content-area preparation programs — including school leader preparation programs — that are identified in the bottom two categories must engage in a needs assessment and develop and implement an improvement plan based on the needs assessment
- Educator preparation entities (defined as the overarching school of education or alternate route organization) that are identified in the bottom two categories overall (based on the performance of the entity's individual preparation programs) must engage in a needs assessment and develop and implement an improvement plan based on the needs assessment
- Any educator preparation entity or individual preparation program that is identified in the lowest category must show improvement by moving out of the lowest category or making substantial improvement on the measure of teacher impact on student learning within three years or risk closure
- Any individual program that is identified in the bottom category and remains there for two consecutive years is ineligible to receive funding from the U.S. Department of Education aside from any funding that directly supports currently enrolled students. As currently enrolled students exit the program, the program is completely ineligible for any Title IV funding and other federal funding that directly supports the entity or the program
- Entities with multiple individual programs that have been identified in the bottom category over a course of years should be ineligible for Title IV funding

## FIGURE D

### RECOMMENDED REPORTING REQUIREMENTS BEYOND THOSE RECOMMENDED FOR PROGRAM PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- For the most recent class, average GPA (high school or undergraduate, as appropriate) of entering students and average GPA of entrants to the institution as a whole, as applicable
- For the most recent class, average SAT/ACT or, if applicable, GRE score of enrolled students and average SAT/ACT or GRE score of entrants to the institution as a whole and compared with the national average
- For the most recent class, number and percent of students enrolled by race/ethnicity compared with the institution as a whole
- Percent of all students participating in a clinical experience who had a supervising teacher rated in one of the top two rating categories on their most recent evaluation (for those states that require all districts to have multi-measure evaluation systems)
- Number and percent of enrolled students taking licensure assessment, first-time pass rate (percent) of enrolled students, and overall pass rate (percent) of enrolled students
- Average scaled score on the licensure exam of all enrolled students against the state-required pass score on the exam
- Number and percent of recent graduates who teach in high-need (high-poverty, high-minority, or low-performing) schools
- Number and percent who remain in high-need schools for at least three years
- Number and percent of recent graduates who teach in state-identified high-need subject areas

In addition to designing a performance assessment and accountability system as outlined above, states should also:

- Ensure that any teacher certification exam used by the state — including any teacher performance assessment — measures the knowledge and skills needed to effectively teach state standards and holds both programs and the candidates taking the exams to a high bar of performance.
- Report on the performance of all programs — traditional and alternate route — and make information easily

accessible, especially to school district human capital offices. States should use the metrics included in Figures A and B to assess program performance, but there are a small number of additional measures, included in *Figure D*, that we believe would be useful for all programs to report to the state and for the state to make publicly accessible. We recommend that this small list of measures replace the current multitude of rather useless metrics that institutions and states are currently required to report.

Moreover, TEACH grant eligibility should be restricted to teacher candidates in programs that are consistently in the top category on state accountability systems. The TEACH Grant Program provides grants of up to \$4,000 a year to students who are completing or plan to complete course work needed to begin a career in teaching and who agree to teach in a high-need field and school for at least four years.

Currently, any interested program can offer TEACH grants to attending students — in fact, 22 of the 37 colleges with teacher training programs identified as being low-performing or at-risk since the TEACH Grants' creation can award them.<sup>11</sup> Since these grants are intended to encourage strong teacher candidates to teach in our nation's highest need schools and subject areas, we should prioritize these dollars for our top programs.

Our proposals for improving the quality of educator preparation are not far-fetched. Several leading states are already moving in this direction. Here are a few examples.

### PROMISING PRACTICE IN STANDARDS ALIGNMENT : FLORIDA

Florida is one state that is not letting teacher preparation programs off the hook when it comes to alignment with new K-12 state standards, including the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

The state is in the process of updating state teacher certification exams to incorporate standards content for math and English language arts. As an example, previously, certification in elementary education required the passage of one test with short content sections — a candidate could do poorly on one section but still pass the test overall. The state has now redesigned this exam into four subtests — one for each core content area — to ensure deeper demonstration of content knowledge. In order to obtain certification, elementary teacher candidates need to pass all four subtests.

Additionally, initial and continued program authorization is based, in part, on curricular alignment with Florida's content standards. To meet program approval standards, programs' candidates are expected to be able to integrate content standards into practice, as measured through their clinical experience, and programs must track all candidates' ability to teach CCSS through their assessment systems.

While the state is setting high expectations for programs' alignment with CCSS, it is also providing resources and support to enable successful alignment and integration. The state held a Common Core Institute specifically for institutions of higher education; it was not a mandatory training, and yet 98 percent of programs were represented. As part of this institute, the state provided teams with a planning template and created time for them to work together on plans for CCSS integration.

## PROMISING PRACTICE IN PROGRAM ASSESSMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY : LOUISIANA

Louisiana is a leader among states with its efforts to measure program performance based on the student outcomes of program graduates.

Following on the heels of a statewide collaborative redesign of teacher education, the state began, in 2007, linking teacher-level math, reading, language arts, science, and social studies value-added data back to traditional and alternate route preparation entities and programs. One thing has become very clear: There are real differences both across and, equally important, within entities in their graduates' impact on student learning in specific content areas.

Preparation entities in Louisiana are expected to demonstrate effective performance in all content areas. The state has used this high bar for quality along with its content-specific program outcome data to drive meaningful program improvements. For example, leaders of a program whose graduates demonstrated low value-added performance in language arts examined its curriculum and realized that the course content lacked sufficient instruction in teaching writing and language arts. Program leaders quickly rectified this omission and saw improvements in following years.

## PROMISING PRACTICE IN DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP : ILLINOIS

In 2010, the state of Illinois passed legislation that significantly revised the standards for principal preparation with the goal of increasing the rigor and quality of preparation programs.

As part of this revision, the new standards include a significant focus on program-district partnership. The law required the “sunsetting” of all current principal preparation programs. Programs then were required to reapply and demonstrate alignment with the new standards and requirements to remain eligible to train and license principals.

Under the new requirements, all preparation programs must partner with at least one school district to apply for approval. District and program partners must work collaboratively on the design, implementation, and administration of the program, including the process for the selection of candidates, the design of the internship experience, and the training of faculty supervisors and internship mentors. As part of the selection process, preparation programs and districts must work together to select promising candidates and provide them support throughout their experience.

Beginning in 2012, new principal candidates were to be admitted under the revised standards, and any program not in compliance with all aspects of the standards — including the requirement for close collaboration between districts and programs — must be out of operation by 2014.

## RECOMMENDATION TWO: FEDERAL COMPETITIVE FUNDS AND OTHER RESOURCES

Given limited federal resources allocated specifically for teacher preparation, there are better ways to maximize these dollars than the current structure of Teacher Quality Partnership Grants. The focus of these federal dollars should be on innovation, improvement, and quality at the state level. States need access to additional dollars that would provide them with the capacity and opportunity to reimagine not only how the programs in their states are preparing educators, but also how systems for teacher licensure and compensation could be restructured to drive positive change in educator preparation.

We recommend redirecting the \$43 million currently allocated to individual institutions through Teacher Quality Partnership Grants to support a competition among states. Such a competition would focus on the complete redesign of current systems for preparing teachers and school leaders, supporting educators' development and advancement once in the field, and compensating them. States could apply on their own or as part of a group of states, and any application should demonstrate partnership among states, local districts, and top-performing programs. Each year, a relatively small number of states would be funded through the competition, but over time, this could be a sequenced effort to provide a significant number of states with the resources for system redesign. Further, products developed through the grant funding would be open-sourced and accessible to the entire educator preparation field, so the impact would extend well beyond those funded states.<sup>12</sup>

To offer states the necessary resources to accomplish this redesign, we recommend allowing states that are successful in the competition to supplement these competitive funds with ESEA Title II dollars. In addition to the 2.5 percent state set-aside already permitted in ESEA Title II, winning states could set aside an additional 2.5 percent of these dollars to support this work.

Successful applications would need to articulate a comprehensive strategy to overhaul state systems in order to dramatically lift the quality of the teacher and principal pipeline. Among other things, applications would need to include plans for:

- Developing and implementing an innovative certification or licensing structure that ties licensure to classroom performance;
- Designing and implementing a high-quality induction program for new teachers that focuses on concrete skills and abilities key to first-year success;
- Developing and implementing an innovative salary structure that eliminates the current "master's bump" and the salary incentives associated with obtaining — but not using — an administrative license, and

instead bases compensation in part on professional performance.

- Developing and implementing a professional development pathway and career ladder that provides educators with opportunities to develop and advance aside from obtaining a general education master's or an administrative license.
- Developing a high-quality program performance assessment system for the evaluation of teacher and principal preparation programs; and
- Developing high-quality curricular content and certification exams for teacher and principal preparation that are closely aligned with the state's college- and career-ready standards.

We recognize that the dollars states would get from this funding stream — even with the additional resources from ESEA Title II — would not cover the cost of everything that states need to do to truly overhaul systems. But what it would do is pay for the analytical work, the coordination of different stakeholders, and the other support states need to determine how they can redirect existing money and where they might need new dollars. For example, state and district leaders may argue that they don't have resources to implement a performance-based compensation structure or career ladder. Yet at the same time, they are spending millions of dollars on salary credits for things that don't matter. If these resources were simply redirected, a lot of the costs beyond the initial federal infusion could be sufficiently covered.

## CONCLUSION

Educator preparation is not a theoretical exercise; it is a vitally important job that — given the outsized impact of teachers and school leaders on student achievement — substantially influences the kinds of opportunities and learning that our nation's students will receive. Right now, we know that too many students, especially students in disadvantaged schools and communities, are not achieving at the levels they can and must for the future success of our nation. We also know that teachers and school leaders are the most important factors within a school for growing student learning. Getting better results for our students, therefore, means getting better results from teachers and school leaders. And this can only be accomplished if we demand and ensure better results from the places that train our educators. ■

## NOTES

1. National Council on Teacher Quality, *Teacher Prep Review* (Washington, D.C.: June 2013) [http://www.nctq.org/dmsStage/Teacher\\_Prep\\_Review\\_2013\\_Report](http://www.nctq.org/dmsStage/Teacher_Prep_Review_2013_Report)
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10. C. Emily Feistritzer, *Profile of Teachers in the U.S. 2011* (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Information, 2011) [http://www.ncei.com/Profile\\_Teachers\\_US\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ncei.com/Profile_Teachers_US_2011.pdf)
11. Chad Adelman, Kevin Carey, Erin Dillon, Ben Miller, and Elena Silva, *A Measured Approach to Improving Teacher Preparation* (Washington, D.C.: Education Sector, 2011) [http://www.educationsector.org/sites/default/files/publications/TeacherPrep\\_Brief\\_RELEASE.pdf](http://www.educationsector.org/sites/default/files/publications/TeacherPrep_Brief_RELEASE.pdf)
12. The Obama administration has a proposal that deals in part with teacher preparation, *A Blueprint for R.E.S.P.E.C.T.* The Department of Education's program provides good building blocks that should be considered in developing a grant program like this. <http://www2.ed.gov/documents/respect/blueprint-for-respect.pdf>





## **ABOUT THE EDUCATION TRUST**

The Education Trust promotes high academic achievement for all students at all levels, pre-kindergarten through college. We work alongside parents, educators, and community and business leaders across the country in transforming schools and colleges into institutions that serve all students well. Lessons learned in these efforts, together with unflinching data analyses, shape our state and national policy agendas. Our goal is to close the gaps in opportunity and achievement that consign far too many young people — especially those who are black, Latino, American Indian, or from low-income families — to lives on the margins of the American mainstream.



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