Race to the Top: Promising Approaches to Achieving Teacher-Related Goals (Goal 3)
March 2009

Introduction

Through the recently passed American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the U.S. Department of Education will conduct a national competition among states for a $4.35 billion “Race to the Top” incentive program designed to push states to improve education quality and results. The Race to the Top fund will help drive substantial gains in student achievement by supporting states that make dramatic progress on four reform goals outlined in the ARRA. Race to the Top grants will be awarded in two rounds — fall 2009 and spring 2010.

What are the four reform goals?

Race to the Top funds must support efforts designed to achieve four goals:
1. Making progress toward rigorous college- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments that are valid and reliable for all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities
2. Establishing pre-K to college and career data systems that track progress and foster continuous improvement
3. Making improvements in teacher effectiveness and in the equitable distribution of qualified teachers for all students, particularly students who are most in need
4. Providing intensive support and effective interventions for the lowest-performing schools.

Some promising actions

This ECS Briefing Memo highlights promising state approaches aimed at achieving Goal 3 — and identifies the components that make them so promising. If your state has achieved strong results using different approaches, please let us know.

Indiana

Matching teachers to students by classroom and subject:
While a growing number of states have established unique identifiers, they don’t all connect to training and to the classroom. For Indiana’s licensed teachers, the School Personnel Number (SPN) consists of an eight-digit unique identifier to link together teachers, teacher preparation programs and schools. Collecting this data makes it possible to identify which students and which courses are being taught by teachers with different levels and types of preparation or certification, and which forms of teacher training and certification have the greatest impact on students’ academic growth in the classroom. Indiana additionally assigns a unique identifier to all school personnel.¹

Louisiana

Unique identifiers for teachers, greater data access for policymakers, and a system for evaluating teacher preparation programs:
Louisiana has assigned unique teacher identifiers in the state’s Profile of Educational Personnel (PEP), which “has made public school personnel data much more accessible to the Legislature, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), the Department and district administrators.”² One additional element of data collected in the PEP database is “non-attendance data relative to time away
Many of the nation’s teacher preparation programs are not evaluated by examining new teachers’ impact on student achievement. To address the Higher Education Act of 1998, a Teacher Preparation Accountability System, developed by the Blue Ribbon Commission for Teacher Quality during 1999-2000, was approved by the Board of Regents in December 2001, refined multiple times between 2002 and 2007, and subsequently relaunched after new policies recommended by the Blue Ribbon Commission were presented to the Board of Regents and approved. Rich teacher data have already made it possible for the Louisiana Board of Regents to be the “first in the nation to publicly use a performance model based upon the achievement of students in grades 4-9 … to examine the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs.” The state’s Value Added Teacher Preparation Assessment Model uses “data from all school districts in the state and all 22 public and private teacher preparation programs.” The 2007-08 Value Added Teacher Preparation Assessment study revealed significant findings, including that some teacher preparation programs are producing new teachers whose effectiveness equals that of experienced teachers, and that “[v]arying levels of effectiveness exist within teacher preparation programs and across teacher preparation programs.” These and other findings can be used to inform decisions on teacher preparation programs at the state and institutional level to improve student achievement.³

**New York**

**Evaluation of all teacher preparation programs:**

Academic achievement is not the only evaluation indicator used to evaluate teacher preparation programs in New York, but it is critical that achievement is included with other indicators. Legislation passed in 2007 directs the commissioner of education to evaluate the effectiveness of all teacher preparation programs in the state, and the timelines and costs of developing or modifying data systems to collect the necessary data. The evaluation must consider measuring the effectiveness of such programs based on the academic performance of their students and graduates as well as other measures. The legislation requires the commissioner to consult with the chancellors of the State University of New York and the City University of New York, and other representatives of higher education. Upon completing the study, the commissioner must make recommendations to the Board of Regents on the implementation of such methodologies.⁴

**Florida**

**Equitable distribution of highly qualified teachers to low-performing schools:**

Most states are still grappling with how to ensure equitable distribution of highly qualified teachers in low-performing schools. Florida has set requirements for school districts to assign highly qualified teachers across all schools within a district and has authorized the use of salary incentives to achieve this goal.

**Legislation** enacted in 2006 provides:

The Legislature finds disparities between teachers assigned to teach in a majority of "A" graded schools and teachers assigned to teach in a majority of "F" graded schools. The disparities can be found in the average years of experience, the median salary and the performance of the teachers on teacher certification examinations. It is the intent of the Legislature that district school boards have flexibility through the collective bargaining process to assign teachers more equitably across the schools in the district.

School districts may not assign a higher percentage than the school district average of first-time teachers, temporarily certified teachers, teachers in need of improvement or out-of-field teachers to schools with above the school district average of minority and economically disadvantaged students or schools that are graded "D" or "F." Each school district shall annually certify to the Commissioner of Education that this requirement has been met. If the commissioner determines that a school district is not in compliance with this subsection, the State Board of Education shall be notified and shall take action … in the next regularly scheduled meeting to require compliance.

The bill also authorizes local boards to provide salary incentives to meet these teacher distribution requirements. A local board may not sign a collective bargaining agreement that prevents the district from providing sufficient incentives to meet this requirement, and local collective bargaining requirements cannot bar a district from providing incentives to high-quality teachers and assigning such teachers to...
low-performing schools. Schools with “D” or “F” ratings must annually report their teacher-retention rate, along with reasons listed for leaving by each teacher who left the school for any reason.\(^5\)

**California**

**Loan forgiveness to encourage qualified teachers to work in at-risk schools:** While some states have developed teacher loan forgiveness programs, such programs often are not geared to improving equitable distribution of qualified teachers among more- and less-advantaged schools. California’s [teacher loan assumption program](#) is designed explicitly to entice highly qualified teacher candidates to seek employment as teachers in schools serving a large population of students from low-income families, schools with a high percentage of teachers holding emergency-type permits, schools ranked in the lowest two deciles on the Academic Performance Index and rural schools. Loan forgiveness applicants must be determined by their postsecondary institution, district or county office of education as having outstanding ability on the basis of criteria that may include grade point average, test scores, faculty evaluations, interviews or other recommendations. [Legislation](#) additionally specifies that priority for awarding loan forgiveness agreements must be given to math, science and special education teachers.\(^6\)

**Ohio**

**Establishing a teaching residency approach:** The teaching residency model is thought by some education experts to be among the most significant teacher education reforms, and may hold promise for addressing the critical problem of inequitable distribution of qualified teachers. Linda Darling-Hammond suggests that the best urban district residency programs:

- Set high standards for program entry and completion
- Place highly qualified teaching recruits into high-need districts
- Include “strong training models” that prepare residents “for what they will encounter on the job” and encourage them to stay and become district leaders
- Provide the opportunity for recruits to learn under expert teachers working in high-need schools.\(^7\)

The teaching residency model does what traditional teacher preparation programs currently don’t do — it moves teacher candidates quickly into the classrooms of high-need districts and schools, offers tailored and intensive support for teacher training, and provides stipends for candidates as they work full-time in their new classrooms. This approach gets candidates teaching faster with appropriate supports — including fiscal supports. The front-loaded expense of recruits’ stipends during their residency are recovered by effectiveness and retention rates of residency graduates, and by reduced costs related to “student remediation, grade retention, summer school, special education and other services.”\(^8\)

While a small number of states have developed “resident teacher” programs as an alternative pathway to help bachelor’s degree holders gain teacher certification, few if any states make a multi-year teacher residency experience a prerequisite for teacher certification. In his 2009 [State of the State address](#), Ohio Governor Strickland proposed a statewide teaching residency program. After beginning teachers had spent four years under the guidance of a successful senior teacher, they would earn their professional teaching license.\(^9\)

**Virginia**

**Attracting highly qualified math teachers to middle schools:** Middle schools are highly likely to be identified as in need of improvement under the No Child Left Behind Act, and middle school mathematics is oftentimes an area of teacher shortage, especially in low-performing schools. Virginia’s [Middle School Teacher Corps Program](#) helps districts “hire experienced mathematics teachers for middle schools that have been designated as ‘at risk in mathematics’ as a result of (1) being accredited with warning in mathematics or (2) not meeting the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) for mathematics performance as required for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).” Eligible teachers must meet specified [criteria](#), and those selected to participate must take part in training “that may include strategies for low-achieving mathematics students, skills in mentoring other teachers, adult learning theory, presentation skills, and data assessment as it relates to AYP and School Accreditation.”\(^10\) To attract and retain high-quality teachers, [legislation](#) allows local boards to offer Middle School Teacher Corps members incentives such as increased compensation, improved retirement
benefits, increased deferred compensation, expenses, bonuses and other incentives as may be
determined by the board."\textsuperscript{11}

Additional resources

ECS state policy collections and analysis can guide you as your state moves forward to address the
effectiveness and equitable distribution of teachers. The following resources may be of particular help:

- \textit{The Progress of Education Reform 2007: Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness:}
  \url{http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/76/13/7613.pdf}

- \textit{Improving the Skills and Knowledge of the High School Teachers We Already Have:}
  \url{http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/78/64/7864.pdf}

- \textit{The Use of Diversified Compensation Systems to Address Equitable Teacher Distribution:}
  \url{http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/74/77/7477.pdf}

- \textit{State Equity Plans That Increase Working Conditions as a Means to Increase Teacher Retention and}
  \textit{Equitable Teacher Distribution:} \url{http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/72/93/7293.pdf}

- \textit{Recent State Policies/Activities: Teaching Quality – Hard-to-Staff Schools:}
  \url{http://www.ecs.org/ecscat.nsf/WebTopicView?OpenView&count=-1&RestrictToCategory=Teaching+Quality--Hard-to-Staff+Schools}

- \textit{Recent State Policies/Activities: Teaching Quality – Recruitment/Retention:}
  \url{http://www.ecs.org/ecscat.nsf/WebTopicView?OpenView&count=-1&RestrictToCategory=Teaching+Quality--Recruitment/Retention}

- \textit{Recent State Policies/Activities: Teaching Quality – Professional Development:}
  \url{http://www.ecs.org/ecscat.nsf/WebTopicView?OpenView&Count=-1&RestrictToCategory=Teaching+Quality--Professional+Development}

- \textit{Synthesis from ECS Research Study database: “Instructional Leadership, Teaching Quality and}
  Student Achievement: Suggestive Evidence from Three Urban Districts”:}
  \url{http://www.ecs.org/rs/Studies/DetailStudy.aspx?study_ID=117}

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\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1} Indiana Department of Education, \textit{Questions and Answers}, accessed March 17, 2009, from \url{http://www.doe.in.gov/SPN/FAQ.html}.
  \item \textsuperscript{2} Louisiana Department of Education, \textit{Planning, Analysis, and Information Resources: Profile of Educational Personnel}, accessed March 17, 2009, from \url{http://www.doe.state.la.us/ide/pair/1214.html}.
  \item \textsuperscript{3} George Noell, Louisiana State University and A&M College; and Jeanne M. Burns, Board of Regents/Governor’s Office, \textit{Value Added Teacher Preparation Assessment, Overview of 2007-08 Study}, accessed March 17, 2009, from \url{http://www.regents.louisiana.gov/Academic/TE/2008/Overview%20of%202007-08%20Value%20Added%20Teacher%20Preparation%20(12.03.08).pdf}.
  \item \textsuperscript{4} N.Y. EDUC. LAW § 305(12)
  \item \textsuperscript{5} FLA. STAT. ANN. § 1012.2315
\end{itemize}
6 CAL. EDUC. CODE § 69612, 69612.5, 69613, 69613.1, 69613.2, 69613.4, 69613.6, 69613.8, 69614, 69615.4, 69615.6, 69615.8
7 Linda Darling-Hammond, "A Future Worthy of Teaching for America," Education Digest, 74.6 (Feb 2009): 11(6)
8 Ibid.
11 VA. CODE ANN. § 22.1-199.1(G)