

Introduction

The purpose of this supplement to *The Status of the Teaching Profession 2007* is to provide California's education policy-makers with specific and concrete steps for the coming year to strengthen teaching quality in the state. These recommendations are drawn from our decade-long experience advocating for public education of the highest possible quality; research conducted on our behalf over the past year by SRI International; recommendations from our reports, policy briefs and other publications; and deliberations with the cosponsors and Task Force members who guide this work.

Recommendations

1. Review and align the current components of teacher development to form a system that is focused on strengthening teaching quality.

*California needs to build a true **teacher development system** that ensures consistent teaching quality and effectiveness of instruction. This will involve transforming the various independent components of our fragmented teacher development continuum into a **system** that is capable of supporting and assisting teachers to be the best they can be. The system we have in mind will take time to develop and is not based simply on rearranging current requirements. It must be flexible, dynamic and responsive to California's changing demographics and student needs – a system that “learns” and adapts to needed changes. At the heart of such a system should be sound, reliable data used wisely by all parties to inform policy and strengthen teaching.*

1.1 Revise each aspect of teacher development in the state to ensure that information on acquisition of knowledge, skills and ability is used to inform preparation and strengthen practice during each subsequent level of candidate development. At the same time, ensure that assessments of teaching quality at each level of the system are, in fact, based on standards of high quality practice allowing candidates to demonstrate competency and move expeditiously through preparation and induction.

Rationale: *Research indicates that assessment of teaching quality regularly occurs within the various teacher development components, yet the information derived from these assessments serves more as a gate-keeping function — simply regulating*

the passage from one component to the next — than as a means for strengthening practice throughout a teacher's career. The California Standards for the Teaching Profession provide a framework for guiding the development of teachers as they mature in the profession, but stops short of providing a reasonable and sound structure for the use of assessment throughout a teacher's career for the purpose of strengthening practice.

1.2 Sponsor statewide symposia, inviting state policymakers, classroom teachers, representatives of local districts, and faculty from institutions of higher education with teacher preparation programs to provide guidance on the design of a teacher development system strengthening teaching.

Rationale: *Such symposia would provide an opportunity to identify steps to improve coordination and communication among the various agencies that have responsibility for teacher development in the state.*

1.3 Encourage the development and implementation of standards for the conditions of teaching quality, similar to those adopted in other states that reflect the conditions needed to support effective teaching.

Rationale: *Research and the deliberations of the Teaching Quality Forum confirm that school site working conditions or “surround” (leadership, facilities, and materials) contribute significantly to teaching success. California has student standards and standards for the teaching profession. We believe standards also must be set for the conditions that support teaching quality and these standards must be part of the state's public education guidelines.*

1.4 Support expansion of articulation efforts among the California community colleges and colleges and universities offering teacher preparation programs.

Rationale: *Community colleges can play an important role in encouraging their students to consider a career in teaching. Unfortunately, little collaboration exists between four-year institutions and the community colleges that facilitate the ease with which prospective teachers enter the pathway to teaching. Articulation agreements for the acceptance of community college students into four-year institutions are frequently difficult to construct, information on pathway programs is scarce and education course taking opportunities are limited.*

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1.5 Monitor implementation of statutes which require that Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) results, in the aggregate, be used to improve educator preparation.

Rationale: State law requires that preparation programs be accredited. By design, the results of Teaching Performance Assessments are to be reviewed and used to improve preparation programs. However, this key element of the teacher development system has yet to be implemented or adequately funded.

1.6 Support Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) efforts to remove any remaining impediments to using TPA results to inform induction for each candidate, eliminate redundancies between preparation and induction, and allow accomplished candidates to pursue the "early completion" option afforded by state law.

Rationale: State law requires TPA results to be used in induction and accreditation (Ed Code Sections 44320.2(e)(3) and 44320.2(d)(8) with 7/1/08 as implementation date), but since the candidate "owns" the test results, and not the preparation program, clarification is needed.

2. Continue to develop the California Longitudinal Teacher Integrated Data Education System (CALTIDES) and use the data derived from the system to inform decisions about the ways in which the components of teacher development can be revised, aligned, and made into a system that learns, adapts, and evolves.

CALTIDES has great potential to provide policymakers with important information on the status of the teaching profession, but there must be a long-term plan to incorporate adequate, critical and timely information from statewide databases into the design and, when appropriate, the revision of a teacher development system.

2.1 Provide funding and any needed authorizations to ensure the existing CALTIDES implementation work remains on schedule while closely monitoring the development and refinement of data system requirements to ensure that CALTIDES actually provides educators and policymakers information essential to decisions regarding teacher supply and demand.

Rationale: With a state the size of California, it is important to have some mechanism for keeping track of a workforce of over 300,000 teachers. The design and implementation of the system is critical to the development of state teacher policy and, therefore, should receive state funding, yet support for CALTIDES is based almost solely on tenuous federal funding for reporting as part of NCLB.

3. Regularly assess classroom practice and use the information gathered to strengthen teaching quality.

3.1 Review and revise statutes governing teacher evaluation as necessary to: 1) provide for the inclusion of a variety of assessments of students' academic growth and social development; and 2) ensure that teachers receive information essential to improving teaching effectiveness, such as suggestions for using professional development to strengthen practice by deepening subject matter content knowledge.

Rationale: Research and case studies indicate that the statutory provisions related to teacher evaluation should be revised to better support teacher growth and development.

3.2. Offer intensive preparation and development to school level administrators in using reviews, evaluations and assessments to support teaching quality, and provide essential, comprehensive, useful information to individual teachers that will help them to strengthen practice.

Rationale: Research, as well as guidance from Teaching Quality Forum members, suggests that school-level teacher evaluations must be improved if the results are to be used effectively to guide teacher professional development and strengthen practice.

3.3 Require districts participating in the PAR program to give program priority to experienced teachers who are struggling and would benefit from intensive development, support and assistance, as determined by local evaluations and/or teacher self-referral.

Rationale: There is little information regarding who participates in local PAR programs. This effort was originally designed to assist experienced teachers who could benefit from extra support and assistance. We suggest a closer connection between PAR and other local efforts to strengthen teaching.

3.4 Revise current statutes to permit school districts, with the concurrence of collective bargaining representatives for classroom teachers, to dedicate the equivalent of up to two additional days each school year to professional development designed to strengthen teaching quality consistent with California Professional Development Reform Initiative (CPDRI).

Rationale: Case studies reveal that insufficient time is available to schools for high quality professional development that provides for observation, practice, review and reflection, the type of professional development that research has shown contributes to improved student outcomes.

3.5 Implement the provisions enacted under SB 1209 designed to waive CBEST for individuals who have successfully passed more rigorous exams, such as the SAT or ACT. Consider eliminating other statutory requirements that result in duplicative testing of teaching candidates.

Rationale: Senate Bill 1209 set forward an appropriate and ambitious goal of eliminating barriers that keep prospective teachers out of the classroom. Good progress has been made in the elimination of redundant teacher testing, but additional effort is required if this goal is to be reached.

3.6 Support implementation by the CTC and California Department of Education (CDE) of induction assessment reform that is focused on individual teacher needs.

Rationale: Research, case studies and discussions with educators all point to the need to revise teacher assessment during the induction period. The CTC and CDE are moving to implement major reforms in teacher induction to eliminate the rote approach to assistance and assessment that has existed to date. Policymakers should monitor this reform carefully to ensure that it is sufficiently resourced to be implemented by July 2008, as planned.

4. Encourage policies that will build and support a larger pool of prospective teachers.

4.1 Review progress toward implementation of provisions included in SB 1209 requiring a more equitable distribution of intern teachers and recommend needed changes that arise as a result of the review.

Rationale: Provisions included in SB 1209 as part of the “Enhanced Internship Program” offer incentive funding for local agencies that provide needed training prior to assigning interns, full time, to a classroom. However, many districts are not participating in the new program. Further, current law requires that interns be placed in schools with teacher shortages, subject matter shortages, or shortage areas such as special education. It is time to rethink statutes that require intern placement principally in shortage situations, and to support CTC efforts to ensure that all interns are provided specified preservice preparation, including preparation to work with special needs populations, prior to becoming the teacher of record.

4.2 Build on efforts by the California State Universities and Colleges and the University of California to expand enrollments in teacher preparation programs, particularly for candidates pursuing preparation to teach in hard-to-staff schools or high-need subject matter areas.

Rationale: In recent years enrollments in teacher preparation programs have declined. This may be attributable to the increased availability of qualified teachers, but data suggest that there will be increased demand for teachers over the next decade. IHEs should make every effort to look ahead to periods of growth and encourage young people to consider teaching.

4.3 Support out-of-field teachers in school districts statewide by including mentor support and coaching in subject matter knowledge and pedagogical skills associated with the classes they are assigned to teach.

Rationale: The practice of assigning credentialed teachers to subjects for which they have limited background is widespread. While in many cases these assignments are unavoidable, there should be a priority placed on support for individuals in such assignments, especially in “gateway” courses such as Algebra I.

4.4 To encourage individuals to enter teaching and be prepared prior to assuming responsibilities for a classroom, consider augmenting APLE awards substantially to cover more of the costs of staying in college, providing an alternative to candidates who cannot forego income while becoming prepared. Further, revise APLE to encourage individuals to serve in schools in the bottom quartile (rather than the bottom half) of all schools.

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Rationale: *In order to ensure an adequate pool of teachers from which districts may choose, more powerful incentives are needed to encourage young people to prepare fully to enter the classroom. As it stands now a prospective teacher can be hired and serve as the teacher of record while completing preparation. However, these underprepared teachers are disproportionately assigned to low-performing, high-minority schools where need for qualified teachers is greatest.*

4.5 Monitor implementation of the Mentor Teacher Program to ensure that all interested local education agencies have access to existing funds and that mentors are available to interns, inductees and other novices.

Rationale: *Many districts did not participate in the Mentor Teacher Program because they were not able to "front-load" a reimbursement program.*

4.6 Ensure continued funding for the Personnel Management Assistance Teams created under SB 1209 (Scott), designed to assist local districts to eliminate practices that discourage the most capable teachers, committed to teaching in hard-to-staff schools, from serving in such schools.

Rationale: *The Personal Management Assistance Teams established in SB 1209 provide an opportunity to encourage local districts to improve their hiring practices to eliminate lengthy delays or other bureaucratic impediments to recruiting the most capable candidates. Unfortunately, no funding for the teams was included in this year's budget although some activity continues with carry-over funds. We encourage the Legislature to consider fully funding this effort in the next budget cycle.*

4.7 Encourage local school districts to conduct exit interviews that can inform the districts as to why capable, experienced teachers are leaving teaching. This information should become part of an annual report to the school board on the status of the workforce in the district.

Rationale: *Work with schools and districts at the local level reveals that exit interviews provide districts with an important source of information regarding the strengths and weaknesses of personnel practices. This process should be encouraged statewide.*

4.8 Broaden veteran teachers' opportunities to demonstrate, for purposes of state licensure, knowledge and skill associated with working effectively with English language learners by accepting successful completion of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards *Take One!* certification in English as a New Language/Elementary, Middle Childhood, and Early Adolescent/Young Adult.

Rationale: *Current law requires that veteran teachers who have not met requirements for teaching second language students as part of obtaining a preliminary credential must complete their training as a condition of continuing service. Additional routes to meeting this requirement should be available so that teachers can select from among professional development options that best meet their needs. Further, the *Take One!* program may provide incentives for teachers to become more deeply engaged in developing their knowledge and skill that, in turn, may lead to higher persistence rates for accomplished veterans.*

4.9 Continue to fund the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Block Grant, giving priority to the preparation, recruitment, and retention of teachers willing to serve special education students.

Rationale: *There remains a serious shortage of fully prepared special education teachers. In order to address this critical need, priority should be given to assisting special education teachers and offering incentives for candidates to become fully prepared.*

*Our full research report
and its companion summary report
are available for download
on our Web site, www.cftl.org.*