



NATIONAL CONFERENCE  
of STATE LEGISLATURES

*The Forum for America's Ideas*



# Getting to Excellence

## A Legislator's Guide to Educator Effectiveness Policy





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By  
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With Support from the NCSL Partnership on Educator Effectiveness



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*The Forum for America's Ideas*

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The National Conference of State Legislatures is the bipartisan organization that serves the legislators and staffs of the states, commonwealths and territories.

NCSL provides research, technical assistance and opportunities for policymakers to exchange ideas on the most pressing state issues and is an effective and respected advocate for the interests of the states in the American federal system. Its objectives are:

- To improve the quality and effectiveness of state legislatures.
- To promote policy innovation and communication among state legislatures.
- To ensure state legislatures a strong, cohesive voice in the federal system.

The Conference operates from offices in Denver, Colorado, and Washington, D.C.



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# About the NCSL Educator Effectiveness Partnership

*State legislators are important actors in the effort to prepare and support effective educators. State policy guides everything from preparation and induction to compensation and evaluation. Legislators must understand our policy options, and hopefully this guide will be useful for that purpose.*

—Idaho Senator John Goedde,  
Co-Chair of the NCSL Educator Effectiveness Partnership

*Although there are many, you don't need studies to know that an effective teacher makes the biggest difference in the lives of their students. This guide is an instrument to help policymakers in their effort to ensure that all children are given the opportunity to succeed in life as a result of effective teaching.*

—Hawaii Representative Roy Takumi, Co-Chair of the NCSL Educator Effectiveness Partnership

*Collaboration among all stakeholders on the issue of teacher effectiveness provides an outstanding model for legislators as they work through the policy options in their own states. The partners brought together some of the best information available to apply to an issue that is of great importance to every state legislature—having the best educators and learning environments possible in our schools.*

—Cheryl Reinhart,  
Arkansas Bureau of Legislative Research, Staff Chair of the NCSL Educator Effectiveness Partnership

In 2011, the National Conference of State Legislatures' (NCSL) Foundation for State Legislatures sponsored the NCSL Partnership on Educator Effectiveness. This partnership brought together industry experts who are members of NCSL's Foundation for State Legislatures and legislators and legislative staff with expertise on this issue. Their joint dialogue sought to further study policy options for state legislatures as they continue to support and improve educator effectiveness. NCSL recognizes this to be one of the more important and pressing issues facing the nation in the struggle to improve student achievement and build a 21st century workforce.

The Partnership met throughout 2011 to hear from researchers and experts on the issue, and shared their own expertise to determine the most effective and efficient policies. The work culminated in this guide.

## Partnership Members

### Partnership Co-Chairs

Senator John Goedde, Idaho  
Representative Roy Takumi, Hawaii  
Cheryl Reinhart, Arkansas

### Legislative Members

Senator Rich Crandall, Arizona  
Senator Joyce Elliott, Arkansas  
Representative Frank Hoffmann, Louisiana  
Representative RaeAnn Kelsch, North Dakota  
Senator Nancy King, Maryland  
Representative Betty Komp, Oregon  
Representative Rick Miera, New Mexico  
Senator Luther Olsen, Wisconsin  
Paula Dominguez, Rhode Island  
Helen James, Tennessee  
Mary Kenfield, Washington  
Jeanette Malafa, Illinois  
Kristopher Nordstrom, North Carolina

### Foundation Members

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education  
American Federation of Teachers  
Dell Inc.  
Educational Testing Service  
Learning Forward  
Microsoft  
National Education Association  
SAS Institute Inc.

### NCSL Staff

Michelle Exstrom  
Caroline Carlson

*The NCSL Educator Effectiveness Partnership is evidence that a diverse group of stakeholders can collaborate to strengthen our public schools. It is heartening for the AFT that NCSL has focused on supporting our educators. We encourage legislators to use this resource as a guide and also to work closely with teachers and principals in your respective states in crafting legislation that affects teaching and learning in your state.*

—American Federation of Teachers, Member of the NCSL Educator Effectiveness Partnership

*SAS supports collective efforts to have effective educators in every classroom and believes every child can learn. Providing educators with important information, feedback and development opportunities is critical not only to their professional development but also to the development of our children. SAS appreciates the opportunity to partner with NCSL and other industry experts to provide this guide to legislators and looks forward to future partnership opportunities.*

—Lindia Harbaugh, SAS Institute Inc., Member of the NCSL Educator Effectiveness Partnership

## Partnership Meetings

December 8-9, 2010  
Phoenix, Arizona

March 9, 2011  
Webinar

April 16, 2011  
Washington, D.C.

July 14, 2011  
Webinar

August 7-9, 2011  
San Antonio, Texas

November 30, 2011  
Tampa, Florida

August 8, 2012  
Chicago, Illinois

December 6, 2012  
Washington, D.C.

## Educator Effectiveness Partnership Meeting Speakers

Barnett Berry  
Center on Teaching Quality

Michelle Exstrom  
National Conference of State Legislatures

Shari Fancis  
National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

Laura Goe  
Educational Testing Service and National Comprehensive Center on Teaching Quality

Liam Goldrick  
New Teacher Center

Eric Hirsch  
New Teacher Center

Stephanie Hirsh  
Learning Forward

Sandi Jacobs  
National Council on Teacher Quality

Toby King  
Colorado Department of Education

Paige Kowalski  
Data Quality Campaign  
Sabrina Laine  
National Comprehensive Center on Teaching Quality

Dianne Lefly  
Colorado Department of Education

Anthony Milanowski,  
Westat

Angela Minnici  
American Federation of Teachers

Ellen Moir  
New Teacher Center

Alice O'Brien  
National Education Association

Allan Odden  
Strategic Management for Human Capitol

Kathy O'Neill  
Southern Regional Education Board

Wil Parker  
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

Elizabeth Pearce  
Vermont Office of State Treasurer

Michael Podgursky  
University of Missouri

Bill Raabe  
National Education Association

Sharon Robinson  
American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education

Steve Tozer  
University of Illinois at Chicago

Snow White  
Dell Inc.

Nadja Young  
SAS Institute Inc.





## Introduction

The Quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers.<sup>1</sup> During the past 20 years, research has confirmed the effects of teaching on student achievement; a teacher's effectiveness is the single most important school-related factor associated with a student's success.<sup>2</sup> We now know that a student who has an effective teacher benefits significantly, and that a student who is taught by a series of ineffective teachers is unlikely to recover academically. While out-of-school factors continue to predominantly influence student achievement, of those factors within a school, the effectiveness of a teacher is the most significant. As a result, state legislators often seek the most effective policies to improve teaching and, ultimately, student achievement.

A growing body of evidence also confirms the importance of effective school principals to student success as second only to that of teachers.<sup>3</sup> Those schools that successfully recruit and retain effective teachers and turn around low performance are led by effective school principals. The effectiveness of professionals in these two roles—principals and teachers—necessarily overlaps. Although there are notable exceptions, most school principals emerge from the ranks of teachers. The pipeline of effective school leaders, therefore, begins with effective teachers.

State legislators are aware of the effect teachers and principals have on student achievement and regularly consider legislation that addresses the various stages of the career continuum—recruitment, preparation, licensure, induction, mentoring, ongoing professional learning, compensation, continuing licensure, tenure and evaluation. In examining the various points along the professional continuum of education, state legislators struggle to consider educator policy as a whole. The pace of reform and the introduction of new policies recently have quickened, even as many states face budget constraints and work to implement new Common Core State Standards and new assessments. Legislators are working to ensure that their efforts to improve educator effectiveness coincide with other reforms and that state funds are being spent to maximize student achievement with little or no new investment.

NCSL's Educator Effectiveness Partnership created this publication as a guide for state legislators as they consider policies that support educators and improve the quality of teaching. It provides an overview of the major areas of educator policy, lists questions state legislators might ask as they consider their own policy context, and offers policy options states are considering. The information presented in this publication was gleaned from Partnership meetings during the past year with education policy experts and from the partners' own expertise and experience.

The partners encourage legislators to approach both teacher and principal policies within the same context, since one is intimately related to the other. The Partnership also urges legislators to consider policies within the larger educator career continuum, rather than piece by piece, by asking how a change in one area might affect another area of educator policy. Finally, the Partnership urges legislators to consider how other reforms, such as new standards or assessments, may affect educator policy in such areas as preparation, professional development and evaluation.

## Preparing Effective Educators

Effective teachers and principals are essential to improving student learning.<sup>4</sup> Effectiveness can be cultivated through preparation programs that purposefully train principals and teachers to teach today's higher standards to today's digital learners in urban, suburban and rural classrooms. The challenges confronting educator preparation programs are abundant: they must provide their students with expertise about the subject they teach, a knowledge of deeper learning strategies, the ability to teach students at different levels, an understanding of how to use data to identify both excelling and struggling students, and the skills needed to use the latest technology in the classroom to create new avenues of access and understanding for every student. Preparing teachers and principals to meet these challenges is no small feat. Well-known education experts involved in educator preparation, such as Arthur Levine and Linda Darling-Hammond, have called on both the education community and policymakers to make improvements and to provide systemic supports to preparation programs.<sup>5</sup>

Responsibility for ensuring that educator preparation programs are up to the task falls to the states, which means state legislators have a legitimate role in the process. States approve educator preparation programs to ensure that educators are adequately prepared. To receive state approval, traditional baccalaureate programs housed within universities often must meet criteria established by the state; these typically include minimum performance standards for teaching professionals who graduate from a program. Some states also require that these programs be accredited by a national body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education or the Teacher Education Accreditation Council. In the coming year, both organizations will officially merge to create the Council for Accreditation of Education Preparation. Accrediting bodies establish quality performance standards across states and regions for preparation programs and their graduates.

Some states—such as Florida, Louisiana and Tennessee—can effectively link student performance not only to the teacher, but even further to the program that prepared the teacher. These links initially are being used to inform preparation programs of their successes and challenges, including grading the programs' performance in Florida and Tennessee. If the data prove to be a valid and reliable indicator of program quality, it eventually may be used as a factor in approval/accreditation and state funding. The U.S. Department of Education currently is considering administrative rules that would require states to link the test scores of students back to the preparation programs where their teachers are prepared—despite concerns about data validity and reliability—and to set consequences for preparation programs if the scores do not meet a certain level.<sup>6</sup>

Higher education-based preparation programs also are pushing for higher performance within their own community. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and the Stanford University Center for Assessment Learning and Equity are partnering with state education agencies and universities to develop and implement the edTPA (formerly the Teacher Performance Assessment). This subject area-specific, performance-based assessment for pre-service teacher candidates is centered on teacher candidates' demonstrated ability to effectively instruct students. The assessment will serve as a valid and reliable measure of teacher readiness.<sup>7</sup> Several states are adopting edTPA as part of their teacher prep-

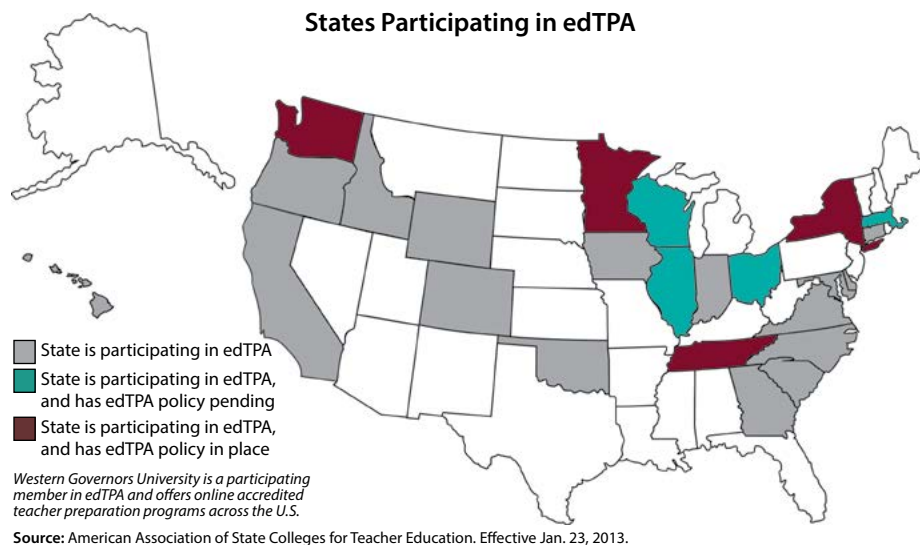
*Our job is to make sure that every student has qualified, caring, committed teachers in their classrooms. The first step in transforming our profession is to strengthen and maintain strong uniform standards for preparation and admission. We need higher standards for those entering the profession, and a greater focus on preparing, mentoring and supporting new teachers. The NEA is taking action by helping to facilitate partnerships between local associations, preparation providers and school districts to increase the number of teacher candidates participating in residency partnership programs. Teachers take their profession seriously, and the rest of us ought to as well.*

—National Education Association President  
Dennis Van Roekel,  
Member of the NCSL Educator Effectiveness Partnership

*“Effective preparation is the bedrock of effective teaching. States are rapidly innovating to ensure that teachers are student-ready when they complete their preparation programs. Innovations such as edTPA—a valid and reliable teacher performance assessment—are excellent measures for state legislators to consider as they answer the question for tax payers: ‘How do I know a new teacher is ready for the classroom?’”*

—Sharon Robinson, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Member of NCSL Educator Effectiveness Partnership

ration pipeline—either as an initial licensure requirement, as a program approval requirement, or as a program completion requirement. Recently, edTPA was field tested on more than 7,000 teacher candidates in almost 200 schools, colleges and departments of education across the country.



The goal of this effort is to create a body of evidence for new teacher competencies, to provide a uniform and evidence-based process that can be used across states to confirm aspiring teachers’ readiness for the classroom, and to serve as a tool for preparation program improvement. The assessment will be aligned to both state and national teacher standards, including the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards, Common Core State Standards, National Board Certification standards and Specialized Professional Association standards.

The American Federation of Teachers suggests further steps. The organization’s recent report, *Raising the Bar*, calls for a rigorous three-part “bar” exam for new teachers that would assess clinical practice as well as theory, content and pedagogical knowledge, and a comprehensive performance assessment such as edTPA.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to their ability to affect educator effectiveness through traditional preparation programs, states have a role in ensuring the effectiveness of new pathways to teaching and principal credential. States approve alternative certification programs. Under such programs, post-baccalaureate candidates receive a varying amount of additional education and training to supplement their subject-matter knowledge and are placed in the classroom with a mentor (usually an experienced or master teacher). This approach typically is used to recruit mid-career professionals into the teaching profession, particularly in hard-to-staff schools or subjects. States—and, in some cases, districts—can create their own programs or can accredit and accept placements from existing programs such as Teach for America and The New Teacher Project. States and districts have experienced mixed results for educator effectiveness of graduates from alternative routes, and program effec-

tiveness can vary widely as well. State legislators can require that programs created in statute undergo a performance audit to gain a better understanding of whether they meet state workforce needs. Another tactic for state legislators and district leaders is to base program approval for alternative providers on the performance of their graduates.



Some policy experts point to clinical residency preparation programs as a successful model for preparing educators. In fact, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education's Blue Ribbon Commission recently advocated using this approach as a model that would increase accountability and strengthen both preparation of teacher candidates and partnerships among schools, districts and preparation programs.<sup>9</sup> These programs can be housed in universities or operated independently. The Boston Teacher Residency program often is cited as an example of a successful urban clinical residency preparation program. The program recruits talented graduates, career changers and local community members and prepares them to teach in the local urban setting of Boston Public Schools.

Through this partnership, students are placed within K-12 schools for one year with a master teacher while they are completing their course work. This approach gives them actual experience during their preparation in a setting where they can immediately apply what they learn in the urban classroom.

## Questions for Legislators to Ask

As legislators consider policies to improve preparation of effective educators, they may want to seek answers to the following questions to gain a deeper understanding of state policies and practice.

- Does your state require national accreditation for preparation programs to receive program approval?
- How do your state's teaching and leadership standards compare to those of other states?
- How do your state cut scores for pre-service assessments compare to those of other states?
- Do your school districts report that local preparation programs are meeting their needs for effective teachers and leaders, particularly in hard-to-staff schools or subjects?
- Are preparation programs meeting the education workforce needs in your state?

- Do your preparation programs partner with rural and urban districts or individual schools?
- Does your state data system track where teachers or leaders are prepared?
- Does your state data system track the placement or success of preparation program graduates?
- Does your state have alternative preparation programs? Are they statewide programs or sponsored by local districts?
- Does your state hold alternative preparation programs accountable to the same standards for success as traditional programs?
- How does your state requirement for clinical hours compare to that of other states?
- Does your state require a performance assessment for preparation program completion, program approval or initial licensure?
- Is information on the quality of your state's educator preparation programs made readily available to potential candidates?

## State Policy Options

The following policy options are among those states are considering to help state legislators improve preparation of effective educators.

- Request an inventory of your state educator preparation policy and evaluate whether those policies are achieving your desired results.
- Review current research—or request research if none exists—on where educators in your state's schools are being prepared.
- Strengthen state program approval and reporting requirements to ensure that preparation programs are graduating successful teachers and leaders and do not approve programs that fail to adequately prepare candidates to teach in your state.
- Ensure that your data system can track not only where licensed educators are prepared, but also where graduates of preparation programs are placed and employed and that such data is made available to the programs for program improvement.
- Ensure that all preparation programs are held to the same high standards and accountability expectations.
- Consider tying preparation programs to valid and reliable measures of effectiveness.

- Provide clear data on the relative quality of educator preparation programs to potential candidates.
- Create incentives for teacher preparation programs to actively recruit and prepare candidates for teacher and leader shortage areas.
- Require an evaluation of alternative preparation programs at both the state and local levels to determine if they are producing desired results.
- Adopt a valid and reliable pre-service performance assessment for program completion, program approval or initial licensure.

## Additional Resources

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, [www.aacte.org](http://www.aacte.org)

Boston Teacher Residency Program, [www.bostonteacherresidency.org](http://www.bostonteacherresidency.org)

Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation, [www.caepsite.org](http://www.caepsite.org)

Educational Testing Service Teacher Programs, [www.ets.org/praxis](http://www.ets.org/praxis)

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, [www.ncate.org](http://www.ncate.org)

Teacher Education Accreditation Council, [www.teac.org](http://www.teac.org)





## Licensing Effective Educators

Every state licenses or certifies educators to ensure that all students are taught by a competent, qualified, effective educator, similar to the process used in other professions. In most states, candidates can apply for their initial license only upon completion of an approved preparation program. Other states allow candidates to be licensed without preparation or upon enrollment in a program. The best licensing systems balance openness with rigor; ideally, they allow approval of the maximum number of candidates who are prepared to successfully teach and lead in public schools. This balance can be difficult to maintain, especially as states seek to fill a growing number of vacancies.

States set standards for what teachers and principals should know and be able to do. For example, states can adopt all or part of the Model Core Teaching Standards from the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers.<sup>10</sup> For principal preparation and licensure, states can adopt all or part of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers in collaboration with the National Policy Board on Educational Administration.<sup>11</sup> Teacher candidates take assessments upon graduation from their preparation program.<sup>12</sup>

Passing the assessment is a prerequisite for applying for a license to teach in the state. Each state specifies additional criteria—typically including fingerprinting and a criminal background check—that candidates must meet to acquire a license. Once the process is complete, the candidate receives a provisional or beginning license and is ready to seek employment.

State requirements differ in the length of the beginning license and license renewal. Most states require that teacher candidates spend a certain number of years in the classroom and receive ongoing education or professional development. Increasingly, state legislatures are revamping teacher and principal evaluation systems by tying teacher performance to student performance. Some states now require satisfactory evaluations for continuing licensure. The same is true in states that have created new evaluation systems for principals.

In addition to striving to meet state licensure standards, some teachers also work toward obtaining national certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The National Board has worked with master teachers and education experts to develop standards for accomplished teaching in prekindergarten through grade 12 for 16 subject areas and offers 25 different certificates.<sup>13</sup> Teachers must pass 10 rigorous assessments, including four portfolio entries that feature teacher practice and six exercises that assess content knowledge. Trained teachers in the candidate's certificate area review the assessments. The certification process can take from one to three years. Once a candidate passes his or her assessments, the teacher becomes a National Board-certified teacher. The certificate, valid for 10 years, can be renewed.

This voluntary program does not replace state teacher licensure or certification. Instead, it offers a much more rigorous national teacher credential for experienced teachers that is recognized and rewarded throughout the country. National Board certification can be used by states to identify and reward effective teachers. Some



states offset certification costs incurred by the candidates and offer additional salary or bonuses for successful National Board certification. More than 91,000 teachers—less than 3 percent nationwide—now are National Board-certified. California, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina and Washington have the most National Board-certified teachers. The National Board is working to implement a similar rigorous national certification for principals.

Take One! is another program offered by the National Board to develop less experienced teachers to complete the National Board certification. This job-imbedded school reform program is available to all teachers and to induction or pre-service teachers, principals, administrators and professors in colleges of education. It can be used as professional development either individually or school-wide. Research shows that a school-wide program can transform a school into a professional learning community. Although educators do not receive full National Board certification through this program, they can use it as an initial step to pursue National Board candidacy by transferring the score within two years. Because this program is focused intensively on a concentrated area of professional practice, it requires less time outside of work and costs less; thus, it may be a more viable option for some educators.

## Questions for Legislators to Ask

As legislators consider policies to license teachers and principals, they may want to seek answers to the following questions to gain a deeper understanding of state policies and practices.

- What assessments and requirements does your state use to determine if licensure is appropriate for teacher and principal candidates? Is it an online subject-matter assessment or a performance assessment of a candidate's actual teaching ability? Do the assessments and requirements provide sufficient confidence in the capacity of the educator to effectively instruct in or lead schools?
- Does your state require that candidates prepared in alternative programs pass the same assessment and meet the same standards?
- Does your state use InTASC or ISLLC standards as a model for state standards?
- Do your state standards require teachers and leaders to demonstrate their ability to teach more demanding content and critical skills to a diverse range of students?
- What is your state's process for principal and teacher licensure? Is your process rigorous enough to ensure effectiveness, yet open enough to recruit enough candidates to meet your education workforce needs?

- Does your state ensure that those with previous criminal offenses against children cannot become licensed educators?
- Does your state recognize National Board certification? Do you offer incentives for this certification? Does your state require or offer incentives to those who receive this certification to teach where they are most needed—in low-performing schools or as mentors or master teachers?

## State Policy Options

The following policy options are among those states are considering for state licensure of teachers and principals.

- Adopt rigorous teaching and principal standards, perhaps basing them entirely or partially on the InTASC and ISLLC standards.
- Use classroom and school-based rigorous performance assessments to ensure that teacher and principal candidates meet your standards and are well-prepared for today's classrooms.
- Require all candidates, regardless of where and how they are prepared, to pass state performance assessments that require demonstration of the knowledge and skills needed to advance student learning.
- Establish a rigorous initial licensure process, requiring fingerprinting and criminal background checks to ensure student safety.
- Establish a rigorous continuing licensure process to show both continued ability to teach successfully and continued professional growth.
- Establish a tiered licensure system in which educators attain higher levels of licensure based on participation in ongoing, high-quality professional development; obtaining National Board certification; and assuming additional professional responsibilities, such as serving as a mentor or master teacher.
- Offer incentives for teachers to receive National Board certification or to participate in Take One!
- Offer incentives for those teachers to apply skills acquired through the National Board certification process to teach in low-performing schools or to serve as master teachers or mentors.

## Additional Resources

Model Core Teaching Standards, [www.ccsso.org/Resources/Publications/In-TASC\\_Model\\_Core\\_Teaching\\_Standards\\_A\\_Resource\\_for\\_State\\_Dialogue\\_\(April\\_2011\).html](http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Publications/In-TASC_Model_Core_Teaching_Standards_A_Resource_for_State_Dialogue_(April_2011).html)

Educational Leadership Policy Standards, [www.ccsso.org/Resources/Publications/Educational\\_Leadership\\_Policy\\_Standards\\_ISLLC\\_2008\\_as\\_Adopted\\_by\\_the\\_National\\_Policy\\_Board\\_for\\_Educational\\_Administration.html](http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Publications/Educational_Leadership_Policy_Standards_ISLLC_2008_as_Adopted_by_the_National_Policy_Board_for_Educational_Administration.html)

Educational Testing Service Teacher Programs, [www.ets.org/praxis](http://www.ets.org/praxis)

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org)



## Recruiting and Retaining Effective Educators

Because half the nation's teachers—approximately 1.72 million—are expected to retire in the next decade, a huge number of teachers will be needed to fill this gap.<sup>14</sup> These teachers should be ready to teach today's 21st century students. States have developed many approaches to attract teachers to the classroom. Both states and the federal government offer scholarships and loan forgiveness programs to prospective teachers, especially those who are willing to teach in urban and rural schools and those who will teach in shortage areas. Illinois and South Carolina have created grow-your-own programs to entice local candidates to enter the classroom. States and districts also have experimented with bonuses to lure teachers to hard-to-staff schools and subjects, with mild success. State and district alternative preparation and licensure programs provide simpler routes to teaching for mid-career professionals or high-achieving college graduates who may want to teach in high-need schools.

Some argue, however, that the projected gap in the teaching force does not result from an inability to recruit teachers; rather, it is the result of too many experienced teachers leaving the classroom. In fact, as many as a third of teachers leave the profession in their first three years, and almost 50 percent leave after five years.<sup>15</sup> Teacher attrition has grown by 50 percent during the past 15 years. The national teacher turnover rate has risen to 16.8 percent. In urban schools, it is more than 20 percent and, in some schools and districts, the teacher dropout rate is actually higher than the student dropout rate.<sup>16</sup> The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) argues that this turnover drains resources, diminishes quality and undermines schools' ability to close the achievement gap.<sup>17</sup>

Poor working conditions have been consistently linked to high teacher turnover rates. During the past decade, some states have studied this linkage by surveying classroom teachers—and, in some case leaders—to determine why highly effective, experienced educators leave the classroom.

These surveys are known as teacher working conditions studies. North Carolina was the first to conduct such a study in 2002, and 18 other states and districts have since joined the effort led by the New Teacher Center.<sup>18</sup> States are learning directly from teachers and principals the policies that could be implemented or the systemic changes that might be made to stem teacher turnover. One key element of working conditions that affect teacher satisfaction is school culture, including leadership and the quality of professional learning supported by the system. Working conditions studies include metrics on the quality of professional learning, as do more focused teacher perception surveys such as the Standards Assessment inventory implemented by school systems across North America.

States have tried various approaches to retain teachers. Compensation has been a significant part of this effort, both to reward effective teaching and leadership and to entice educators to remain in the classroom. Some experts contend that traditional educator compensation does little to recognize excellence and may offer rewards for factors that are not tied to effectiveness. States have experimented with performance pay during the past decade, but none have successfully implemented a system statewide. Districts have been more successful, in part because stakeholders are more likely to make a commitment/support and participate in design. In addition, districts can design systems that fit their unique needs and

circumstances. The \$600 million federal Teacher Incentive Fund grant program has been an important source of funding for these innovative pay systems, and the independent research firm Mathematica currently is evaluating the success of this effort.

Research also has been conducted to determine the cost of teacher turnover to states and school districts. NCTAF estimates that more than \$7 billion is spent each year due to teacher dropout.<sup>19</sup> The organization completed a pilot study of teacher turnover and some of its direct costs in five school districts: Chicago Public Schools (Chicago, Ill.), Milwaukee Public Schools (Milwaukee, Wis.), Granville County Schools (Granville, N.C.), Jemez Valley Public Schools (N.M.) and Santa Rosa Public Schools (N.M.). In both small and large districts, the study found that, when a teacher leaves, the cost to recruit, hire and train a replacement teacher is significant. The cost per teacher leaving ranged from \$4,366 in rural Jemez Valley to \$17,872 in Chicago. The total cost of turnover in the Chicago Public Schools is more than \$86 million per year. The study also found that high-need schools experience the highest costs. These direct costs of teacher turnover do not include the significant additional—but less easily quantified—costs to student learning and a stable school environment that result from extensive teacher turnover.

## Questions for Legislators to Ask

As legislators consider policies to recruit and retain effective educators, they may want to seek answers to the following questions to gain a deeper understanding of state policies and practices.

- What are the teacher shortage areas in your state—special education, STEM, urban or rural?
- Does your state prepare enough teachers in these shortage areas?
- Do your institutions of higher education work to recruit and prepare teachers for these shortage areas?
- What is the average number of years of experience of teachers in your state?
- How many teachers will likely retire in the next decade in your state?
- What policies are in place in your state and districts to recruit teachers in high-need subjects and hard-to-staff schools and to recruit a diverse teaching force?
- What evidence is there that your teacher recruitment and retention policies are effective?
- What policies are in place in your state and districts to retain effective teachers?

- Has your state or have districts surveyed teachers about why they stay and leave (working conditions studies)? What was the participation rate? How is your state or districts using this information to inform recruitment and retention policies?
- Has your state estimated the cost of teacher turnover in terms of both the direct costs of replacing teachers who have left and the costs to student learning and the school environment?

## State Policy Options

The following policy options are among those states are considering to recruit and retain effective educators.

- Commission a study of the number of teachers who are estimated to stay, leave and retire in the next decade, determining the teacher shortage areas in the state.
- Commission a study of the cost of teacher turnover in your state to quantify the gains that could be realized by effectively stemming turnover. To provide the data necessary to refine retention policies, ensure that the study provides some measure of the effectiveness of teachers who leave using multiple measures, including reliable measures of student performance.
- Implement and support programs that specifically recruit and support diverse teacher candidates.
- Implement and support programs that specifically target teachers in the geographic and subject-matter shortage areas, such as preparation programs that partner with high-need districts, bonuses or loan forgiveness programs for teachers who teach and stay in high-need schools, quality systems of educator supports and professional learning, and compensation systems that reward effective teachers in high-need areas.
- With support and design assistance from stakeholders, create career ladders for teachers that reward professional growth and learning.
- With support and design assistance from stakeholders, create a statewide compensation system that rewards effective teaching, or remove state policy barriers that might prevent districts from implementing this system if they desire to do so.
- Conduct statewide teacher working conditions and teacher perception studies to determine why teachers stay and leave and what policies might be helpful to address recruitment and retention, such as effective professional learning systems. Consider conducting this survey every two years to determine whether conditions are improving and to analyze policies.
- Conduct exit interviews to determine why teachers and principals leave and use the results to update state and district policy.

- Hold school and district leaders accountable for improvement based on survey results.

## Additional Resources

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, [www.nctaf.org](http://www.nctaf.org)

New Teacher Center, [www.ntc.org](http://www.ntc.org)

National Comprehensive Center on Teaching Quality, [www.tqsource.org](http://www.tqsource.org)

Learning Forward, [www.learningforward.org](http://www.learningforward.org)

Center for Policy Research in Education, [www.cpre.org](http://www.cpre.org)

National Education Association, [www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org)

American Federation of Teachers, [www.aft.org](http://www.aft.org)

National Center on Performance Incentives, <https://my.vanderbilt.edu/performanceincentives/>

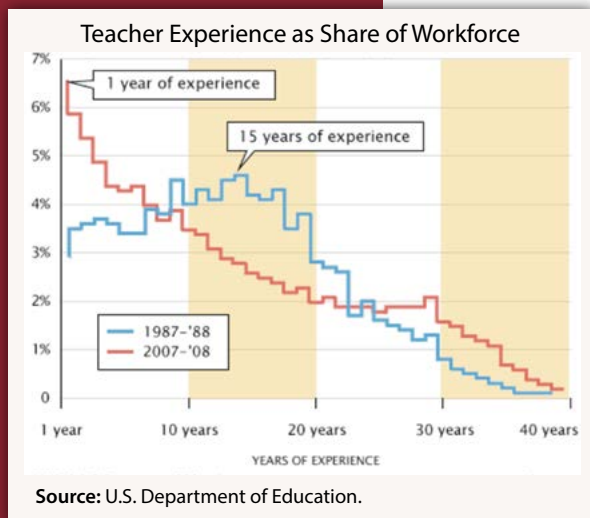
Teacher Incentive Fund, [www2.ed.gov/programs/teacherincentive/index.html](http://www2.ed.gov/programs/teacherincentive/index.html)  
Innovate + Educate, [www.innovate-educate.org](http://www.innovate-educate.org)





## Induction and Mentoring for New Educators

The quality of the initial support new teachers and principals receive is critically important to their future success. A widespread need exists for effective assistance. U.S. Department of Education statistics indicate that the nation's public schools are served by a large proportion of new educators. Most of the nation's current teachers have only one or two years of experience.<sup>20</sup> This lack of experience is the result of a significant number of baby boomer teachers who are retiring,<sup>21</sup> and a high proportion of teachers (about one in two) who leave the profession after five years in the classroom.<sup>22</sup>



Teachers in the first few years of their careers tend to be less effective than their more experienced peers.<sup>23</sup> To support these new entrants to the profession, some schools and school districts have created effective induction and mentoring programs that provide new entrants with the support they need to not only survive but also to thrive as educators. While most states use these terms interchangeably, experts often distinguish between the two. Richard Ingersoll and Michael Strong define the core elements of a robust induction program as those that tend to extend beyond mentoring to include elements such as new teacher classroom assignments, teacher working conditions and teacher learning time.<sup>24</sup> North Carolina is one of a few states that has separate and distinct induction and mentoring program standards.<sup>25</sup>

State policy can shape the programs and practices of new educator training. States can create programs that effectively support novice teachers and principals in their work and provide safety nets when these new professionals strive to implement what they learned in their preparation programs. Regardless of their educational background, all new teachers and principals are best served with strong supports.

More than half the states have enacted policies that require induction and mentoring programs for beginning educators.<sup>26</sup> The New Teacher Center, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization working with states and districts to implement high-quality induction and mentoring programs, recommends the following state policy elements to support strong induction and mentoring programs.<sup>27</sup>

1. **Teachers Served:** State policy requiring all teachers receive high-quality induction support during their first two years in the profession.
2. **Administrators Served:** State policy requiring all school administrators receive high-quality induction support during their first two years in the profession.
3. **Program Standards:** Formal program standards that govern the design and operation of local teacher induction programs.
4. **Mentor Selection:** State policy requiring a rigorous mentor selection process.
5. **Mentor Training:** State policy requiring basic training and ongoing professional development for mentors.



6. **Mentor Assignment and Caseload:** State policy addressing how mentors are assigned to beginning teachers, allow for manageable mentor caseloads, and encourage programs to provide release time for mentors.
7. **Program Delivery:** State policy identifying key induction program elements, including a minimum amount of mentor to new teacher contact time, formative assessment of teaching practice and classroom observation.
8. **Funding:** The state provides dedicated funding to support local educator induction programs.
9. **Educator Accountability:** State policy requiring participation in and/or completion of an induction program to advance from an initial to a professional teaching license.
10. **Program Accountability:** The state assesses or monitors program quality through accreditation, program evaluation, surveys, site visits, self-reports, and other relevant tools and strategies.

While the above practices are consistent with strong state level approaches to induction and mentoring, the New Teacher Center notes in its February 2012 policy scan that no state has enacted a comprehensive policy approach that embraces all 10 of its elements of high-quality support for beginning teachers and principals.<sup>28</sup> For example:

- Eleven of 27 states that require induction or mentoring specify two or more years of induction support;
- Twenty-two states require completion of or participation in an induction program for advanced teaching certification;
- Seventeen states provide dedicated funding for teacher induction;
- Only Connecticut, Delaware and Iowa require schools and districts to provide multi-year induction support to beginning teachers, require teachers to complete an induction program to obtain a professional teaching license, and provide dedicated state induction funding. These three states, however, do not provide strong supports for beginning school principals, lack policies to govern ongoing mentor professional development, and have placed limitations on full-time mentors.

## Questions for Legislators to Ask

As legislators consider policies to ensure high-quality induction and mentoring for new educators, they may want to seek answers to the following questions to gain a deeper understanding of state policies and practices.

- Does your state require statewide induction and mentoring of new teachers and principals or are these programs left to the discretion of local education

agencies? Does your state require new educators to spend a minimum period of time in these programs?

- Are the programs outcome-based in that they specify skills new educators should be able to demonstrate?
- Has your state developed design and performance standards for local programs?
- What requirements does your state have for those who serve as mentors? Are there training programs for mentors? Do you evaluate mentors? Do you allow full or partial release time from classroom duties for mentor teachers?
- Does your state provide funding for these programs or does funding come from local district budgets?
- Does your state monitor the quality of induction and mentoring programs? Who is responsible for monitoring, and how are the findings used to improve the programs?

## State Policy Options

The following policy options are among those states are considering to ensure high-quality mentoring and induction programs for new educators.

- Create and fund a statewide requirement for high-quality, research-based induction and mentoring of new educators for licensure renewal.
- Establish standards for program design and implementation to establish a common vision for excellence.
- Establish a minimum number of years that new teachers and principals must spend in their induction program and a minimum number of hours they must spend with mentors.
- Use rigorous mentor selection criteria that identify highly effective candidates as measured, in part, by reliable data on student performance and require training and ongoing professional learning on best practices in mentoring.
- Allow mentors full or partial release time from the classroom for mentoring responsibilities.
- Reward mentors with additional salary to compensate for additional responsibilities.
- Develop career paths for teacher leaders that include and reward assuming mentoring responsibilities.
- Dedicate a funding stream for mentoring and induction.
- Build in external evaluation requirements to ensure program effectiveness.

## Additional Resources

The New Teacher Center, [www.newteachercenter.org](http://www.newteachercenter.org)

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, [www.nctaf.org](http://www.nctaf.org)

Center for Policy Research in Education, [www.cpre.org](http://www.cpre.org)



# Ongoing Professional Learning for Educators

*The link between teacher effectiveness and high-quality professional learning is too important to ignore. Without opportunities to learn in collaboration with other educators, identifying and addressing the needs of both the adult and student learners in a school, teachers lack the single most important strategy for solving schools' entrenched challenges.*

—Stephanie Hirsh, Learning Forward, Member of the NCSL Educator Effectiveness Partnership

If educators matter most to student achievement, then it follows that high-quality, ongoing professional learning is essential.<sup>29</sup> This is particularly important today as states adopt new higher academic standards such as the Common Core State Standards and educator evaluation systems that require educators to apply sophisticated instructional strategies and implement more challenging assessments of student performance. The success of these reforms hinges upon teachers' and principals' ability to fully understand and change educator practice to reliably implement reforms.<sup>30</sup> A critical strategy to create shifts in educator practice is professional learning. Policymakers at both the state and local levels will want to ensure that principals and teachers receive the support they need, and high-quality professional learning will be essential to this goal. Policies can help to effectively promote cultures of learning and continuous improvement for educators.

The pressures for quality educator support systems will become increasingly important with implementation of new evaluation and compensation systems. These systems will make it possible to better identify where teachers and leaders need to improve, and personalized professional development plans can be shaped to provide supports and assistance to all educators, particularly those who are struggling. The plans will give teachers the opportunity to improve their performance and, for those in performance-based pay systems, to perhaps earn more.

One way states promote ongoing professional learning is by requiring school systems to provide a minimum number of days in the school calendar for professional learning. School systems are expected to use this time to support results-driven, standards-based, collaborative, job-focused learning for teachers and principals. In addition, many states provide some funding for these activities, and some federal funding also is available. Some schools and districts also work to ensure that teachers have time within the day or week for team-focused, collaborative learning that, under the best circumstances, can be used to improve student and educator performance across an entire team or even a school. During team learning, educators examine student data, determine student and educator learning needs, identify professional learning strategies to improve performance for both, implement and reflect upon new practices, and assess the effects of their ongoing improvement process.<sup>31</sup>

Another strategy states use is requiring educators to participate in additional professional development, often outside the school calendar and day in order to meet requirements for continuing licensure or certification. These activities typically are chosen by individuals and may or may not align with an individual's personalized professional development plan. In many states, little deliberate connection exists between this requirement and the team, school or system goals for professional learning.

The truth is that not all professional learning opportunities achieve the same results. States and districts cannot afford to waste time or money on training that is not related to the immediate needs of principals, teachers and students. To ensure quality, more than half the states have adopted professional development or learning standards, establishing a vision that can lead to effective teaching practices,

supportive leadership and improved student results. Most of these states have adopted standards developed by Learning Forward, the international association of learning educators, in association with 40 professional associations and education organizations, including the National Conference of State Legislatures. Purposefully called “professional learning” rather than “professional development” standards, they indicate an increased emphasis on the role that educators can and should play in their ongoing learning.

According to Learning Forward’s Professional Learning Standards, professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students addresses the following.<sup>32</sup>

- **Learning Communities.** Professional learning occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility and goal alignment.
- **Resources.** Professional learning requires prioritizing, monitoring and coordinating resources for educator learning.
- **Learning Designs.** Professional learning integrates theories, research and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.
- **Leadership.** Professional learning requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate for staff and create support systems for professional learning.
- **Data.** Professional learning uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator and system data to plan, assess and evaluate professional learning.
- **Implementation.** Professional learning applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.

In addition to adopting standards, some states have adopted a formal definition of professional development.<sup>33</sup> This definition, first introduced in the 2009 congressional session, spells out the professional development process that teachers consistently report as most helpful.<sup>34</sup> State legislators may direct time and resources to this approach when the definition is adopted into policy.

States have taken other steps that lead to high-quality professional learning. In January 2011, Learning Forward and the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education released a study that carefully examined four states that were determined to have effective professional learning programs—Colorado, Missouri, New Jersey and Vermont.<sup>35</sup>

The study identified five common policies and practices that legislators can consider as guides:

- A common and clearly articulated vision that permeates policy and practice;
- Monitoring of professional development quality;
- Mentoring and induction programs that create a foundation for ongoing professional learning;
- An infrastructure of organizations that facilitates effective professional development; and
- Stability of resources for professional development.

## Questions for Legislators to Ask

As legislators consider policies to ensure high-quality professional learning for teachers and principals, they may want to seek answers to the following questions to gain a deeper understanding of state policies and practices.

- Does your state have a vision for professional learning?
- Does your state have standards for professional learning?
- Does your state evaluate whether professional learning is meeting those standards? How are evaluation findings used to strengthen professional learning?
- Does your state provide stable funding for professional learning that support time, personnel and technology?
- Do you have any specific requirements or support for training in the new Common Core State Standards, new assessments, or interpretation and use of data?
- What role does professional learning play in your new evaluation systems? Is it required? Is professional learning tailored to individual needs as identified in each teacher's evaluation? Do teachers and principals work together to develop personalized plans?
- Do your school systems use instructional coaches to support teachers to make needed changes? How are coaches compensated, trained or certified? How is their role evaluated?
- Does your state ensure supports for new teachers, including induction and mentoring programs? Do these programs complement professional learning for veteran teachers?
- Does your state partner with professional organizations, universities or regional education service agencies for professional learning supports and training? How does your state ensure the partners' work is aligned with state and district goals and that their services meet state standards for professional learning?
- How does professional learning help your state meet state and federal expectations for improving teaching and learning? Is this a strategy to turn around low-performing schools?
- Does your state require school districts to evaluate the effects of professional learning?
- How does your state support districts in allocating the time they need to support professional learning? What flexibility is offered to ensure teachers obtain the support during the work day when they most need it? What flexibility is offered to ensure teacher leaders have time during the school day to plan and deliver professional learning to other teachers?

- How do your state requirements for continuing licensure or certification tie to school and individual improvement plans? What incentives exist to ensure that educators translate new learning to practice and measure the effects on students?
- How is the legislature informed of the effectiveness of professional learning in the state?

## State Policy Options

The following policy options are among those states are considering to ensure the quality of educators' professional learning.

- Adopt a statewide vision, standards and definition for professional learning that aligns with research and evidence-based practice.
- Establish and monitor clear goals for professional learning focused on educator effectiveness and student success.
- Expect strong alignment among regional agencies, higher education, community colleges, technical schools, early childhood and K-12 schools.
- Establish a system for multi-tiered licensure and/or career paths that attracts, supports, qualifies and compensates teachers for assuming new responsibilities, such as instructional coaches, school improvement committee members and team leaders.
- Use teacher leaders—a built-in district resource—to plan and develop professional learning for other teachers.
- Analyze current policies and practices to identify fragmentation and inconsistencies, current expenditures in professional learning, equity of access to professional learning systems and evidence of effectiveness.
- Set guidelines for adequacy of resources—including funding, time, technology, staff and materials to support professional learning—and sustain resources for continuous improvement that ensure their equitable distribution.
- Provide flexibility to the state education agency and local school systems in organizing school schedules to support the time educators require to develop knowledge and skills necessary prepare to meet new standards and assessments
- Set briefing sessions regarding the state plan for implementing new initiatives and monitoring the effectiveness of legislation.

## Additional Resources

Learning Forward, [www.learningforward.org](http://www.learningforward.org)

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org)

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, [www.nctaf.org](http://www.nctaf.org)



## Detailed Findings from Learning Forward and Stanford University Report

**Developing standards to guide accountability.** State education agencies that develop professional development standards to guide licensing and professional development provide strategic guidance and oversight. That guidance and oversight can be supplemented by district and school committees that oversee professional development at the local level. This is the case in New Jersey, where school- and district-level committees are required to create local professional development plans, which are reviewed by a county panel.

**Monitoring quality.** States can determine the usefulness and effectiveness of professional development by using surveys and studies to assess educators' participation in and the quality of professional development.

**Requiring induction and mentoring programs.** In three of the four states, induction programs for beginning teachers are required before teachers can receive a professional license.

**Leveraging collegial strategies for professional learning.** Policy can leverage staff collaboration as a strategy, often through the form of professional learning communities (PLCs) or other collaborative teams that focus on professional development and school improvement initiatives. These approaches represent a promising shift from the traditional "sit and get" model of staff development.

**Partnering with professional organizations.** Partnering with universities and professional organizations can create an infrastructure to support professional development that surpasses the reach and influence of the state agency, particularly when focusing on specific subject-area initiatives. Colorado's state education department, for example, created a Colorado Math Intervention Team, comprised of a number of professional organizations, including an organization of math teachers and another focused on learning disabilities.

**Creating networks of intermediary organizations.** Along with providing coordination, coaching, and other supports to schools and districts in a way state departments cannot, these organizations often act as a "sense-making filter" that links state goals with local needs. Missouri's regional professional development centers (RPDCs), Vermont's Math Initiative, and New Jersey's PLC Lab Schools projects are examples of such organizations.

**Addressing federal mandates and accountability requirements in constructive ways.** While federal policies such as No Child Left Behind have provided significant resources for instructional improvement in high-need schools, states must use policy to support collegial learning without restricting its focus to narrow types of instructional improvement defined only by basic skills test scores. The turnaround initiatives required of low-performing schools offer one example of how states can address federal mandates in ways that support effective professional development. In Vermont, for example, struggling schools in their third year of corrective measures are required to create PLCs and spend 10 percent of their funds on professional development.

**Skillfully marshaling resources.** Despite budget cuts, all four states examined in the report have made important long-term resource commitments to teacher professional learning. For example, Missouri requires districts to allocate 1 percent of state funding to local professional development efforts. An additional 1 percent of the state's overall budget is dedicated to statewide professional development, which helps support its network of 11 RPDCs. While state funding for the centers was suspended in 2010, nine of the 11 centers have found alternative funding sources.

**Source:** Learning Forward; [www.learningforward.org/publications/status-of-professional-learning](http://www.learningforward.org/publications/status-of-professional-learning).

## Evaluating Educators

Since 2009, more than two-thirds of states have enacted legislation to reform how teachers and principals are evaluated. With publication that year of The New Teacher Project's *The Widget Effect*, it became clear to education experts and policymakers that evaluation systems were failing to identify effective teachers; more than 99 percent of teachers studied in that report received satisfactory ratings.<sup>36</sup> If determining and supporting teacher and principal effectiveness is indeed important to improving student achievement, then evaluation systems must be much more accurate.

In 2010, the U.S. Department of Education also began to offer incentives to states to implement evaluation reforms. During difficult economic times, the federal Race to the Top competition offered money for implementation to states that promised, among other reforms, to use the growth students are making in terms of academic achievement as one of the several measures of teacher and principal effectiveness in new state evaluation systems. The U.S. Department of Education also has required this reform as one condition for receiving a waiver from the cumbersome requirements of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act. These federal incentives dramatically moved forward the timeline for state and district policy shifts.

By the end of the 2012 legislative sessions, 33 states had adopted new evaluation systems that now include student growth as a significant measure of teacher effectiveness. Some states have tied tenure and licensure to the new evaluation systems.

In many states, approximately half of educator evaluations now will be tied to multiple measures of student performance determined by the state or district, including statewide standardized tests and interim assessments. In some states, districts can evaluate teachers of subjects not included in standardized tests by selecting from an approved list of alternative measures, including locally development measures such as performance standards. The other portion of the evaluation is based on other measures of the educator's performance, such as peer or principal observations of teaching and student perception surveys.

Strong concerns exist, however, about these new evaluation systems. Some argue that tying student performance data directly to teacher evaluations may be a risk, especially since states are simultaneously adopting new, more rigorous content standards and new assessments with the understanding that current assessments do not provide rich measures of student learning. They warn against relying heavily on statewide standardized test scores, since as many as 80 percent of teachers teach untested subjects. They argue that attributing another teacher's students' standardized test scores to a teacher of an untested subject is arbitrary and creates perverse incentives. They further contend that attempting to solve that problem by expanding standardized testing is costly and allows standardized tests to dominate the school curriculum.

Concerns also remain not only about whether state data systems can reliably and validly measure student growth, but also the value added by an individual teacher. This has been a perennial concern in simple value-added models,<sup>37</sup> but the issue is more pressing now that evaluation and tenure decisions are tied, in part, to these systems. Data experts contend that significant advances have been

made to address those areas of concern, including roster verification that allows teachers to verify their students and the duration of instructional time. They assert that, although it may be difficult to measure the progress students are making, sophisticated value-added and growth models now exist that are being used in the states that successfully measure student growth.<sup>38</sup> However, they advise that states use a multiple-year average of student growth, preferably three years if available, in a teacher's evaluation to increase the reliability and stability of this measure.<sup>39</sup>

New research is shedding light on how best to build an evaluation system that recognizes the complexity of teaching and is trusted by educators. For the past three years, the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project—a research partnership of academics, teachers and education organizations—has been investigating ways to identify and develop effective teaching. In their 2010 report, *Learning About Teaching*, the MET research team found that a well-designed student perception survey can provide reliable feedback on aspects of teaching practice that predict student learning.<sup>40</sup> In 2012, they reported similar results for classroom observation.<sup>41</sup>



The MET research team confirmed in their January 2013 research report that effective teaching can, indeed, be measured; researchers can identify groups of teachers who are more effective in helping students learn.<sup>42</sup> They also confirmed that current and prior state test scores should make up between 33 percent and 50 percent of a teacher's total evaluation; classroom observation and student surveys complete the evaluation.<sup>43</sup> MET researchers also verified that adding a second observer increases the reliability significantly more than having the same observer score more than one lesson.<sup>44</sup>

States face challenges as they begin to implement the new evaluation systems. Some states, for example, have found more local stakeholder resistance to and concerns about these changes than they anticipated. Other states have discovered that timelines required under both the Race to the Top competition and the NCLB waivers and enacted in state legislation may not be practical within the state context. States that did not receive Race to the Top funds have struggled to ensure that their state and local education agencies have the capacity and funding to successfully implement the new systems.

A particular challenge for states and districts lies in aligning teaching and evaluation standards and measures with the instructional expectations of the Common Core State Standards. All teachers should demonstrate the core knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to implement these new standards. Many experts recommend aligning implementation of teacher evaluation systems with the new standards. Organizations such as the American Federation of Teachers and American Institutes for Research are providing resources and tools for teachers and districts to make these connections.<sup>45</sup>

Experts that are providing states and districts with implementation assistance urge a deliberate approach. This new area of work is complex and evolving, and proceeding on a pilot basis with locally developed and initiated programs may make sense. For states that already are moving forward with this effort, consistent review and analysis are important to determine if programs are leading to better teaching and, ultimately, to improved student learning.<sup>46</sup>

## Questions for Legislators to Ask

As legislators consider policies to improve measurement of educator effectiveness, they may want to seek answers to the following questions to gain a deeper understanding of state policies and practices.

- How are teachers and leaders now evaluated? What measures of student performance, if any, are used in those evaluations?
- Has your state recently enacted new legislation or regulations to revamp teacher and principal evaluations? What is the primary purpose of the new evaluation system—to identify the most effective teachers, to ensure that struggling teachers receive professional development and guidance, to improve student learning, or to inform human resource decisions?
- Did your state receive funding or a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education to implement these changes?
- Is the legislature working closely with the state education agency and teachers or their representatives to ensure successful development and implementation of the new evaluation system?
- Has your state created a model evaluation system? Is this system required or optional for districts? Does your state provide technical assistance and/or funding to districts to create and implement the new evaluation system?
- What are the factors in the evaluation? By whom and how were they selected? How is the evaluation tied to student performance? Does your evaluation use multiple measures of student performance? Are the measures fixed or can they fluctuate based on subject and context? How and by whom are the measures determined? How will teachers of untested subjects account for student achievement? What factors account for the remainder of the evaluation?
- Are student performance measures sophisticated enough to dampen the effects of assessment measurement error and to include all tested students, even those with missing data? Can the student performance measures incorporate different types of assessments? How reliable are the value-added measures from year to year as a measure of teacher effectiveness?
- Is your state education agency or school systems capturing accurate student-teacher links, which account for student and teacher mobility and shared instructional practice? Can teachers verify or modify their own rosters in this process?

- How many observations are required or recommended for evaluation? Is flexibility allowed at the local level? Who will conduct the observations? Are the evaluators trained and regularly reviewed to ensure reliability?
- Are teacher evaluation systems aligned to professional growth systems that include induction, professional development and teacher leadership opportunities?
- As part of the evaluation system, are districts required or encouraged to establish or expand existing peer assistance and review programs that allow peers to help support new and struggling teachers?
- Do you require principals to collaborate with teachers and their representatives in the development of improvement strategies and professional learning opportunities, including mentoring for teachers, where the evaluation reveals they struggle?
- Is your implementation timeline realistic? What provisions exist that can allow you to adjust your timeline, if needed?
- How is your state funding state and district implementation?

## State Policy Options

The following policy options are among those states are considering to improve the measurement of educator effectiveness.

- Require the state education agency to develop teacher and principal evaluation systems that use multiple measures of student performance that are valid and reliable for assessing teacher and principal performance.
- Establish clear, rigorous expectations for teacher and principal performance, and build a fair system that accurately measures performance against these expectations.
- Provide school districts the flexibility to create and use their own systems of principal and teacher evaluation and determine the appropriate weight of student performance and other factors in such evaluations.
- Ensure that the evaluation system is created with input from teachers, principals and other key stakeholders.
- Ensure that your state data system can accurately tie a student's performance and growth to the student's teacher. Allow teachers and principals to easily access and verify data, including student rosters.

- Where available, use a multiple year average of student growth in a teacher's evaluation in order to increase the reliability and stability of this measure.
- Ensure that new evaluation systems include multiple, meaningful ratings.
- Ensure that educators receive opportunities for professional learning in areas identified as in need of improvement on the educator's evaluation; ensure that evaluations and professional learning plans are linked.
- Establish clear consequences for continuously poor performance after providing ample opportunities for improvement and provide a swift and fair appeals process.
- Direct the state education agency or school districts, in collaboration with teachers and their representatives, to develop fair and equitable methods of measuring student achievement for teachers of untested subjects.
- Develop a comprehensive communications plan to ensure that stakeholders receive timely news about implementation and have adequate opportunities to provide input in design.
- Require training and monitoring of evaluators—principals and outside evaluators—to ensure that observations and evaluations will be conducted efficiently, consistently and accurately.
- If the new evaluations are shown to be valid and reliable measures of teacher and principal effectiveness, consider their use as a factor in high-stakes employment purposes such as pay and continuing licensure.

## Additional Resources

American Federation of Teachers, [www.aft.org](http://www.aft.org)

American Institutes for Research, [www.air.org](http://www.air.org)

Center for Teaching Quality, [www.teachingquality.org](http://www.teachingquality.org)

Council of Chief State School Officers, [www.ccsso.org](http://www.ccsso.org)

Educational Testing Service Teacher Programs, [www.ets.org/praxis](http://www.ets.org/praxis)

National Comprehensive Center on Teaching Quality, [www.tqsource.org](http://www.tqsource.org)

National Council on Teacher Quality, [www.nctq.org](http://www.nctq.org)

National Education Association, [www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org)

SAS Institute Inc., [www.sas.com](http://www.sas.com)





## Using Data to Improve Educator Effectiveness

During the past decade, states have worked to implement longitudinal education data systems that can track achievement of individual students over time. States use this data for federal, state and local accountability for student achievement. More recently, states have begun to link teachers and students, thereby attributing student gains to particular teachers. As states move forward to use this data with higher stakes for rating schools, students, educators and preparation programs, state legislators will want to ensure that their state education data system can accurately capture data and measure this information.

Since 2005, the Data Quality Campaign has worked closely with policymakers to ensure that states are building adequate and appropriate data systems. They have surveyed states and reported their progress toward the generally accepted 10 essential elements (see insert). The student-teacher data link is the most important element for use of data systems in educator effectiveness policies. Defining teacher of record, accurately capturing schedule or staffing changes and matching student records across the systems also are important elements for using data to improve educator effectiveness.

When the Data Quality Campaign began this tracking, no state had all the essential elements; by 2011, however, 36 states had met their goal of the 10 essential elements. Beginning in 2012, the Data Quality Campaign no longer will track this information using state survey data; instead, the information will be gathered and reported by the U.S. Department of Education under the America COMPETES Act of 2007, as agreed by all 50 states as a condition of receiving State Fiscal Stabilization Fund money in 2009.

States next will want to consider how to use the robust data they now are collecting. If it is collected, aggregated and disaggregated effectively, the data can be used to inform policymakers, enhance instructional practice and improve student achievement. The Data Quality Campaign also has suggested 10 state actions it believes are essential for effective data use.

The Data Quality Campaign's most recent analysis of state work on these actions found that states indeed are making progress. However, states remain focused on building data systems rather than on helping people—teachers, parents and students—use the data.<sup>47</sup> For example:

- States have laid the foundation to link prekindergarten through grade 20 workforce data systems but lack governance structures that have the necessary authority to share appropriate and limited critical data. This deficiency impedes efforts to empower stakeholders with critical information to ensure that students stay on track for success in college and careers.
- States use longitudinal data to produce reports and real-time digital displays of student data points for administrators and teachers but often fail to provide access to stakeholders such as parents; more work will be necessary meet all stakeholders' needs.
- States are increasingly providing training to help stakeholders use data but have not adequately helped train all education stakeholders to effectively use data.<sup>48</sup>

*Without reliable information about how an educator is contributing to student progress, it is not possible to provide the needed support to advance instructional practices and resulting student achievement. Empowering teachers and instructional leadership through effective use of data in a continuous improvement process will reinforce the shared belief that all educators should add value for each student annually. This is true whether the students enter the classroom at, above or below grade level.*

—Nadja Young,  
SAS Institute Inc., Member of the  
NCSL Educator  
Effectiveness Partnership



### States and Jurisdictions that Use Data Quality Campaign's 10 Essential Elements of a Longitudinal Data System

1. A unique statewide student identifier that connects student data across key databases across years (50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico)
2. Student-level enrollment, demographic and program participation information (50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico)
3. The ability to match individual students' test records from year to year to measure academic growth
4. Information on untested students and the reasons they were not tested (50 states and Puerto Rico)
5. A teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students (43 states and Puerto Rico)
6. Student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned (39 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico)
7. Student-level college readiness test scores (49 states and the District of Columbia)
8. Student-level graduation and dropout data (50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico)
9. The ability to match student records between the P-12 and higher education systems (48 states and the District of Columbia)
10. A state data audit system assessing data quality, validity and reliability (50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico)

Source: Data Quality Campaign; [www.dataqualitycampaign.org/build/elements/](http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/build/elements/) (effective through 2011).

States collect data for use in several different models, depending on their need for the data. States may adopt a value-added model, which matches longitudinal student data with teachers of record to attempt to determine how much a teacher affects populations of students. Value-added models are most often used to measure student academic growth for a particular district, school or teacher. Tennessee's Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) is perhaps the best-known value-added model.

States that use the SAS Institute Inc. Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS) can, for example, use the resulting data to influence staffing and instructional decisions from the state policy level to the individual school. States could use this system to determine the overall effects of certain policies on student achievement, and districts could use the system to attempt to determine the effectiveness of individual teachers. Teachers and principals could use this system to help make differentiated instruction and professional development decisions. Parents and students could view individualized data to better understand a student's growth trajectories and achievement projections to future academic benchmarks, including the SAT and ACT.

Some states use a growth model, which measures and charts individual student progress. Colorado is perhaps best-known for its Growth Model and SchoolView program for analysis. Matching student growth data with the teacher of record can be a powerful tool for policymakers and stakeholders. State policymakers, for example, can determine the overall achievement of students in the state and develop and amend policies to achieve higher growth. Districts can use the system to determine how well its students are achieving using certain curriculum. Teachers and principals can determine what subjects to emphasize in certain grades for school improvement plans. Again, similar to EVAAS, parents and students can view individual data to better understand growth trajectory.

## Questions for Legislators to Ask

As legislators consider policies to use data to determine educator effectiveness, they may want to seek answers to the following questions to gain a deeper understanding of state policies and practices.

- Does your state have a longitudinal data system? Do you know how it is used? What are legislative expectations? Do the system and its implementation meet those expectations? How does the legislature use that data to formulate policy?
- Does your state match student and teacher data?
- How does your state rank in the Data Quality Campaign Essential Elements and the State Actions? What policies are missing in your state?
- How does your state ensure data accuracy?
- Are your state department of education assessment and data experts confident that your state data system will be able to meet your needs as states make the transition to new standards and assessments?
- Does your state use a value-added or growth model to interpret and relay information about student growth and educator effectiveness? How reliable are the resulting estimates of projected growth and/or educator effectiveness?
- Is the value-added or student-growth measure itself based on all the student's previous performance data on an assessment instrument? Is it sophisticated and robust enough to include students with missing data?
- Is your model sophisticated enough to accommodate student/teacher mobility or shared instructional practices?
- Does your state use other measures to interpret and relay information about student growth and educator effectiveness?
- How do your state and districts interpret and relay data to principals and teachers about student achievement? How are your principals and teachers trained to interpret this data and make staffing and instructional decisions based upon it?
- How does your state ensure student and educator privacy in terms of data access?

## State Policy Options

The following policy options are among those states are considering for using data to measure educator effectiveness.

- Implement and fund a longitudinal data system that contains all the elements recommended by the Data Quality Campaign. Ensure that your state is capable of matching student and teacher data and that the data can be verified by principals and teachers.
- Ensure that your data system can meet your policy needs.
- Take the state actions advised by the Data Quality Campaign to ensure that your data system is appropriately and best used to meet your policy needs.
- Require teachers and principals to be trained in the use of data to adjust instructional practice and inform curricular decisions.
- After meeting with your state data experts, make any necessary adjustments to your state policy if your system will not produce reliable data on teacher and student performance.
- Enact policies to ensure that your state data system is capable of meeting state needs as your state makes the transition to new standards and assessments.
- Ensure that student and educator privacy is protected.

## Additional Resources

American Federation of Teachers, [www.aft.org](http://www.aft.org)

Data Quality Campaign, [www.dataqualitycompcampaign.org](http://www.dataqualitycompcampaign.org)

Dell, [www.dell.com](http://www.dell.com)

Educational Testing Service teacher Programs, [www.ets.org/praxis](http://www.ets.org/praxis)

Microsoft, [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

National Education Association, [www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org)

SAS Institute Inc., [www.sas.com](http://www.sas.com)

## Data Quality Campaign's 10 Recommended State Actions to Ensure Effective Data Use

1. Link state K–12 data systems with early learning, postsecondary education, workforce, social services and other critical agencies. By linking data systems across the P–20/workforce spectrum, states will be able to evaluate whether students, schools and districts are meeting college- and career-readiness expectations.
2. Create stable, sustained support for robust state longitudinal data systems. Longitudinal data systems are not one-time investments but critical state infrastructure that require maintenance and enhancements over time to meet new stakeholder demands. A key factor in ensuring that state longitudinal data systems remain viable over time is stakeholder use and demand for these systems.
3. Develop governance structures to guide data collection, sharing and use. Data governance, a critical aspect of data management, provides organizations and agencies an opportunity to define the roles and responsibilities needed to institutionalize their commitment to data quality and use. Without a data governance strategy, there is no clear ownership of the data, no clear business processes for collecting and reporting data, and no accountability for data quality.
4. Build state data repositories that integrate student, staff, financial and facility data. State educational data warehouses are essentially storage facilities where detailed and reliable educational data from several areas that affect student performance are stored and integrated. Data repositories allow data that have been traditionally stored in different systems to be linked and/or integrated in a manner that would allow states to inform various practices and policies.
5. Implement systems to provide all stakeholders with timely access to the information they need while protecting student privacy. Without access to the right information, stakeholders are forced to make decisions based on anecdote, experience or instinct. By granting access to different types of users based on the kinds of information to which they are entitled, state data systems can provide access to information while fully protecting student privacy.
6. Create progress reports with individual student data that provide information educators, parents and students can use to improve student performance. Creating progress reports using student-level longitudinal data enriches the information that are available to parents and teachers by providing information on a student's academic.
7. Create reports that include longitudinal statistics on school systems and groups of students to guide school, district and state improvement efforts. All stakeholders need information on school, district, and state performance to gauge progress and make decisions to support continuous improvement at all education levels. Reports that include longitudinal statistics provide valuable information about the effectiveness of schools, programs, policies and interventions for students who start out at different academic levels.
8. Develop a purposeful research agenda and collaborate with universities, researchers and intermediary groups to explore the data for useful information. To make full use of the longitudinal data they are collecting, states need people with high-level analytical skills and research training to mine the data and answer the multitude of policy and evaluation questions.
9. Implement policies and promote practices, including professional development and credentialing, to ensure educators know how to access, analyze and use data appropriately. To ensure that data is used to inform teaching in the classroom and to promote continuous improvement at the school and district levels, educators must be trained on how to access, analyze and interpret the data. States can develop the capacity of educators to use data by implementing appropriate policies for both pre-service and in-service staff.
10. Promote strategies to raise awareness of available data and ensure that all key stakeholders, including state policymakers, know how to access, analyze and use the information. In addition to educators, other stakeholders—students, parents, policymakers and community members—need to know what data are available and be able to access, interpret and use data effectively. Without access to timely and accurate data, state policymakers are flying blind when weighing the potential impact of new legislation in terms of the cost, return on investment, and effect on students and schools.

**Source:** Data Quality Campaign; [www.dataqualitycampaign.org/stateanalysis/actions/](http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/stateanalysis/actions/) (effective November 2012).

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