

TEACHER QUALITY: A FORUM

Fourteen Policy Experts Examine the Role of Government in Teacher Training and Licensure

This special section, a supplement to educational HORIZONS' Fall 1999 exploration of teacher certification, examines the role of government in ensuring teacher quality. The experts and policy-makers represented in the following pages are all veterans of public discussion and legislation on the issue. Their diverse viewpoints should provide HORIZONS' readers with a review of recent reforms and a guide to this vitally important topic.

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My Changing View of Teacher Education Policy: From Heartbreak to Sex Appeal

Rena F. Subotnik

Three years ago, I sat among the children in a third grade classroom, mortified by a presentation I was witnessing. I took the liberty of digging my nails into the shoulders of the two boys on either side of me to ensure they would not express out loud their dim view of their student teacher's mathematics knowledge. My heart broke for all concerned. This young woman cared deeply about children and was one semester away from applying for a provisional teaching certificate, yet she exhibited a minimal grasp of third grade mathematics.

When the state of New York initiated the idea of accountability regulations for schools of education in 1997, I heaved a sigh of relief. According to the proposed new regulations, schools of education with inadequate pass rates on certification examinations could lose state approval. At last we would have an excuse to lobby for more stringent admissions criteria and more rigorous courses. What had been standing in our way was a press to fill class rosters, a misguided sense of equity (thinking that higher standards of admission would exclude minority teachers), and plain old inertia. Since the announcement of the regulations, the quality of our teacher education students at the City

University of New York's Hunter College has been soaring, and diversity has increased.

In 1997 I was awarded a Child Policy Fellowship from the American Psychological Association to work in the U.S. Senate. The experience of serving as an education aide to Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.) immersed me in federal policy related to the quality of teacher preparation. Much of my enlightenment came from interacting with knowledgeable individuals in Senator Bingaman's office, with staff from House and Senate offices, and government specialists in key education organizations. Many of these people and the organizations they represent have contributed their thoughts to this special section. Some of them worked in tandem with our office's efforts on behalf of Senator Bingaman's legislation, and others did not. What we shared in common was a deep commitment to improving the quality of teachers in our nation's classrooms.

Schools of education have been the focus of attention, for better or worse, both in the 1998 Higher Education Act (HEA) reauthorization and in an increasing number of statehouses. As many of our essayists point out, it's now time

for other stakeholders to be on the receiving end of the same kind of treatment.

- Liberal arts and science faculties need to get more involved in the preparation of teachers. They also need to be more demanding. There's no reason education professors should encounter college juniors or even graduates who cannot write a grammatically correct paper or solve a simple mathematics problem.
- State certification bodies need to develop workable plans for helping weak schools of education, and if those schools are deemed hopeless, they should lose their state approval to serve as officially sanctioned sites for teacher preparation.
- Parents need to take advantage of provisions of the HEA and proposed provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that make available the professional qualifications of their children's teachers. Armed with this knowledge, they can press for teachers with appropriate preparation in content knowledge and teaching skills. Once children are assigned a well-qualified teacher, parents must support those teachers' efforts, verbalize respect for them in the home, and send their children to school ready to learn.
- Teachers and their representatives need to grease the skids on removing incompetent teachers. They might entertain proposals

like those currently being circulated by several members of the Senate and the House of Representatives to offer tax breaks to qualified teachers who are prepared to work in high-poverty schools.

- Administrators should be squeezed hard about resorting to emergency waivers to fill openings in the teacher corps. Portability of certification and licensure will help alleviate the problem, and mentoring new teachers will keep more of them in the profession. If emergency waivers were to be disallowed, the value of a qualified teacher would increase, and in response to high demand, salaries would have to go up.
- Spokespeople pushing for small class sizes need to limit implementation to the early grades in Title I classrooms. Otherwise teaching quality will end up being sacrificed in the name of quantity.

There *are* several parties to the debate that in my estimation are already doing exemplary work: members of Congress and national education groups like those featured in this section are making teacher quality a major focus of ESEA, and the media, bless them, have made the topic of education downright sexy!

Rena F. Subotnik is Professor of Education, Hunter College, City University of New York. She also serves on the Publications Advisory Board for educational HORIZONS.

The Role of the Federal Government Can Play in Improving Teacher Quality

Senator Jeff Bingaman



I am a strong supporter of America's hard-working and talented teachers. As the son of an elementary school and a college teacher, I know that education is an extremely challenging and meaningful profession. I also know that the vast majority of our teachers are dedicated, professional, and competent. Too many American classrooms, however, are led by teachers with insufficient training and qualifications, especially in schools that serve poor and minority children. Almost 15 percent of the new teachers hired in high-minority districts lack full teaching credentials, which usually involve passing tests to demonstrate needed skills and knowledge. Over 30 percent of all math teachers are teaching outside their field of academic preparation—with even higher percentages in other academic areas and in high-poverty schools.

According to recent research, good teachers are so important that almost half of the achievement gap between minority and white students would be erased if minority children had access to the same quality of teachers. We need to ensure that states and local education agencies provide equitable access to the existing cadre of qualified teachers. In addition, the federal government should support state and local efforts to increase the pool of qualified teachers and improve the skills and knowledge of future teachers and teachers currently in the work force.

Federal law should require that all teachers in schools receiving Title I funds be fully qualified. This means that an elementary school teacher must hold state certification and at least a bachelor's degree, and demonstrate subject matter knowledge, teaching knowledge, and teaching skills in reading, writing, mathematics, social studies, science, and other elements of a liberal arts education. Secondary school teachers must also

have state certification and at least a bachelor's degree, and demonstrate a high level of competence in all subject areas in which they teach. Competence can be demonstrated by passing a rigorous academic subject area test, and completing an academic major or equal number of courses (or in the case of mid-career professionals, documenting a high level of performance in relevant subject areas through employment experience).

In order to ensure that all children are taught by qualified teachers, our first step must be to work to keep the qualified teachers currently in the system. Our communities must recognize the tremendous role played by teachers and see that their compensation reflects that role. We also must increase federal support for high-quality induction programs and high-quality, ongoing professional development for the existing teaching force. Congress also needs to provide grants to assist states and LEAs provide education and training for teachers who do not yet meet appropriate qualifications. Forms of assistance should include scholarships for college or university course work. In addition, recognizing that some geographic areas have difficulty attracting qualified teachers, we should provide federal funds for financial incentives such as signing bonuses for fully qualified teachers, particularly for those working in low-income areas. Moreover, we must support efforts to recruit teachers by providing alternative means of certification for highly qualified individuals with college degrees, including mid-career professionals and former military personnel. In addition, we can help districts fill unmet needs by supporting state efforts to increase the portability of teachers' pensions, certification, and years of experience so that qualified teachers can have greater mobility.

Parents are natural partners in our efforts to raise teaching standards. I want to see districts and schools provide parents with information regarding teachers' qualifications. This effort builds on provisions I sponsored in the Higher Education Act reauthorization of 1998. Those provisions require a national report card on teacher training programs. By reporting this information, the public as well as the schools can assess the strengths and weaknesses of teacher training programs. Likewise, the parental-right-to-know provision I'm proposing for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act will empower parents by informing them of the qualifications of their children's teachers so that parents too can advocate quality education.

Efforts to raise standards for teaching must include greater incorporation of technology into our teacher training programs and our classrooms. Solid peer-reviewed studies show a significant improvement in student performance and attitude in all age groups and all subject areas as a result of better use of technology. A new \$25 million research-and-evaluation program at the National Science Foundation will provide even more insight into the positive impact of education technology.

Reducing inequities in access to computers and the Internet must continue to be a main function of federal education technology programs. If we believe that no child should be too poor to have a quality teacher, a safe classroom, or a textbook, the same should hold true for access to computer technology. These investments will be wasted, however, if we do not provide educators with the training they need to effectively incor-

porate technology into a standards-based curriculum. Research demonstrates that we must dedicate at least 30 percent of any technology spending on teacher training. Indeed, the training to hardware/software ratio is much higher for an average business incorporating new technologies. We also must continue our efforts to ensure that teacher preparation institutions include technological proficiency in curriculum-based applications in their programs.

By ensuring high-quality, well-prepared teachers in our classrooms, we empower our educational system and our nation to meet the demands of an increasingly complex and challenging world. I know that most, if not all, my colleagues in the Senate agree that a critical first step in improving our nation's schools is to support efforts to raise standards for teaching in our poorest and most challenged schools. During this Congress, I will be advocating these and other initiatives in the context of reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. We made great progress in our efforts to improve the quality of instruction by raising standards for teacher quality in the Higher Education Act last year. I believe that we must take the same approach in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act—raising standards and achieving greater accountability for our teachers, for our schools, and for our students.

Senator Bingaman, a Democrat from New Mexico, serves on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee.

The Importance of Professional Development for Teachers

Senator Jack Reed



Well-trained and well-prepared teachers are central to improving the academic performance and achievement of students.

Last Congress, we worked to reform the way our prospective teachers are trained. I was pleased that legislation I introduced to foster partnerships among teacher colleges, schools of arts and sciences, and elementary and secondary schools—a key recommendation of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future—was included in the renewed teacher training title of the Higher Education Act Amendments of 1998.

As Congress turns to the upcoming reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the focus shifts to new teachers and teachers already in the classroom.

Too often the professional development available to our teachers consists of fragmented, one-shot workshops, at which teachers passively listen to experts and are detached from the practice of teaching. Research shows that such professional development fails to improve or even impact teaching practice.

With participation in professional development typically lasting a day or less, it is no wonder that only one in five teachers feels well-prepared to address the needs of students with limited English proficiency, culturally diverse backgrounds, or disabilities, or how to integrate educational technology into the curriculum.

Research shows that effective professional development approaches are sustained, intensive activities that focus on deepening teachers' knowledge of content and allow teachers to work collaboratively. At the same time, a truly successful professional development system must also provide opportunities for teachers to practice and reflect upon their teaching; be aligned

with standards and embedded in the daily work of the school; and involve parents and other community members. This is the professional development that improves student achievement.

A 1998 study in California found that students of teachers who were frequently engaged in ongoing, curriculum-centered professional development achieved higher in mathematics on the state's assessment. And the investment in sustained, intensive professional development in places like Community School District 2 in New York City has paid off with similar gains in student achievement.

Unfortunately, a recent national evaluation of the Eisenhower Professional Development program found that the majority of professional development activities in the six diverse districts studied did not follow such a sustained and intensive approach.

I introduced legislation earlier this year to create a new formula program for professional development that is sustained, collaborative, content-centered, embedded in the daily work of the school, and aligned with standards and school reform efforts.

To achieve this enhanced professional development, S. 1442, the Professional Development Reform Act, funds the following activities: mentoring; curriculum-based content training; dedicated time for collaborative lesson planning; opportunities for teachers to visit other classrooms to model effective teaching practices; training on integrating technology into the curriculum, addressing specific needs of diverse students, and involving parents; and release time and compensation for mentors and substitute teachers to make these activities possible.

The Professional Development Reform Act also requires partnerships between elementary

and secondary schools and institutions of higher education that provide training opportunities, including advanced content area courses and training, to address teacher shortages. In fact, U.S. Department of Education data show that the Eisenhower Professional Development activities sponsored by institutions of higher education are most effective.

The legislation will also provide funding for skills and leadership training for principals and superintendents, as well as mentors. Ensuring that our principals have the training and support to serve as instructional leaders is critical, as is ensuring that mentors have the skills necessary to help our newest teachers and other teachers who need assistance in the classroom.

Funding is targeted to Title I schools with the highest percentages of students living in poverty, where improvements in professional development are needed most.

The legislation does not eliminate the Eisenhower program, but it does require that Eisenhower and other federal, state, and local professional development funds be coordinated and used in the manner described in our bill—on professional development activities that research shows work. Strong accountability provisions require that school districts and schools which receive funding actually improve student performance and increase participation in sustained

professional development in three years in order to secure additional funding.

The Professional Development Reform Act seeks to ensure that new teachers have the support they need to be successful teachers, that all teachers have access to high-quality professional development regardless of the content areas they teach, and that professional development systems do not isolate teachers, but rather make up part of a coordinated and comprehensive strategy aligned with standards.

The time for action is now. Schools must hire an estimated 2.2 million new teachers over the next decade due to increasing enrollments, the retirement of approximately half our current teaching force, and high attrition rates.

Ensuring that teachers have the training, assistance, and support to increase student achievement and sustain them throughout their careers is a great challenge. My efforts throughout the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act will focus on meeting this challenge so that we can reform education and prepare our children for the twenty-first century.

Senator Reed, a Democrat from Rhode Island, serves on the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

Meeting America's Teacher Quality Challenge

by Terry Dozier, Senior Advisor on Teaching, U.S. Department of Education



Until his untimely death, John Stanford, the beloved superintendent of the Seattle Public Schools, was fond of reminding his community that “the victory is in the classroom.” As a former Army general, he understood that the highest standards, the strongest accountability measures, the latest technology, and the most beautiful facilities will do little good without talented, dedicated, and well-prepared teachers.

But if we are to win this victory, we must confront many national challenges. Challenges in quantity loom as schools across the nation face teacher shortages caused by increasing enrollments and accelerated retirements. These concerns about quantity in turn affect issues of quality, and many school districts, given shortages of qualified teachers, hire individuals without sufficient knowledge and skills. We also face equity issues. Students in high-poverty areas—those who need the best teachers—often are taught by those who are least qualified.

New education goals and tougher standards, more rigorous assessments, increasingly diverse student bodies, greater interest in parental involvement, and expanded use of technology increase the knowledge and skills that teaching demands. These challenges are compounded by deficiencies in teacher preparation, licensure, and professional development. Often, there is too little collaboration among teacher preparation programs, colleges of arts and sciences, and the school districts they serve. Many state licensure and certification systems are built upon low expectations, limited accountability, and a lack of responsibility for the quality of teacher preparation. Once teachers are prepared and licensed, they rarely have ongoing access to high-quality professional development experiences that help

them to respond to the changing needs of today's classrooms.

Although these challenges are daunting, the demographic changes in America's teaching force and the public's demand for improved schools provide a historic opportunity for making dramatic improvements in the ways we recruit, prepare, license, and provide ongoing support for teachers. Through a combination of incentives, accountability measures, and proactive leadership, the federal government has developed a comprehensive approach to improving teaching in America.

In 1998 Congress and the Clinton administration joined forces during the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act to create three new competitive Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant Programs—state, partnership, and teacher recruitment grants.

State grants support systemic policy and practice changes. For example, many states are using these grants to strengthen their licensure and certification standards and to establish rigorous alternative pathways into teaching.

Partnership grants support the collaborative work of teacher preparation programs, colleges of arts and sciences, and high-need school districts to reform teacher preparation comprehensively. The partnerships focus program redesign on improving prospective teachers' academic content knowledge, providing extensive clinical experiences that prepare teachers for today's classrooms, and supporting new teachers as they begin their careers. The U.S. Department of Education also offers *Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology* grants to build capacity at teacher preparation institutions to prepare future teachers to use technology as a tool for teaching and learning.

The teacher recruitment grant program provides grants to states and partnerships to attract strong new students to the profession. Through financial assistance to students, critical academic and student-support services, and effective induction support, grantees help to alleviate teacher shortages in high-need schools.

Incentives that encourage necessary policy and practice innovations are important, but they must be coupled with a means of ensuring accountability for progress. New accountability measures in the Higher Education Act, which require states and teacher preparation programs to produce annual report cards on the quality of teacher preparation and licensure, will help provide a means of measuring our success in improving the “front end” of teacher development. As another way of measuring the nation’s progress, the department also issued its first biennial report on teacher quality in January 1999, focused on teachers’ qualifications, ongoing learning opportunities, and the environments in which they work.

The department promotes rigorous standards for all teachers through support for the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. By defining standards of excellence for experienced teachers, the National Board helps to recognize outstanding teachers and to keep them in the classroom. As the National Board completes its assessment work, federal funding will increasingly enable more teachers to undertake board certification.

The National Board is part of the department’s effort to ensure that teachers have meaningful opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills, since the board’s standards help schools to focus and improve their professional development. The department is also working to make federal programs such as the Eisenhower

Professional Development Program more accountable for results and to emphasize the need to link professional development with improved student learning through the National Awards Program for Model Professional Development. This program helps schools to learn about models of professional development that increase student achievement through sustained, intensive, collaborative, and content-focused strategies.

While continuing to pursue its more traditional role of supporting research, development, and dissemination, under Secretary Richard Riley’s proactive leadership the department has launched a national campaign aimed at engaging national, state, and local leaders in improving the quality of teaching in America. The secretary has used two major policy addresses—his annual Back to School Address and the State of American Education Address—to outline an action agenda and to challenge higher education, state, and local leaders to make comprehensive changes in our teacher development system. He has also hosted a series of nationwide conferences, starting with the Presidents’ Summit on Teacher Quality, at which college and university presidents discussed their role in improving the quality of teacher education in America.

John Stanford was right. The victory *is* in the classroom. By working as partners at the federal, state, and local levels, we can win that victory and ensure that every child has a talented, dedicated, and well-prepared teacher.

The U.S. Department of Education was established in 1980 to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence for all Americans. Richard W. Riley currently serves as secretary of the department.

Consideration of Federal and State Education Policies to Address Teacher Preparation and Professional Development

by Penelope M. Earley, Vice President
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)



Context

Examination of government efforts to stimulate high-quality teacher preparation and professional development should not be carried out in a policy vacuum. It is important to review the federal commitment to teacher education over time and to consider what policy levers are employed at various levels of government. Federal interest in teacher education has been modest and limited, for the most part, to small teacher-recruitment programs in times of personnel shortages or to adding a nominal teacher education component to large elementary-secondary programs as a strategy to help fulfill a broader educational purpose. The long-term investments in education reform and enhancement that characterize federal activity in elementary and secondary education have not been considered for teacher education.

Although arguably less powerful than the federal government in most arenas, state authorities wield a “big stick” in regard to teacher education. State governments influence curriculum through their authority to approve teacher preparation programs and influence educator qualifications through licensure regulations. In most cases such authority is vested in each state’s executive branch through its K-12 or higher education agencies or professional standards and practices boards.

In the late 1990s the traditional roles of federal and state governments began to shift. Legislators considered requiring certain majors or fields of study for future teachers, and in 1998 new legislation gave the federal government additional teacher education oversight responsibilities (HEA, Title II, Sec. 207). At the same time a number of state legislatures assumed more active roles in mandating curricular, clinical, and structural components of teacher preparation pro-

grams. In Colorado, Florida, Idaho, and Oklahoma, mandated changes were accompanied by new requirements for performance-based assessments. Although vetoed by the governor, legislation in New Mexico would have specifically defined course work required of teacher candidates. These efforts were pursued under the broad rubric of making the teacher education system more accountable.

Teacher education programs must balance the expectations of many powerful entities: the colleges or universities in which the programs are housed; state and federal regulators; accrediting agencies; and school districts that will hire their graduates. Thus when one or more of these units move to alter their demands on teacher education, a collision of anticipations may occur. Consideration of IDEA '97, Class Size Reduction, and the 1998 Amendments to the Higher Education Act illustrates the dilemma of contrary policy assumptions.

IDEA, Class Size, and HEA

In 1997 the Congress enacted and President Clinton signed amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The foundation of this massive federal program anticipated that new special education teachers would be prepared to work with children who have disabilities and that all teachers would be equipped to work with special-needs children in regular classroom settings. The sponsors of IDEA '97 expected that the teacher preparation system would adjust itself to prepare more special education personnel and include additional course work in special education for all teachers. IDEA was not the only federal program to presume qualified teachers would be available. Early in his second term President Clinton announced as a

policy goal reducing class size, primarily in the elementary grades. The strategy to achieve this goal was funding school districts to hire additional personnel, believing that market forces would provide the needed educators. The 1998 amendments to the Higher Education Act added an additional policy dimension: new reporting mandates for states and institutions of higher education. This included requiring colleges and universities that prepare teachers to report scores of their students on all licensure exams and then ranking institutions according to the percentage of students who pass such exams in a given year.

Expectations undergirding these major federal policy initiatives created unforeseen dilemmas within the teacher education system. Policymakers who enacted the higher education amendments hoped that program rankings would lead to requiring an academic major, or equivalent, of all potential teachers. Yet that outcome may not contribute to the need for more elementary and special education teachers. According to the Educational Testing Service, students preparing to be special education or elementary education teachers have more difficulty passing certain standardized examinations than students in secondary education programs. Thus, a college administrator, fearful of a low institutional ranking, might reduce or curtail programs in which students have not performed well on state licensure exams. In addition, when considering revisions to the teacher education curriculum, college presidents may call for additional liberal arts course work for future teachers instead of preparation to work with children classified as having special needs. These actions, which respond to one policy concern, may actually exacerbate problems targeted by IDEA and class-size reduction.

What Can Government Do?

AACTE believes that as governments consider their responsibilities as public stewards of the education system, including the preparation of teachers, they should attend to four principles:

The well-being of children must be government's top priority. As proposals to refine and revise existing education laws are debated, the primary issue must be: How will these programs improve children's learning, their experiences in schools, and their chances for successful and productive lives? To that end, consideration should

be given to ways in which education, health, welfare, public safety, child nutrition, and similar programs can be revised and amended to create a comprehensive and efficient system of services for children and youth in need. At the federal level, it is essential that true and accurate data on the need for teachers now and in the future be gathered by region, teaching field, and level.

Achieving efficiency through shared responsibility. Consideration must be given to how any education legislation will be used to improve the entire P-16 education system. By removing artificial separations between what are considered K-12 and higher education authorities, governments can more effectively create change in the system and achieve a more efficient use of public funds.

Consideration of appropriate level of responsibility. Governance and administration of the United States' education system is delicately balanced between levels of government. It is essential that federal lawmakers be vigilant in ensuring that the rights of children, youth, and their parents are not abridged. It is equally important that matters of implementing and administering government programs be handled by lower units of government. There is a fine line between appropriate federal oversight and micromanaging what can and should be done by states, districts, and schools.

Accountability and authority must be aligned. It is imperative that recipients of government funds be accountable for how public resources are used. However, accountability should be designed as a process to motivate and improve performance of all parties involved in the education system, rather than as a procedure to administer sanctions to a few. Such a process must define lines of responsibility and mutual obligation clearly and take into consideration whether achievement of expectations is an individual responsibility, a collective responsibility, or both. In addition, the process must rely on multiple measures and indicators of success.

AACTE, located in Washington, D.C., is a national, voluntary association of colleges and universities with undergraduate or graduate programs to prepare professional educators.

Addressing Teacher Quality

by Diane C. Hampton, Legislative Analyst, American Council on Education (ACE)



Addressing teacher quality has become a hot-button issue in the public policy arena. Members of Congress, educators, and the general public have raised concerns about unqualified teachers in our nation's schools. The American Council on Education (ACE)—the umbrella association in the higher education community—has been involved in this debate on three fronts: legislative, regulatory, and research.

Legislative Issues

As a result of congressional concerns, the Higher Education Act amendments of 1998 (HEA) used a “carrot and stick” approach to improving teacher quality—by establishing a new grant program and requiring more accountability. The new Title II of HEA provides a single authorization for three separate grant programs focusing on improving teacher quality and recruiting highly qualified teachers. Grant recipients will be subject to strong accountability measures to ensure that funds are being effectively used to improve student achievement and improve teacher quality.

In fiscal year 1999, the first year of this program, grants were awarded to:

- twenty-four states to reform teacher certification requirements, expand alternative routes to teacher certification, and promote performance-based compensation for teachers;
- twenty-five partnerships between institutions of higher education and high-need local education agencies to improve accountability of teacher preparation programs and provide clinical experience and ongoing professional development for new and experienced teachers; and
- twenty-eight proposals specifically focusing on recruiting highly qualified teachers.

ACE has collaborated with other higher education associations to develop legislative proposals related to teacher preparation and will continue to do so. Since the enactment of HEA, the higher education community has been advocating companion legislation in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). We feel strongly that the key to improving teacher quality lies in developing a seamless continuum that includes teacher preparation, induction and mentoring, and ongoing professional development. The partnerships established in HEA should be carried throughout ESEA to ensure that the higher education and elementary and secondary communities are working toward this common goal.

Regulatory Activity

In the regulatory arena, HEA mandated that institutions of higher education report pass rates of their graduates on teacher licensure assessments. States, as well as colleges and universities, are to supply data to the Secretary of Education in an annual report card on teacher preparation. To accomplish this, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) was directed to form a consultative committee of advisers to develop definitions and a uniform methodology. ACE and the higher education community recognize and support the need for colleges to be held accountable for the quality of the teachers they prepare, but the complex and confusing guidelines NCES drafted to implement the law will not achieve that end. Their complexity will focus energy and attention on meeting federal record-keeping requirements rather than on improving teacher preparation.

ACE actively participated in the consultative committee discussions about how to design a sys-

tem that would produce meaningful data while not imposing an undue burden on colleges and universities, and ACE continues to offer comments to NCES as the guidelines are being revised. A key concern is that colleges must be given an opportunity to verify that test takers who claim to have graduated from an institution actually completed that school's teacher education program. Given the public attention that accompanies any ranking, having the ability to confirm the underlying data is essential.

Research

In response to the growing importance and urgency placed on improving teacher preparation, ACE in December 1998 convened a task force of thirty-five college and university presidents, heads of higher education associations, chief academic officers, deans, and representatives from school systems. The group had as its charge the compilation of a national report for fellow educators and policymakers which would provide an action agenda of promising steps that could be taken to improve teacher quality.

The report, *To Touch the Future: Transforming the Way Teachers Are Taught*, released in October 1999, concluded that the quality of the teacher is the key to improved student performance irrespective of any other factors. The need for an estimated 2.5 million teachers over the next decade presents both a challenge and an opportunity, the report states. It criticizes the employment practices of school boards in placing unqualified teachers in classrooms, especially in math and science. The report found that beginning teacher salaries compare poorly with salaries offered in other occupations, thereby limiting the ability to attract the best and the brightest to teaching careers.

The recommendations of the task force focused primarily on what colleges and universities should do to strengthen the nation's teaching force. Among the recommendations, the report urges college and university presidents to:

- Place teacher education higher on the institution's agenda and accept the challenge and responsibility to lead constructive change.

- Clarify the role of teacher education vis-à-vis the institutional mission. The preparation of teachers should be central to the institution's mission or the program should be abolished.
- Mandate a comprehensive campus-wide review of the quality of the teacher education program.
- Require that the curriculum and faculty of the teacher education program be coordinated with the arts and sciences faculty and courses.
- Ensure that the teacher education program has adequate equipment, facilities, and personnel to educate future teachers in the uses of technology.
- Ensure that beginning teachers are supported, monitored, and mentored through well-designed induction programs and ongoing professional development opportunities.

The report urges higher education institutions to take an active role in elevating the importance of teacher preparation and assessing the quality of these programs with an eye toward reforms where necessary.

ACE and other higher education associations have been heeding that call. Our effort to develop legislative proposals related to teacher education in the HEA legislation was the first step. Our next steps will be to revise the ESEA legislation to ensure the continuation of K-12/higher education partnerships, and to help the NCES design guidelines on how to collect and report teacher-candidate pass rates that produce meaningful data. Through these efforts, colleges and universities will play a major role in improving the quality of teaching in our nation's schools.

The American Council on Education, located in Washington, D.C., is a coordinating higher education association that includes 1,800 accredited, degree-granting colleges and universities from all sectors of higher education and other education and education-related organizations.

Addressing Teacher Quality

by Gerald E. Srouf, Director of Government Relations
for the American Educational Research Association



The good news regarding professional development of teachers at the beginning of the new century is that it is prominent in the minds of every state and local policymaker, including university presidents, chief state school officers, and heads of teacher education associations. This is also the bad news, for too often the instinctive response of politicians inside and outside education to any salient issue is to propose a vigorous “feels-good, sounds-good” strategy for fixing the problem. However, the prevalence of concern about teacher education should serve to bring researchers, teachers, and others concerned with teacher education programs on a day-to-day basis even closer together, for the proper response to almost every politically based proclamation about professional development of teachers by both groups should be “Wait, it’s not that simple.”

Many members of the American Educational Research Association work exclusively on issues of professional development, and even more work on issues closely related to teaching and learning in school settings. As a membership organization, the association is cautious in developing positions regarding professional development strategies or contemporary efforts at improving the quality of teachers and teaching (e.g., the standards movement, or accountability for schools of education). However, the work of most members of the association is in keeping with its commitment to achieve as complete an understanding of education phenomena as possible, and to work to encourage development of policies that take into account a hard-won understanding of the complexity of the teaching and learning processes.

Some Examples of the Complexity Problem

Edward Morris (*Consilience*, 1999) has declared that the social sciences, including edu-

cation, should be considered the “hard sciences” because they are “hypercomplex” and inherently more difficult than physics or chemistry. Although some advances may be made by applying productivity models developed in industry to education, one must be constantly aware of the greater complexity of education issues. Every teacher reading this piece will be able to provide a list of problems, created or unforeseen, that stemmed from local, state, or federally mandated policies regarding teaching. Here are two recent examples of policy expectations that appear to fall short of full understanding of complex education phenomena.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Differentiating between the elite and the mass of teachers has long been regarded as necessary to achieve a measure of professionalism—especially with regard to salary and prestige—and NBPTS is a vehicle for achieving this goal, among others. The objectives of NBPTS have necessarily changed a bit over time, and currently include the idea that the “board certified” teachers will be change agents in their schools and lead a general reform of teaching from within. One must admire the dedication and competence of those who achieve this level of certification, and applaud the existence of this opportunity for teachers of high aspiration. However, schools themselves are complex organizations that often reject or neutralize change agents, and it is unlikely that 2,000 or 20,000 teachers whose skills have been recognized and rewarded are going to have much greater impact on their schools than they had prior to achieving this recognition. We have almost continuously experienced major efforts to achieve education reform through the introduction of change agents in the schools, and because

of our failure to account for the political and social organization of schools, the results have generally been disappointing.

Teacher Accountability. The publication *Education Week* has reported on the degree of seriousness of the various states in holding teachers responsible for student achievement (*Rewarding Results, Punishing Failure*, 1999). At a press conference releasing the report, it was noted that teachers were much less enthusiastic about such measures than the general public, but time did not permit an explanation about why this might be the case. An understanding of the complexity of schools and schooling would have clarified the situation readily. Teachers are being asked to be accountable for variables over which they have no control: the previous educational experiences of the children, student mobility, school resources and organization, and the experiences of children in their families and neighborhoods. Provided with a fuller understanding of the actual context of teaching, fewer of the governors would be as unquestioning in their acceptance of the kind of straight-line connection between teacher preparation and student achievement that underlies many accountability proposals.

Some Thoughtful New Directions

Teachers and educators will be interested in several recent reports intended to help policymakers think about teaching and professional development in a more systemic and comprehensive manner.

1. A National Research Council report, *Testing, Teaching, and Learning* (1999), seeks to modify the ubiquitous standards-and-assessment change model by highlighting the importance of professional development and improved teaching in making this model work. Although it is discouraging that this obvious component has been missing for so long in the standards movement, the report's recommendation that state and local school districts ask about professional development needs and teaching resources as they consider new content and achievement standards is a welcome recognition of the complexity of education reform.
2. A report by the National Academy of Education, *Recommendations Regarding Research Priorities* (1999), provides justifica-

tion for research priorities that relate directly to professional development and reflect a concern for complexity. One of the report's central recommendations is for research on teacher professional development, which encompasses the effect of teacher skills on student learning, contextual factors in teaching, impact of professional development, and teaching across an individual's professional life span. Clearly, it will be difficult to formulate sound policies regarding professional development without additional understanding of these critical areas of the teaching experience.

3. The National Research Council also issued a report, *Improved Student Learning* (1999), that explores a number of areas with potential for achieving student achievement. The report concluded with a recommendation to study ways of increasing student motivation and engagement in learning. Clearly, student engagement is an important topic for researchers, teachers, and professional development programs, even though it falls outside the customary band of policymaker concerns regarding professional development issues.

Teachers, Teacher Educators, and Professional Development

Teachers and researchers certainly can't be faulted for responding to each new wave of state and federal policy proposals by sharing rich examples of policy naiveté with their colleagues. But such commiseration surely won't improve the situation. Educators and researchers, on their own and through their professional associations, must take responsibility for calling the full range of complexity regarding professional development issues to the attention of policymakers. Education policy, while often underinformed, is seldom intentionally bad. It is the responsibility of those who have the benefit of experience, insight, and research to share it with policymakers.

The American Educational Research Association, headquartered in Washington, D.C., is a membership organization of 23,000 individuals who collectively do research about every aspect of education.

Federal and State Teacher Quality Initiatives: American Federation of Teachers' Perspective



Teacher quality—a major focus at the AFT—has become a central policy issue at the federal and state level, and none too soon. Research has demonstrated just how essential competent teachers are to student learning. In this age of accountability for students, teachers, schools, and the entire education community, it is time that we have policies which support the development of excellent teachers for all children. The federal and, more extensively, state governments play several crucial roles in ensuring teacher quality. These roles include providing funds for innovative practices, targeting moneys to schools that teach children at risk, and monitoring and evaluating policy initiatives to ensure that they are implemented and effective.

Federal and state policies address issues along the entire teacher development pipeline—from recruitment, to teacher preparation and licensure, through induction, professional development, and support for certification of exemplary teachers.

Both the federal and state governments play roles in recruitment. The federal government has developed incentive programs to assist paraprofessionals to become teachers and to forgive the loans of college students who agree to teach in underserved areas and/or shortage-affected areas (e.g., science, math, special education). Vice President Al Gore has proposed a plan to support the deployment of well-prepared teachers to high-poverty areas. The AFT supports this initiative. While many districts have begun to provide signing bonuses and other incentives (e.g., low mortgage rates, moving expenses) for new teachers, Massachusetts is the first state to provide a bonus to new teachers who agree to serve in high-poverty areas. Gov. Gray Davis (D-Calif.) has proposed a \$20,000 bonus for any National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) cer-

tified teacher who agrees to teach in a school designated as “low performing.” The AFT applauds these measures and believes states can go further in developing financial incentives to encourage qualified teachers to teach in rural and inner-city schools as well as shortage-affected fields.

States can do more. They must work out reciprocity agreements so that individuals trained in a state that has surplus qualified teachers can practice in another where there are shortages. States must amend their laws to encourage retired teachers or those on leave to teach part-time, and develop other job-sharing initiatives. And they must develop a twenty-first century hiring system. Only twenty-seven states have Web sites indicating where jobs are available, and only a few districts take applications electronically. States must provide funds for districts to modernize their hiring procedures.

Federal policy has also recognized the need for high-quality teacher preparation programs nationally. The Higher Education Act created funds for the development of innovative teacher education programs, especially those that work with districts to ensure that teacher education is connected to the reality of today’s classrooms. That act also encouraged high standards for teacher licensure and monitoring the effectiveness of state teacher preparation programs. The AFT supports these efforts and believes that states can go further in improving teacher preparation by:

- raising the standards for admission to teacher education; requiring rigorous liberal arts and science course work and a major in a discipline for all teacher candidates regardless of the level (elementary, middle, or high school) they wish to teach;
- instituting rigorous teacher licensing examinations;

- developing alternative certification programs that require nontraditional candidates to take the same tests as traditional candidates before they enter the classroom; and
- eliminating emergency credentials.

Some might argue that higher standards will discourage candidates. What discourages people from entering teaching are low salaries and poor working conditions. Teachers historically have been underpaid. Considering their education and responsibilities, teachers' salaries are not competitive in today's marketplace. Their average starting salary is lower than that of college graduates in any other profession.¹ Teachers are paid less than other college graduates with comparable literacy levels,² and most significantly the earnings gap widens as they attain more education. State policymakers must address these disparities if they are serious about recruiting and maintaining a quality teaching force.

States must do more to develop meaningful induction programs—programs that provide time for beginning teachers to observe and learn from expert teachers and that identify, train, and compensate outstanding mentor teachers. Research has indicated that induction programs for new teachers are not only crucial for improving their skills, but also important in retaining good teachers. Twenty percent of new teachers—and more than 50 percent of beginning teachers in inner-city schools—leave teaching within the first five years. This is unacceptable. Yet only twenty-eight states have induction programs, only nineteen make such programs mandatory, and a mere ten provide funds to local districts for this purpose.

The federal government has some excellent programs to fund professional development.³ Professional development is essential, given the needs of teachers to learn the skills necessary to help all students meet high standards. Access to research-based information on what works is critical, particularly in relation to knowledge about teaching reading.⁴ If children enter fourth grade unable to read, their educational progress is stymied, and the likelihood that they will succeed in life is greatly diminished.

States must do more to support standards-based professional development. Our members tell us they are in favor of high standards for all children, but they are not as prepared as they

need to be to deliver such instruction. They need help and they want help. States are in the position to do just that, but professional development for today's teachers is often underfunded and ineffective. States need to make sure that those who provide professional development have the information and expertise that teachers need. California and Utah have developed systems of certifying professional development providers; more states should follow suit.

In addition, too many states give teachers credit for continuing education (master's degrees and the like) without considering how such education contributes to their teaching. Policies should be implemented that more closely link credit for learning to the field for which the teacher is licensed. In addition, given shortages and the unhealthy practice of "out-of-field" assignment, states must develop incentives for teachers to earn additional licenses in shortage-affected fields and/or develop the deeper subject-matter knowledge and instructional skills required in standards-based teaching and learning.

Both the federal government and the states provide support for teachers who pursue NBPTS certification. This is an excellent investment, and we hope to see additional state activity in this realm. Twenty-four states currently provide incentives, ranging from support for the NBPTS fee, to professional development support for undergoing the rigorous process of certification, to bonuses and salary awards for those achieving certification, to license reciprocity for NBPTS teachers.

The federal government and the states must continue, and expand, their efforts to improve teacher quality. Policies that encourage people to enter teaching and support their continued professional growth through induction programs, meaningful standards-based professional development, and rewards and incentives for acquiring new skills and knowledge are invaluable if our nation is to have a first-class educational system.

Notes

1. AFT Salary Study. Research Department, Washington, D.C.: 1999.
2. Coley, R., and Barton, P. (1999) *How teachers compare: the prose, document and quantitative skills of America's Teachers*. Educational Testing Service: Princeton, N.J.
3. For example, Goals 2000, Title I and Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title II of the Higher Education Act, and the Reading Excellence Act.
4. The Reading Excellence Act provides funds for such professional development.

Policies for Teacher Improvement

by Mari A. Pearlman, Vice President of the Division of Teaching and Learning, and
Drew H. Gitomer, Vice President for Research, Educational Testing Service (ETS)



Increasingly, high-quality teaching is viewed as the linchpin of meaningful educational improvement. Currently there are significant efforts at the federal and state levels to improve the quality of teaching in the United States by regulating and monitoring teacher licensing more strictly. In the licensing arena, one of the most popular and seemingly sensible strategies is simply for states to raise, sometimes dramatically, the level of the passing score on licensing tests. What is the likelihood that this kind of effort will, in fact, improve the overall quality of the teaching force in any given state or in the United States as a whole?

A recent ETS study of the academic qualifications of prospective teachers found that raising the passing standards in individual states would, indeed, raise the overall quality of those teachers who are granted licenses. In cases in which the supply of available prospective teachers exceeds the number of teaching jobs, this strategy will yield a stronger overall pool of prospective teachers. However, raising passing standards sharply reduces the total number of licensed teachers, with particularly severe effects on the diversity of the teaching force.

In cases in which there are fewer prospective teachers than there are available teachers—a reality in many of the nation's most populous states—raising the passing standards on licensing tests can adversely affect the overall quality of the pool of people who actually become teachers in those classrooms. Those licensed will indeed be among the academically elite in this population. However, all the jobs will be filled in one way or another, particularly in locations in which measures such as class-size reduction legislation have increased the number of available jobs dramatically. We already have seen the reality that many of those in this pool will be unlicensed teachers,

having met no requirements for the license because they are hired on emergency credentials.

Remember too that the teacher labor market is further stratified by both geography and specialization in terms of age of children taught and subject matter. Thus, even in a state with a limited number of available teaching positions and a pool of prospective teachers larger than the total number of positions, there could be severe shortages in particular subject areas or geographical locations.

So what more must be done to complement raising licensing standards as a means of enhancing teacher quality? A place to start would be adherence to some basic principles of economics. If we want teaching to compete for talented individuals on an equal basis with other learned professions—law, medicine, architecture, engineering—then the total compensation package, the working conditions, and the terms and conditions of employment must also be competitive. This means that the structure of salaries, benefits, and working conditions would need to be revamped.

Second, it is essential to recognize the dynamics of the labor market that affect the supply and the quality of prospective teachers. Unlike the situation in most other labor markets in the United States economy, there is no differential compensation in teaching for skills that are much needed and scarce in the available pool. Furthermore, there is no incentive compensation to encourage individuals to take jobs in locations and specialty areas experiencing severe shortages. This suggests that attracting mathematics, science, and special education teachers may require salary incentives. Furthermore, it suggests that teachers willing to teach in sparsely populated rural areas or in high-poverty urban districts would receive financial incentives.

Third, some attention must be paid to making teaching a dynamic career, with opportunities for career and personal growth. Today, a teacher with thirty years of service is likely to be doing exactly what a teacher with five years of service is doing in the next classroom. Certainly, a career ladder that encourages and rewards growth in experience and expertise by offering positions of leadership, peer development, mentoring, and the like would be more attractive than the status quo.

These potential interventions speak to ways of improving the likelihood that students of high ability will want to become teachers and successfully weather a rigorous licensing process to do so. They do not address the more fundamental issue of the efficacy of these able new teachers in boosting student achievement. In the past five years, almost every state has adopted rigorous standards for student learning from K-12 and across the curriculum. This current state commitment to student learning standards cannot, in itself, change student achievement. Articulating standards for student learning is only the first step in establishing accountability for both teachers and students. If the standards are to be meaningful guideposts for student learning, then teachers must be prepared to teach to the standards, and both teacher education and K-12 curricula must be aligned with the standards. Currently, ETS is redeveloping its Praxis™ series of licensing tests for beginning teachers in light of the past decade of national standards development. A fundamental part of that redevelopment is an analysis of standards that supports alignment between the testing domain and K-12 student standards. Teachers must also develop assessment practices that support student learning and com-

municate student progress against the standards. In our view, most school contexts today are not conducive to standards-based instructional practice, which demands that teachers understand the fundamentals of good assessment practices and use those practices to shape instructional decisions.

Improved assessment practices that are aligned with standards would provide the single most important change in school accountability throughout the United States today. Accountability means far more than the standardized test battery, administered to students once a year, even if such tests are aligned with the articulated standards. In a fully realized accountability system, the standards need to become the driving force behind curriculum and instructional development, formal and informal assessment practices, student progress reports, reports of assessment outcomes, school improvement goals, and evaluations of teachers and programs. Sound standards-based assessment practices both articulate learning goals and inform students, teachers, parents, and policymakers how students are progressing toward those goals. With clear goals and monitoring of achievement toward those goals, all in the hands of well-trained professionals, it should be possible to achieve the kinds of improvements in educational performance that are needed so desperately.

The Educational Testing Service, located in Princeton, New Jersey, is a private institution that develops educational assessments and conducts educational research.

How to Get Better Teachers: A Commonsense Approach

by Marci Kanstoroom, Research Director, Thomas B. Fordham Foundation



How to boost teacher quality is a hotly contested topic in American education. The present focus on teacher quality arises from mounting awareness that too few of today's teachers—and perhaps even fewer of tomorrow's—are well-prepared for the challenges they face.

While America is blessed with many fine teachers, we don't have enough of them, a problem that is more acute in some subjects and regions than others. We are not attracting enough of the best and the brightest to teaching, and not retaining enough of the best of those that we attract.

There is agreement about the *need* for an overhaul, and reasonable consensus about the nature and severity of the problem, but there is much less coherence when it comes to solutions. Nobody is absolutely certain how best to overhaul this vital domain, but two basic approaches have been offered to policymakers.

One, which we call the “conventional wisdom,” is most prominently associated with the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF). This approach has been embraced by a number of state officials and educators. Essentially a regulatory strategy that would restrict entry into the classroom, it relies heavily on inputs and peer judgments as sources of quality control.

The other, which we call the “commonsense approach,” was set forth in the April 1999 policy manifesto *The Teachers We Need and How to Get More of Them*, published by our foundation on behalf of a number of policymakers and education experts. It was elaborated in *Better Teachers, Better Schools*, a research volume we published in July. It is, essentially, a *deregulatory* strategy that opens entry into teaching and, for quality

control, relies primarily on student learning as evidence of teacher effectiveness.

We believe that the regulatory strategy is bankrupt. In fact, we contend that the shortcomings of the present teaching force are themselves caused or worsened by regulatory policies, particularly those policies pertaining to licensure and certification.

How does the regulatory strategy contribute to the difficulty of assembling a world-class teaching force? The regulatory strategy automatically focuses on “inputs” rather than results: on college courses taken, requirements met, time spent, credentials acquired, and activities engaged in rather than actual evidence of classroom effectiveness, particularly as gauged by student learning. Insofar as it even looks at results, it relies on subjective “peer” judgments—what other teachers, professors, and experts think of one's teaching—rather than objective measurement of a teacher's impact on her pupils.

The problem with this strategy is that all the input measures, from course requirements to passing scores on teacher tests, are poor proxies for the qualities of teachers that we really care about. Much research has sought to find the connection between teacher “input” qualities and the effectiveness of those teachers in actual classrooms. On balance, these studies indicate only a modest association between any measurable qualities of teachers and student performance.

The teacher characteristics that are most important are not the qualities honed in schools of education. A meta-analysis of sixty studies of the effect of various school resources on pupil achievement demonstrated that the verbal ability of teachers, not the degrees they had earned or training they had received, had the strongest effect on student learning. There is simply no evidence

that focusing on inputs, and in particular insisting that teachers receive extensive formal instruction in pedagogy before being allowed to teach, will contribute to improved student learning.

Why doesn't training in a school of education contribute more to teacher effectiveness? The research base of today's pedagogical knowledge is uneven, incomplete, highly disputed, and vulnerable to ideological and interest group manipulation. It is this lack of grounding of teaching methods in solid and consistent research that contributes to the rampant faddism often found in colleges of education. Some of the best-known ideas embraced and promulgated there—"whole language" instruction in reading, for example—have proved to be of dubious educational value, despite claims by their boosters that they are grounded in research. Thus it should not be surprising that training in pedagogy cannot be convincingly linked to effective teaching, if by effective teaching we mean the likelihood that student learning will follow.

State regulations governing teacher employment were meant to ensure that every child has a competent instructor. Today, however, they do not ensure quality, even as they interfere with hiring and retaining outstanding individuals.

Burdensome certification requirements discourage well-educated and eager candidates who might make great teachers but are deterred by the cost (in time and money) of completing an approved teacher education program. Since good teachers can be found in many places and educated in many ways, states should eliminate the hoops and hurdles that discourage good candidates from entering the classroom. Teacher hiring

should be deregulated, and key personnel decisions should be devolved to the school level. In return for this autonomy, schools should be held accountable for producing results.

Teachers, too, should be evaluated by the academic performance of their pupils. While good teachers do many other worthwhile things besides add to student learning, the surest measure—some would say the only true measure—of good teaching is student learning. The best way to gauge this is to use "value-added" measures that capture the gain in academic achievement brought about by particular teachers.

Rather than regulating inputs, deregulating entry into teaching, accompanied by accountability for school results, will be a surer way to provide quality control. States should empower principals and other school executives to hire, fire, and reward teachers as they see fit, and then hold them accountable for their schools' results. Instead of being told whom they may or may not hire, principals should be able to recruit and employ the ablest people they can find, just as private and charter schools do today. Deregulating the teaching profession in this way will not only expand the size but also raise the quality of the teaching profession.

The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation (no affiliation with Fordham University) is located in Washington, D.C. It supports research, publications, and action projects of national significance in elementary and secondary education reform, as well as education reform projects in Dayton, Ohio, and vicinity.

Quality Teachers—the Aim of the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC)



by Marilyn Scargall, President

The quality of teachers, teacher preparation programs, and teacher licensure systems is constantly being called into question. The public, education leaders, and national and state lawmakers are calling for higher teacher standards and greater accountability at all educational levels. NASDTEC recognizes, however, that simply raising standards for teachers (demanding more licensure examinations with higher passing scores, demanding more rigorous preparation programs, and increasing licensure requirements) is not the sole solution to ensuring the quality work force that the public demands and deserves. Increased expectations for teachers and other educational personnel are appropriate. At the same time, however, we must provide significant and long-lasting reforms to improve the status of the teaching profession.

Despite reports to the contrary, the country has a dedicated, talented, and committed teacher work force. That work force, however, is shrinking. As we work to improve the quality of teacher preparation and teacher performance, we will accomplish little if we further diminish an already-shrinking pool of teachers. While NASDTEC recognizes the need for reforms and has always advocated high standards, it also advocates well-planned, well-supported, and well-funded systemic reforms that ultimately result in increased student success and academic achievement. Such reform efforts must include initiatives to enhance the status of the profession, including much-improved salary structures and other financial incentives to recognize and reward talented educators.

During this period of increased attention to teacher quality reform initiatives, NASDTEC will provide leadership and guidance to its members and to the education community in several areas.

NASDTEC and Title II

Section 207 of Title II of the Higher Education Act requires annual report cards on the quality of teachers. The latest *Reference and Reporting Guide* reflects remarkable collaboration and understanding by the United States Department of Education (USDOE) and its contractor, the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES). Since 1998, when Congress enacted this legislation, NCES has been struggling with its charge to design the implementation process by which all states and all institutions that prepare teachers shall prepare report cards on the status of teacher preparation.

To facilitate its work, NCES established a consultative committee, composed of professional educators and policymakers. The three NASDTEC representatives on the committee played a key role in the preparation of the final document. The first *Reference and Reporting Guide*, which was released for public comment in July 1999, reflected NCES's unsuccessful attempts to create a one-size-fits-all reporting and accountability process. NCES's initial inability to fully comprehend the advice of the consultative committee, coupled with its simplistic view of teacher preparation and licensure across the United States, resulted in an incomprehensible, cumbersome, and labor-intensive reporting system that would surely produce inaccurate, misleading, and inappropriate data.

Many states, government agencies, and professional organizations, including NASDTEC, responded during the period of public comment and called for wholesale revisions of the reporting requirements. NCES and the USDOE listened. The *Reference and Reporting Guide* dated January 13, 2000, reflects a more thoughtful approach to obtaining the desired information.

Although a few reporting issues remain, NCES satisfactorily addressed the major concerns by revising the method of calculating pass rates; by permitting states to develop their own reporting forms and methods; and by permitting states to provide appendices to their reports to explain data and describe programs, policies, and characteristics unique to that state. Additionally, the USDOE's declaration that the reports will *not* be used for state-by-state comparisons is an essential compromise. Unfortunately, the process will still be labor-intensive.

NASDTEC and Protecting Children

NASDTEC has established the only nationwide Educator Identification Clearinghouse. The clearinghouse is an electronic system for sharing information among member jurisdictions about educators who have had their licenses denied, suspended, or revoked for cause. Through the clearinghouse and through sponsorship of the Professional Practices Institutes, NASDTEC has demonstrated its long-standing commitment to protecting children. NASDTEC will continue to urge national and state leaders to incorporate child-protection measures in "Teacher Quality" reform initiatives. Such measures should include mandatory background checks through fingerprint identification of all licensure applicants and school employees.

NASDTEC and Reciprocity

The Interstate Contract, which was established by NASDTEC in order to facilitate licensure for persons moving from one state or jurisdiction to another, has been an essential tool in assisting applicants to become licensed as they move

between states and jurisdictions. Additionally, it has been a time saver for licensure-certification staff members in the credential evaluation process. Often referred to as reciprocity, the contract permits ease of movement across state lines while still permitting states to implement certain licensure requirements that are deemed essential to that state—for example, licensure tests. NASDTEC's goal is to have all fifty states sign the 2000 contract.

The NASDTEC Manual

NASDTEC's *Manual on the Preparation and Certification of Educational Personnel*, first published in 1984, is the most comprehensive resource regarding teacher preparation and certification in the country. The 2000 edition of the manual is soon to be released. NASDTEC's executive board has called for a wholesale revision of the manual to make it even more user friendly, align it with the reporting requirements of Section 207 of Title II, and make certain sections available electronically.

NASDTEC welcomes the opportunity to be part of the continuing discussions about the quality of our teachers.

The National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) is one of the nation's leading organizations advocating a strong, high quality, and ethically fit teaching work force. NASDTEC membership is comprised of governmental agencies that have major responsibility for the preparation, certification/licensure, and discipline of teachers and other school personnel.

Quality Teaching Key to Education Reform

by Betty Castor, President

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)



The founding chair of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina, is fond of saying, “Every effort in education geared toward improved student learning depends on one thing to start with—a quality teacher.” We agree. And that is why the focus of our work at the National Board is concentrated on the heart of education—the teacher.

Studies increasingly show that excellent teachers can make a significant difference in the performance of their students. What teachers know and can do is the single most important influence on what students learn. To be effective, teachers must know their subject matter so thoroughly that they can present it in a challenging, clear, and compelling way. They must also know how their students develop and learn, and command a broad range of teaching strategies that make knowledge accessible to all.

Furthermore, the complexity of a teacher’s work occurs in schools that serve students more diverse—racially, culturally, and linguistically—than at any time in our nation’s history, placing an even greater importance on the need for talented, dedicated, well-prepared teachers in every classroom. Teaching is, indeed, the profession that is shaping our children’s education and therefore America’s future.

At the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, we believe that what teachers know and are able to do is of critical importance to all of us, as is the task of preparing and supporting the career-long development of teachers’ knowledge and skills. Moreover, we see creating a broad and sustained effort to improve teacher quality as a collaborative effort that includes everyone—from classroom teachers and parents, to teacher educators and university pres-

idents, to federal, state, and local policymakers. Indeed, we agree with the adage that education is a state responsibility, a local function, and a national concern.

We believe that teachers must continue to insist that their occupation become a true profession—one based on high and rigorous standards of accomplished practice and a means for members to hold themselves accountable to those standards. Equally important, it must become a profession that supports teachers by guaranteeing them access to the knowledge they need to help all students learn.

Second, we see the role of state and local leadership as crucial to improving teacher quality. Over the past decade of reform, policymakers in many states have undertaken comprehensive initiatives aimed at improving the quality of teaching. Notable among many statewide efforts are the policy reforms under way in North Carolina. Beginning in the early 1990s, this state coupled major statewide increases in teacher salaries with intensive recruitment efforts and initiatives to improve pre-service teacher education, licensing, beginning-teacher mentoring, and ongoing professional development. It introduced the most wide-ranging set of incentives in the nation for teachers to pursue National Board Certification and embedded the National Board’s standards in all of the state’s education initiatives.

Today, North Carolina students have posted some of the largest achievement gains in mathematics and reading of students in any state in the nation. They now score well above the national average in fourth-grade reading and mathematics—even though North Carolina entered the 1990s near the bottom of the state rankings. The state, whose 1,263 National Board Certified Teachers exceed any other state’s, recently

increased pay incentives for teachers who pursue master's degrees and National Board Certification.

North Carolina leaders are certainly not alone, however, in their comprehensive investment in teacher quality. Across the country, policymakers, teacher educators, and classroom teachers are beginning to put in place strategies that recognize that a teaching career is a continuum, not a series of disconnected steps to be stacked one on top of another. They are recognizing that a professional teaching career begins with recruitment, continues through preparation and initial licensing, and extends to lifelong professional development—and that every stage in this continuum must be rigorous and compatible with the other stages.

That is why the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards supports the policy recommendation of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future to create a continuum of teacher learning based on compatible standards that operate across the professional life of a teacher. These teaching standards can become the linchpin for transforming current state systems of teacher preparation, licensing, and certification. A new standards-based framework will help bring clarity and focus to a set of state policies and activities that are currently poorly connected and often badly organized.

National Board standards and certification have achieved unprecedented political and professional consensus. Our identification and articulation of what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do has been widely accept-

ed as a substantive framework for guiding the teaching profession. Our standards reflect a national consensus on the critical aspects of teaching that distinguish the practice of exemplary teachers in each field. And, most important, National Board standards cut to the core of education reform by focusing attention where it must be—in the classroom, with teachers and students.

Finally, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards believes that the ideal education policy is one that nurtures, recognizes, and deploys caring, dedicated, accomplished teachers in schools across America. Our goal, at a minimum and as soon as possible, is for every school in the nation to have at least one National Board Certified Teacher. Before long, every student should be taught by at least one such educator at some point in his or her educational career. And eventually, we envision a national network of accomplished teachers who will help us spread the dedication and commitment to excellence that our finest teachers have always possessed.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, headquartered in Southfield, Michigan, has established standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do and has developed and operated a national, voluntary system to assess and certify teachers who meet these standards.

Quality Teacher Preparation in the New Millennium

by Arthur E. Wise, President

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)



Two positions currently exist regarding current federal and state policy on teacher preparation. Members of the profession and many policymakers support the view that teachers need preparation—they must have adequate content preparation and sufficient clinical and professional education in how to teach that content effectively. In contrast, some scholars would allow those with bachelor's degrees into the classroom with no other training. Both views are supported in teacher policy development, creating a schizophrenic character in policy efforts and results.

At the federal level, Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.) led the charge for more accountability in teacher preparation when the Higher Education Act of 1998 was drafted. As a result, the Congress has taken a step forward. Institutions are now required to report teacher candidate pass rates on state licensing examinations. This information, not previously available in organized fashion for the general public, will be a factor in accreditation decisions in NCATE's new performance-based accreditation system for teacher preparation. States will use the information as one major indicator to help determine future teacher quality. States will be able to pinpoint institutions that need assistance or institutions that should close certain programs. In addition, market forces will go into effect once the information is released to the public on a broad basis.

Many state licensing examinations are now examinations of content knowledge. If candidates are deficient in content knowledge, then the focus will shift to the academic departments that provide instruction in the subject matter major, and thus the institution as a whole. Middle school and high school teacher candidates currently

spend the majority of their time in higher education in arts and sciences course work.

State licensing examinations that primarily test content knowledge are necessary, but not sufficient, indicators of a prospective teacher's ability to teach. Knowledge of content is certainly an important "screen" of candidate readiness, but by itself it does not include information about candidate performance in the classroom and ability to help students learn. Multiple performance measures should be used in addition to content-knowledge tests. NCATE-accredited schools of education are expected to ensure that candidates are competent in the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that make an effective teacher. NCATE 2000, NCATE's performance-based accreditation system, expects these performance measures to include candidates' effects on student learning.

Some states, such as Kentucky and Connecticut, are moving to performance-based licensing systems, but most are just beginning to develop this area. Time, effort, and resources should go into developing robust performance-based licensing systems in which not only candidate knowledge but also candidate skills and dispositions are assessed thoroughly and continually before granting a professional license to practice.

In addition, NCATE is working with the Educational Testing Service to ensure that the licensing examinations being given are aligned with the profession's standards. ETS is working with several NCATE constituent member organizations to gain feedback and information on the standards in the content areas so that tests can be revised where necessary to align with subject matter knowledge. This alignment between subject matter knowledge and testing is long overdue. Programs at accredited institutions are

expected to align their programs with the standards of the professional associations.

State policies will begin to focus more on the quality of licensing examinations, which are now in the spotlight. Cut scores will differ by state, and states will be grappling with this issue in the near future.

States have also focused on "alternate certification" as a way to ensure that there are enough teachers in the classroom. However, there is a growing awareness that emergency licensure has not raised student achievement levels. For the first time, a presidential administration has called for fully licensed teachers to teach our nation's children. Why? Research has demonstrated that teachers who are fully licensed are more effective teachers than those who are not fully licensed.

In May 1999, ETS released the results of an in-depth study on teacher qualifications, academic ability, and pass rates on teacher licensure examinations. ETS examined the PRAXIS II (content examination) scores of 270,000 test takers and correlated these with SAT/ACT scores of the candidates. Candidates in NCATE-accredited institutions passed the *content* examination in significantly higher numbers than those who had never enrolled in teacher preparation but presumably majored in a content area. Of those who took the examination, 91 percent graduating from NCATE-accredited institutions passed; 84 percent graduating from programs at unaccredited institutions passed, and 74 percent who had never attended a teacher preparation program at all passed the exam.

A 1996-97 study conducted at the University of Texas at Arlington's Charles A. Dana Center showed that Texas students perform better on state exams when their instructors are fully licensed in the subjects they teach. The passing rate for Hispanic third-graders on the 1997 Texas state assessment jumped from 58.7 percent to 67.5 percent when their teachers were fully licensed in their field. African-American students experienced similar results, as did the student population as a whole. Other data support this finding.

Clearly, were policy to follow research, all teachers would be fully licensed and well qualified for their positions. Administrators now face a problem every fall: hiring enough qualified teachers to fill every classroom. One solution would be the educational equivalent of a truth-in-labeling law. Only those who meet increasingly rigorous state requirements should be given the title "teacher." Others whom school districts must hire to fill vacant classes would be known by a lesser title. As more parents, policymakers, and members of the public start asking questions, officials will have to decide what steps to take to ensure that a competent, caring, and qualified teacher teaches every child.

NCATE is a non-profit, non-governmental accrediting body located in Washington, D.C. It is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as the accrediting body for teacher preparation in the United States today.

Quality Teaching Is Achievable: A National Commitment Is Required

by Sylvia Seidel and June VanderVeen, Senior Professional Associates,
Teaching & Learning, National Education Association (NEA)



The teaching profession is a cornerstone of society. It is the profession that produces our nation's scientists, doctors, technology whizzes, corporate and political leaders, and the creative spirits that profusely contribute to our culture in a range of media.

For the National Education Association, quality teaching is the foundation of a strong public education system.

In the search for answers to today's dilemmas about education, there is a growing awareness that no single factor will contribute more to improved student achievement than the guarantee of a quality teacher in every classroom.

To achieve that goal, our nation must take a holistic approach and commitment. The road to quality must take into consideration how we recruit, how we prepare, and how we induct individuals into the profession, as well as how we continue to help them grow professionally, how we evaluate them, and how we hold them accountable.

Teacher Preparation Programs: Recruitment

The NEA believes in a strong program of teacher recruitment with special emphasis on recruitment of underrepresented populations. Preteaching programs and recruitment efforts should be developed at high schools and community or junior colleges in conjunction with teacher preparation programs at colleges and universities. To get on the path to quality, students should attend institutions accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Federally financed loan and grant programs should be established to encourage students to enter the profession. Loan-forgiveness programs based on number of years served in the profession should be employed.

Grants from both the public and private sectors should be secured to help students pursue careers in education.

Teacher Preparation Programs: Clinical Practice

Our association believes that clinical practice is essential to provide prospective teachers with the experience necessary to enter the profession. Our ongoing research through the Teacher Education Initiative, which is exploring unique partnerships among public schools, NEA affiliates, and universities across the country, is providing increasing evidence of the significance of clinical experiences that give education majors "reality-based" training that is already sending teacher candidates into the profession better prepared.

Clinical experiences should be supervised student teaching experiences, or internships, and include a post-hiring residency of one year for prospective teachers to achieve full licensure. They also should provide a foundation for the content in the selected teaching field, a broad grounding in instructional strategies, knowledge of children and how they best learn and develop critical thinking skills, and how to test and use those results for greater improvement—things all parents would want a child's teacher to know.

Teacher education programs that meet the NCATE performance-based accreditation standards provide quality assurance to the American public that their graduates are prepared to meet the challenges of diverse classrooms in which all students can learn.

Teacher Induction and Mentoring

It is imperative that beginning teachers get the proper support to make a successful transition into the classroom. We can no longer afford

to push new teachers into the classroom and abandon them. New teachers, as well as more seasoned practitioners moving into new assignments and teaching environments, need ongoing support in making those changes to ensure success and retention in the profession. Given today's teacher shortages, attention to this matter is vital. These efforts should include mentoring programs that last at least a year for new teachers and are flexible for more senior educators.

Professional Development

The challenges that face today's teachers—demographic shifts, the information era, the increased needs of students, and public demands for accountability—likewise require attention to how already-practicing professionals are dealing with these enormous changes. To a great extent, teachers are getting little help to adjust to these demands. How we retool America's teaching force must be addressed if quality instruction is the goal. Educators have told the NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE) they know they require training and retraining. For years, the NEA has provided training through its local and state affiliates. NFIE likewise has provided grants for educators involved in partnerships to make high-quality, on-the-job learning central to the role of teaching. School districts have provided episodic "in-service" professional development that is often judged neither "in" nor "service." The federal government's Eisenhower Professional Development Program is playing a critical role in fostering meaningful professional development. These efforts should be broadened to include all stakeholders in the education enterprise.

Teaching Standards

Long a strong supporter of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), the NEA sees the board's certification process as a critical avenue to professional

growth. Setting standards in various teaching fields provides a teacher a valuable framework against which to "measure my practice." The process, with its extensive writing and videotaped documentation of instruction, portfolios, written exams—and induced reflection on a professional's practice—is rigorous but judged among the "best professional development experiences" by most candidates.

The NEA, which has embarked on a national campaign to increase the number of National Board Certified Teachers, seeks to boost our association's state and local affiliate efforts to provide support for the board-certified candidates. Sustained or increased support for the NBPTS must be a critical piece of any federal agenda to promote quality teaching.

The "Checks" and "Balances"

No emergency licenses exist in medicine, law, or accounting, nor among hairstylists or manicurists. Yet emergency licensing is commonly used to fill teacher gaps in this country's classrooms. In some states, individuals are teaching without licenses. Only thirteen states have independent standards boards. NEA efforts are geared to creating such bodies to bring life to its calls for professional quality. Over the years, our association has partnered with various national bodies, seeking the same sets of checks and balances to the profession. Additionally, to inform its efforts on teacher quality, the NEA is collecting data on alternative and nontraditional routes to licensure.

Quality teaching is achievable. A national commitment is required.

The National Education Association, headquartered in Washington, D.C., is committed to advancing the cause of public education. Its 2.5 million members work at every level of education, from pre-school to university graduate programs.

Aligning Student Learning, Educator Preparation, and Educator Certification through Standards-Based Assessment



Prepared by National Evaluation Systems, Inc. (NES)

Governmental bodies in the United States have long exercised considerable influence on educational policies and practices. Just as the provision of tax-supported public education for children through their mid-teen years is generally considered a fundamental right in our society, some form of governmental oversight of education is accepted as a reasonable exercise of the government's authority and responsibility.

But which level of government? Because of the silence of the U.S. Constitution—the word “education” is never mentioned in that document—and the tenth amendment's delegation of all nonspecified powers to the states, states have emerged as the governmental bodies primarily responsible for defining the content of public education. States exercise this responsibility by overseeing three essential aspects of education: student learning, educator preparation, and educator certification.

Certification: The Key to Alignment

Of the three essential aspects, educator certification probably offers the greatest leverage for state alignment efforts. The state, through its licensure power, can proclaim professional teaching standards for educator candidates in three main areas of essential teacher expertise: basic skills, subject-matter knowledge, and professional knowledge. The standards the state applies to prospective teachers flow through the educational system from the classroom to the college campus; that is, educator certification standards can be constructed, on the one hand, to enable and reinforce student learning standards, and on the other, to reflect, and be reflected in, preparation-program content for educators.

Basic skills standards. Individual states define the basic skills differently. In states that recognize

the importance of alignment, basic skills include not only the skills that educator candidates need in their educator-preparation studies, but also the skills their teaching duties will require.

Subject-matter standards. The subject-matter content that prospective teachers must learn in educator-preparation programs and use in teaching is essentially a more sophisticated, informed, cross-disciplinary, and connected version of what students learn. If the state aligns subject-matter standards across each level of public education, the subject-matter certification requirements for prospective educators will correspond to the subject-matter requirements for completing educator preparation programs and the academic requirements that students must meet in elementary or secondary classrooms.

Professional standards. Finally, the professional knowledge the state requires of prospective teachers enables them not only to fulfill their academic requirements during their program preparation, but also to plan, organize, deliver, assess, manage, and expand on their instructional work with students and colleagues in the public schools. The professional standards promulgated by the state underlie the prospective educator's collegiate preparation and future success in the public school classroom.

The Role of Tests

Tests play several important functions in supporting states' efforts to change education. In fact, these functions serve the states' efforts to align educational change from the classroom to the educational preparation program.

Focusing attention. Tests powerfully focus the attention of students, parents, policymakers, educator preparation faculty, and prospective educators on the knowledge and skills that the

state considers most important at all levels of public education.

Consensus building. Tests are public, high-interest activities that elicit a considerable public and professional dialogue and feedback. The state can use this dialogue to fine-tune both the implementation of its standards and the fulfillment of its testing agenda. Such a dialogue can build consensus around the state's efforts.

Collaboration. States can build further consensus by collaborating in efforts to develop the tests. The best way to ensure that they are appropriately focused and meet the correct level of knowledge and sophistication is to involve state educators in their development and review. Meaningful participation by the state's public school and collegiate educators can enhance the tests' quality, acceptability, and authenticity.

Summarizing knowledge and skills. Sound tests based on state standards can amplify the information that flows to their intended audiences and clarify public understanding of the standards. For testing purposes, state standards are typically detailed in documents (often called "frameworks" or "content outlines") comprising structured groups of statements ("proficiencies," "competencies," or "objectives") that encapsulate the knowledge and skills required of test takers. These documents are often more accessible and better targeted to audiences than statutory or regulatory standards.

Specificity. States have different ways of defining what is important for students and prospective teachers to know and be able to do. Each state interprets even similarly stated goals and standards in a unique way. Sometimes the state's test frameworks and objectives are specific enough to let states highlight the content they value most; certainly test frameworks and objectives are more specific than regulatory documents. Still, the most specific definition of the knowledge and skills a state actually values is contained in the test questions that measure the knowledge and skills. If state educators participate actively and meaningfully in test development and review, the resulting tests can be truly appropriate for the state and definitive in specifying the required knowledge and skills.

When National Evaluation Systems, Inc. (NES), develops a comprehensive teacher certification testing program for a state, it takes all these

necessary components into account. The program is validated by educators in the state for which it was created. State educators, both faculty and district personnel, participate in objective-review and item-review conferences to establish the validity and accuracy of objectives and test items, and their freedom from bias. A state-based job analysis survey of teachers and teacher educators is conducted to determine the appropriateness and importance of the objectives. Pilot testing may be conducted to gather additional information about the performance of test questions. Passing scores are recommended by state educators and adopted by the state. Subsequently, the test is administered at sites across the state a number of times per year, according to dates specified by the state contracting agency. Performance assessment assignments are scored by educators with relevant professional skills. Finally, custom-designed score reports are prepared for and distributed to examinees, teacher preparation programs, and the state agency that is responsible for issuing certificates.

Conclusion

Through collaborative efforts with concerned constituent groups, many states have developed explicit, detailed standards for student learning and teacher knowledge and skills. Well-constructed, state-specific teacher certification standards include the content of student learning standards and reflect the content of educator-preparation programs for both entry-level educators and more advanced educators engaged in continuing professional development. Finally, educator certification testing offers important benefits to further the alignment efforts of states engaged in educational change. Among these are the ability of tests to focus attention on educational issues, the opportunity for the state to build consensus and engage in collaborative efforts during test development, and the specificity with which test documents define and operationalize state standards for student learning, educator preparation, and educator certification.

National Evaluation Systems, Inc., located in Amherst, Massachusetts, is an educational services company that develops and administers testing programs, primarily for state education agencies.