

# **Teaching at Risk:** **Progress &** **Potholes**



THE  
**TEACHING**  
COMMISSION

**FINAL REPORT**  
**SPRING 2006**

# The Teaching Commission

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THE FINAL REPORT

# Teaching at Risk:

**Progress and Potholes**



**THE TEACHING COMMISSION**

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**FINAL REPORT**

*Dedicated to*

R. GAYNOR McCOWN

1960-2005

AND

SANDRA FELDMAN

1939-2005

*Teachers, Reformers, and Leaders*

**THE TEACHING COMMISSION**



# About The Teaching Commission

**E**stablished and chaired by Louis V. Gerstner, Jr., the former chairman of IBM, the Teaching Commission has sought to improve student performance and close the nation's dangerous achievement gap by transforming the way in which America's public school teachers are prepared, recruited, retained, and rewarded.

The Commission is a diverse group, comprising 18 leaders in government, business, and education. Its members unanimously signed off on the policy recommendations included in its 2004 report, *Teaching at Risk: a Call to Action*. Putting a "highly qualified" teacher in every classroom by the close of the 2005-2006 school year is already part of the No Child Left Behind Act, which also requires that each state develop a specific plan for reaching that goal.

We are moving in the right direction. But the Commission is convinced that without clearer vision, better guidance, and stronger leadership, that objective will remain unfulfilled. Student learning, rather than teacher protection, must become America's number one priority.

**THE TEACHING COMMISSION**



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**THE TEACHING COMMISSION**



# Preface

## Letter from the Chairman

**T**he Teaching Commission was born in 2003 when, after many years of working to convince states to set strong academic standards, my colleagues and I became increasingly convinced that the future of our schools—and our schoolchildren—could only be as promising as the future of the teaching profession. And the teaching profession was, in various ways we reiterate in this report, utterly unprepared for the 21st Century. In a country that seems to call every third problem a crisis, this one felt most real to me, and its potential consequences most severe.

I asked 18 colleagues to commit to the project, bringing to the table their collaborative experience, insight, and expertise. That group included fellow business leaders, big city school superintendents, philanthropists, governors, a teacher, an education school dean, and the head of one of the nation's largest teachers unions. I believed then and maintain now that this should never become an issue that's discussed merely within the narrow confines of the education sector. If we let our teaching profession languish, it will be everyone's problem—so building a better one is everyone's responsibility. Equally important, the Commission included Democrats, Republicans, and people of no pronounced political affiliation at all, consistent with our conviction that an attempt to solve this problem that fractures along purely partisan lines is bound to be incomplete and dishonest.

The Commission carefully studied the challenge for a year and then, in January 2004, released a report—*Teaching at Risk: A Call to Action*—outlining our consensus recommendations.

The Commission never intended to set out our reform agenda and then dissolve.

## THE TEACHING COMMISSION

We wanted to help bring about real public policy results. Following the release of *Teaching at Risk*, therefore, members of the panel and our small staff began engaging directly with policymakers, primarily at the state level, to make the case for change. In a variety of ways—writing newspaper commentaries, speaking at public forums, synthesizing research, polling—we went straight to the public with our message.

But just as I never meant the Commission to disband soon after releasing its findings, neither did I want it to become a permanent part of the education reform lobby. From the start, we outlined a three-year timetable for our work. We would see what kinds of bold and comprehensive public policy proposals could be produced and promoted within that window, and then we would assess the progress made and close our doors.

This report completes the work of the Teaching Commission. It is our candid assessment of the momentum and the inertia we've witnessed these past three years. Now it will be up to others—and there are many others doing great things—to carry the torch.

Overall, I believe our work has been successful. We have helped raise the visibility of the teacher quality crisis and have begun to move the debate in the right direction. A number of states have started implementing or seriously considering bold new legislation tackling teacher quality—proposals that bear a strong resemblance to the framework laid out in our report. Similar policy movement has happened at the local level, including in some of the nation's biggest school districts. And the federal government has made a strong statement of, and significant investment in, reform.

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We cannot and do not claim credit for every step forward, but I am confident that we have been one strong voice in a chorus making the case for change.

I'm also pleased that the teacher quality challenges we face have lately been a key part of a broader conversation about the unprecedented and unforgiving skills race that is the current global economy. It's a race in which, at least at the moment, our young people cannot keep pace. This is especially true of the minority and low-income students who are consistently saddled with the least effective teachers. We've seen a growing consensus (represented in books like Tom Friedman's *The World is Flat* and reports like the National Academies' *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*) that unless we start figuring out far more effective ways to teach basic and high-level skills in our public schools, we will pay a serious price in economic competitiveness and social and political upheaval.

So I am proud of our accomplishments, especially of the tremendous contributions of our executive director Gaynor McCown, who died last November at the age of 45 after a remarkable life and career. Yet I'm far from satisfied. In a profession this large—there are more than twice as many K-12 teachers as registered nurses and five times as many teachers as lawyers—change cannot happen overnight. The state of public education in America these days regrettably requires a kind of perpetual impatience. We've made some progress in recent years, but if we do not go far further, far faster, we will all soon be talking in the past tense about America's greatness.

—Louis V. Gerstner, Jr.

CHAIRMAN, THE TEACHING COMMISSION  
FORMER CHAIRMAN AND CEO, IBM

# Introduction:

## What's at Stake

**A** fiercely competitive global information economy, powered as never before by innovation and intellect, demands that America's young people be well educated. It is not only their individual potential that hangs in the balance; it is the nation's economic future. Yet today, though some positive trends are emerging in the wake of the standards movement and the No Child Left Behind law (particularly in minority students' progress), our public schools still struggle to teach our children what they need to know—from math, science, and engineering to reading, writing, history, and critical thinking skills.

By fourth grade, American students have fallen behind students in countries including Singapore, Japan, Latvia, and the Russian Federation in math.<sup>1</sup> The ratio of first university degrees in natural sciences and engineering to the college-age population in the United States is 5.7 degrees per 100. Taiwan, South Korea, France, and the United Kingdom each produce nearly twice as many.<sup>2</sup> A new book, *Flight Capital*, makes the case that, for the first time in memory, America is on the wrong end of a brain drain—losing many leading lights of the innovation economy to other nations.<sup>3</sup>

The latest fourth grade reading scores on the test known as the nation's report card showed little improvement, and in international comparisons of 15-year-olds' reading literacy, our students rank behind those in 11 other

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### VITAL SIGNS

### Losing the Skills War?

Average combined mathematics literacy scores and reading literacy scores of 15-year-olds in the OECD, 2003

Combined Mathematics Literacy			Average Reading Literacy	
Score	Rank		Score	Rank
500		OECD average	494	
544	1	Finland	544	1
542	2	Korea	534	2
538	3	Netherlands	513	8
534	4	Japan	498	12
532	5	Canada	527	3
529	6	Belgium	508	9
527	7	Switzerland	499	11
524	8	Australia	525	4
523	9	New Zealand	521	5
516	10	Czech Republic	489	20
515	11	Iceland	492	16
514	12	Denmark	492	16
511	13	France	496	14
509	14	Sweden	514	7
506	15	Austria	491	18
503	16	Germany	491	18
503	16	Ireland	516	6
498	18	Slovak Republic	469	27
495	19	Norway	500	10
493	20	Luxembourg	479	23
490	21	Poland	497	13
490	21	Hungary	482	21
485	23	Spain	481	22
<b>483</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>United States</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>15</b>
466	25	Portugal	478	24
466	25	Italy	476	25
445	27	Greece	472	26
423	28	Turkey	441	28
385	29	Mexico	400	29

Note: Due to low response rates, data for the United Kingdom is not used.

Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)*, 2003.

**B**lack and Hispanic twelfth graders in America on average perform at the same level in reading and math as white eighth graders.

major nations.<sup>4</sup> A new analysis released by the Education Trust makes clear that students perform far worse on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, known as the “gold standard” of student achievement, than they do on state tests—with the number of fourth and eighth graders reaching proficiency as much as 50 percentage

points lower on the federal exam than on the state exam.<sup>5</sup> This raises profound doubts about the quality of state standards. A study released late last year shows that the number of *college graduates* proficient in English fell from 40 percent in 1992 to 31 percent in 2003.<sup>6</sup> And when students enter the workforce, employers are forced to spend millions of dollars on remediation. Using a conservative estimate, it was calculated that businesses and institutions of higher learning in the state of Michigan spend \$601 million per year teaching young adults skills they should have learned in high school.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, America continues to struggle with stubborn and destructive inequities in student achievement that actually widen rather than narrowing as children stay in school. Black and Hispanic twelfth graders in America on average perform at the same level in reading and math as white eighth graders<sup>8</sup>—yet the system perversely draws the best American public school teachers into the schools and classrooms with the most fortunate children, rather than matching the most talented instructors with the low-income, minority, and low-achieving young people who need them the most.<sup>9, 10, 11, 12</sup>

Our schools are only as good as their teachers. This is intuitive and supported

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by a growing body of research. Beginning from the same academic starting point, Dallas third graders assigned to three highly effective teachers in a row performed at the 76th percentile in math by the end of fifth grade; those assigned to three ineffective teachers in a row fell to the 27th percentile.<sup>13</sup> Students assigned to the most effective teachers can achieve a full year of academic growth on top of expected annual gains—with low-performing students gaining the most academic benefit from these teachers.<sup>14, 15</sup>

The No Child Left Behind law recognizes that good teaching is central to all of our efforts to improve American public schools. Title II of the law requires that every classroom have a “highly qualified” teacher by the end of the 2005–2006 school year. The Commission views these provisions as important; a major federal law states unequivocally that every public school classroom in America deserves a top-notch schoolteacher.

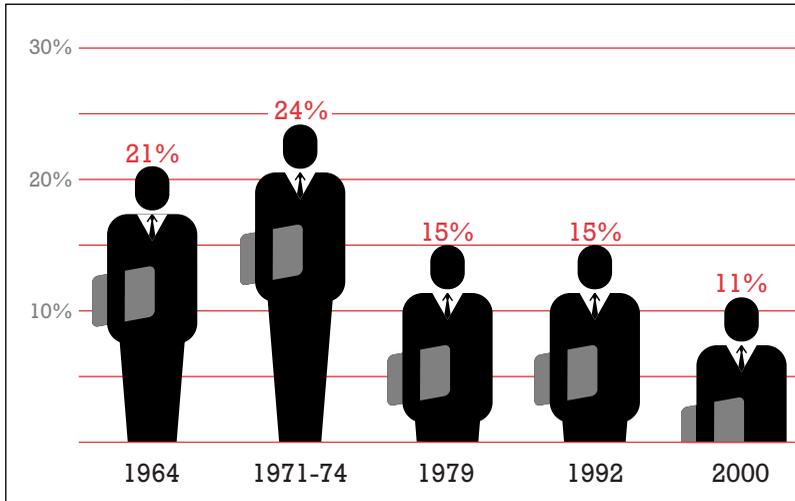
Yet ultimately, the welcome reforms being prompted by the legislation are insufficient. Why? Because the occupation that makes all others possible is eroding at its foundations. Average teacher salaries have not risen as quickly as inflation or on pace with other professions. (Reasonable people debate the economic question of how teaching compares with other lines of work when measured by hourly wages and benefits,<sup>16</sup> especially when factoring in local cost of living.) The means of paying teachers has largely resisted change rather than incorporating market incentives and rewards for excellence. The only advancement potential available to an exemplary teacher in most systems is to slowly earn a higher salary by racking up years of experience and graduate credits or advancing into management. Teacher preparation programs have continued business as usual rather than systematically raising their standards and applying new methodolo-

## THE TEACHING COMMISSION

### VITAL SIGNS

#### Wanted: The Best and Brightest

% of teachers scoring in the top decile of high school achievement tests



**Why It Matters** Top-performing students are becoming far less likely to enter teaching.

Source: Sean Corcoran, William Evans and Robert Schwab, "Changing Labor Market Opportunities for Women and The Quality of Teachers 1957-1992" (working paper, National Bureau of Economic Research, 2002).

gies based on state-of-the-art, research-proven strategies.<sup>17</sup> With a few notable exceptions, teaching is attracting fewer top college graduates than it once did.

Teacher evaluation and on-the-job training are arcane and largely ineffective; novice teachers are usually left to sink or swim, and far too many sink. Close to 50 percent of new teachers leave within five years, with attrition rates highest in schools serving low-income students.<sup>18</sup>

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Finally, due in many cases to collective bargaining agreements, hiring and firing practices in our schools are weighed down by piles of paperwork and miles of red tape, reflecting almost none of the accountability revolution that has transformed so many other workplaces. One recent study revealed that in five urban districts, 40 percent of teacher vacancies were filled with little or no say from schools themselves; another investigation found that of nearly 100,000 tenured teachers in the state of Illinois, an average of just *two* per year are fired for poor performance.<sup>19, 20</sup>

In sum—taking nothing away from the hundreds of thousands of outstanding teachers in the nation’s classrooms—it is painfully clear that today’s teaching profession attracts and retains the most talented professionals by accident, not by design.

This human capital crisis would be serious in any event. It is made even more pressing because the Baby Boom generation is retiring, increasing the pressure to hire millions of talented new educators and keep them on the job as they hone their skills.<sup>21, 22</sup> While “there appears to be no overall national teacher shortage,” according to the Department of Education, “shortfalls persist in certain subject areas and grade levels, as well as rural, urban, and outlying area locations.”<sup>23</sup>

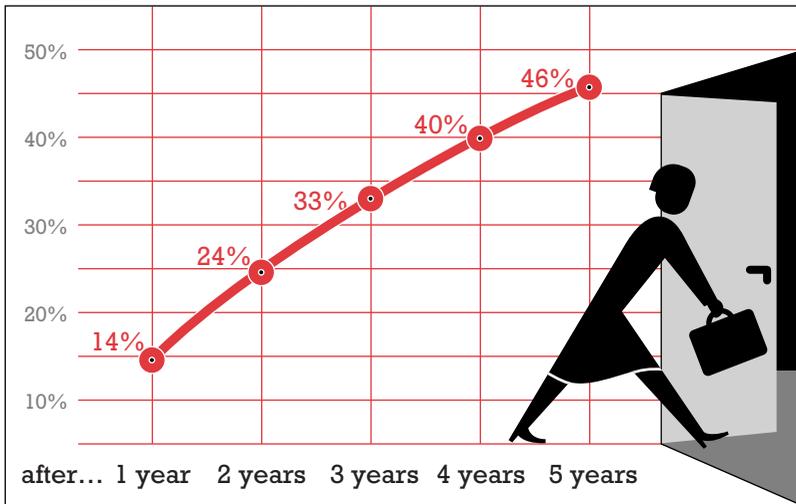
The premise of the Teaching Commission’s work, which began three years ago, was that strong leadership is required to change direction. As argued in *Teaching At Risk: A Call to Action*, the Commission believes that state leaders must initiate sweeping and aggressive efforts to revive teaching based on four fundamental pillars of reform:

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**VITAL  
SIGNS**

### **The Other Dropouts**

Attrition of new teachers (cumulative),  
by years of experience



Source: Richard Ingersoll, *Is There Really a Teacher Shortage?* (Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy and Consortium for Policy Research in Education: University of Washington, September 2003).

One, **transforming how teachers are paid** by making base pay more competitive with other professions; offering substantial rewards based on performance; creating new career advancement pathways; and awarding premium pay for service in high-need schools and shortage subject areas.

Two, **revamping teacher education programs** by raising standards at schools of education to make them commensurate with other university departments; launching concerted efforts to encourage students in all programs and departments to enter teaching; and systematically measuring

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results—including the number of graduates who go into public school classrooms and the success they have in raising student achievement.

Three, **improving or overhauling licensing and certification requirements** by raising the bar for entry (testing all would-be teachers in specific content areas and agreeing on a common national standard for cutoff scores at a level requiring mastery of one’s subject); and streamlining red tape so that talented professionals from all backgrounds can enter the classroom when they meet these higher standards.

Four, **giving school leaders more authority and holding them more responsible for the development of their staff** by letting principals make ultimate decisions to hire and fire personnel at their school sites; giving teachers the ability to be involved in key decisions; recruiting and training better school leaders; and offering mentors to new teachers and high-quality, ongoing professional development to veteran teachers.

As the Commission made clear, the problems we face are interlocking, and so the solution should involve interconnected reform components.

This report is an assessment of what has happened these last three years. It is not meant to be a comprehensive overview of state policy reform in these areas. Other organizations, most notably the National Council on Teacher Quality and the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, are doing that work well. Instead, it is a candid look at where we see the biggest gains, and where we see politics or inertia preventing them from happening.

# Implementation:

## Revitalizing the Most Important Profession

**A**re we making progress? Yes—in some respects, more than even the most optimistic observers could have hoped.

**A number of governors** have moved improving teacher quality from the eternal back burner to the front of their state agendas. One state, Minnesota, stands out for seeing the problem holistically—and developing a multifaceted policy reform campaign. In October 2004, Governor Tim Pawlenty announced he would use *Teaching at Risk* as his blueprint for change, and proceeded to champion “Q Comp,” a teacher compensation overhaul, as the first phase of a comprehensive approach to the problem. Governors Haley Barbour of Mississippi, Jeb Bush of Florida, Robert Ehrlich of Maryland, Mike Huckabee of Arkansas, Janet Napolitano of Arizona, Bob Riley of Alabama, Mitt Romney of Massachusetts, Mark Warner of Virginia (now out of office), and others have also launched significant and aggressive efforts to tackle the problem on multiple fronts. (Other states, including Connecticut, Georgia, Louisiana, and North Carolina have made significant efforts to improve teacher quality predating the existence of the Commission.) Though they have achieved various levels of success, usually running into complex school finance politics and other political obstacles, all deserve high marks for effort.

For a full accounting of recent legislative action in furtherance of the Teaching Commission’s recommendations, see our companion report, *Teaching At Risk: States Respond to The Teaching Commission’s Call to Action*, available in electronic form at [www.theteachingcommission.org](http://www.theteachingcommission.org).

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**School superintendents** such as New York City Schools Chancellor Joel Klein have cited *Teaching at Risk* as inspiration in their fight to bring down bureaucratic barriers, strengthen principal leadership, improve professional development, and pay teachers differently. Local leaders from Denver, Colorado and Houston, Texas to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania have made significant gains during the three years the Commission has been active. And some superintendents, such as San Diego’s Alan Bersin and Maryland’s Eric Smith, began to implement major teacher quality reforms—only to be forced out of their leadership posts for being, in the opinion of their school boards, too confrontational.

**Federal leaders** on both sides of the aisle have made teacher quality a much higher priority. Since aggressive teacher quality reforms are often mischaracterized as being led by conservatives and business interests, it is important to acknowledge this growing bipartisan appeal. As one high-profile example, in their 2004 Presidential campaign platform Senators John Kerry and John Edwards called for reforms that closely resembled the Teaching Commission’s recommendations. Their plan sought to:

raise teacher pay, especially in the schools and subjects where teachers are in the shortest supply; improve mentoring, professional development, and new technology training for teachers, instead of leaving teachers to sink or swim; create rigorous new tests for teachers; provide higher pay for teachers who have extra skills and excel in helping children learn; [and] ensure fast, fair procedures for improving or removing teachers who do not perform well on the job, while preserving protections from arbitrary dismissal.<sup>24</sup>

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Many of these ideas are not favored by the leadership of the National Education Association, the nation's largest teachers union, which at one time was considered a critical litmus test for major Democratic party education policy proposals. We welcome the independent thinking.

The Bush Administration's primary education preoccupation (understandably so) has been state implementation of the No Child Left Behind law, including its requirement that every public school classroom have a "highly qualified" teacher by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. But that did not prevent President Bush from proposing, and Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings from championing, a new \$99 million Teacher Incentive Fund that promises to catalyze innovative teacher pay plans around the country (see more on the Fund under "Transforming Teacher Compensation," p. 25). Nor did it prevent Congressional leaders including Representatives John Boehner (R-OH), Bart Gordon (D-TN), George Miller (D-CA), and Ralph Regula (R-OH), and Senators Mary Landrieu (D-LA) and Barack Obama (D-IL), among others, from backing laudable legislative attempts to reinvigorate the teaching profession.

Invaluably, a number of **business leaders** have cast their lot on the side of change. Standouts include a committee of the National Academies led by the retired chairman and CEO of Lockheed Martin Corporation, Norman Augustine; the Council on Competitiveness's National Innovation Initiative; the National Summit on Competitiveness; and an alliance of groups led by the Business Roundtable, which issued a report entitled *Tapping America's Potential*. Some businesses, including IBM Corporation, have sought to effect change directly by helping their employees become teachers in public schools or otherwise leading by example.

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Perhaps most notably, **leaders of non-profit organizations** and foundations across America—including The New Teacher Project, The Teacher Advancement Program Foundation, the Broad Foundation, and others—are not waiting for government officials to act; they are putting in place bold new programs that are beginning to reshape the teaching profession from the bottom up.

In the “Honor Roll” sidebars in the pages of this report, we cite and celebrate a number of these efforts.

**But is all this progress sufficient?** No. The challenge we face is too large and too urgent to settle for a few steps forward. Nothing less than a number of giant leaps are necessary to transform teaching.

And unfortunately, in the course of the Commission’s work, it has become clear that most state leaders, who are the key to driving public policy change, prefer to approach discrete pieces of the teacher quality problem rather than embracing the comprehensive approach recommended by the Commission. This has sometimes happened with good reason—because one particular type of reform proved to be more urgent in a given state and therefore demanded more immediate action. More often, however, some governors and other leaders have shied away from championing holistic solutions because of political considerations. For example, many state leaders pressed the high-profile agenda to reform teacher pay, while far fewer confronted the equally important and more sobering challenge of overhauling ineffective teacher training programs.

**S**ome governors and other leaders have shied away from championing holistic solutions because of political considerations.

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Further evidence of state stasis is the way some have reacted to the No Child Left Behind law's demand that there be a "highly qualified" teacher in every classroom by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. Most states have responded to the law by relying on flawed certification systems to shield teachers, particularly veteran teachers, from additional scrutiny, rather than applying new requirements that raise the bar for all.<sup>25</sup>

Fleshing out this brief summary, in the following pages we review the progress made in advancing each of the four major agenda items outlined by the Teaching Commission: transforming teacher compensation, reinventing teacher preparation, overhauling licensing and certification, and strengthening leadership and support. We then highlight a few other areas of reform that are central to the future of teaching in America.

RECOMMENDATION 1

# Transforming Teacher Compensation

**GRADES**

B for effort

C+ for results

**T**eaching at Risk urges states and districts to reinvent the way teachers are paid.<sup>26</sup> This is imperative because the status quo—in which most teachers are paid based on years of experience and graduate credits alone (often called “steps and lanes,” or the “single salary schedule”)—does almost nothing to attract America’s best and brightest into the classroom and keep them there.

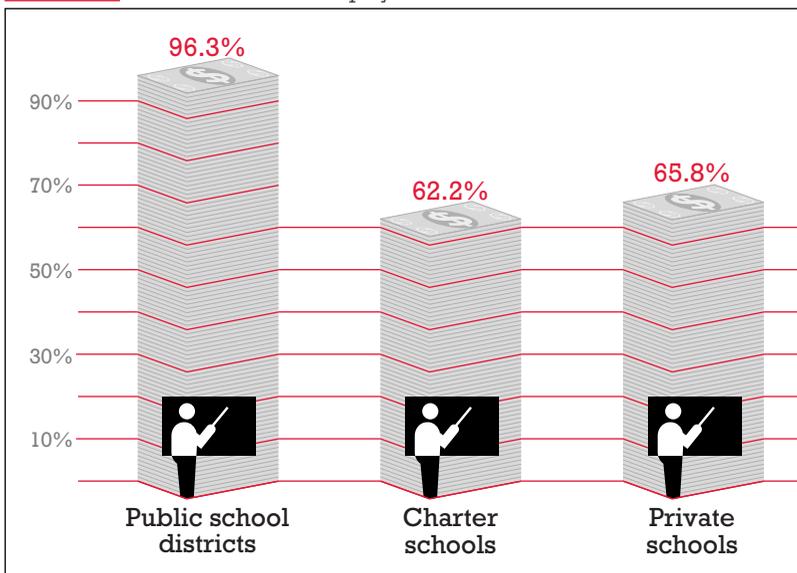
A generation or two ago, teaching had access to a “captive market” of well-educated women to whom other jobs were not open. Now, with women making up ever greater numbers in law, medicine, and other fields, teaching is simply one of many professions vying for top talent. It is a competition that teaching—with little advancement potential, minimal possibilities for promotion, and few financial rewards for individual contributions to organizational success—inevitably loses. Recent research has revealed that the percentage of individuals going into teaching who ranked among the top 10 percent of their

## THE TEACHING COMMISSION

**VITAL  
SIGNS**

### **Inflexibility in Teacher Compensation**

% of schools/districts using a salary schedule to determine base pay for teachers



**Why It Matters** Because they adhere to a prescribed salary schedule, traditional public schools have little flexibility to pay teachers more based on performance or market need.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, *Schools and Staffing Surveys*, 1999–2000.

high school class fell from 20 percent in 1964 to just over 11 percent in 2000. According to this research, pay compression—the rigid teacher pay schedules that flatten the difference between the earnings of teachers of highest and lowest college aptitude—accounted for 80 percent of the drop in teacher aptitude over that time period.<sup>27</sup>

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Districts and states most desperately need better salary incentives to attract effective teachers to serve in low-income and minority schools, which typically are stuck with the least effective teachers,<sup>28,29</sup> and in subjects such as math, science, and special education, which are often suffering from the most serious talent shortages.<sup>30</sup>

The Teaching Commission therefore called for the rigid status quo of teacher compensation to be replaced by flexible, responsive systems that recognize and reward excellence and incorporate market incentives.<sup>31,32</sup>

How do we define “excellence”? The Commission is not overly prescriptive on this score. Alternative pay systems are still in their early stages of development, and it therefore makes sense for districts and states to innovate rather than emulate previous efforts. Intuition and experience do suggest, however, that new pay plans should meet a few basic requirements. They should:

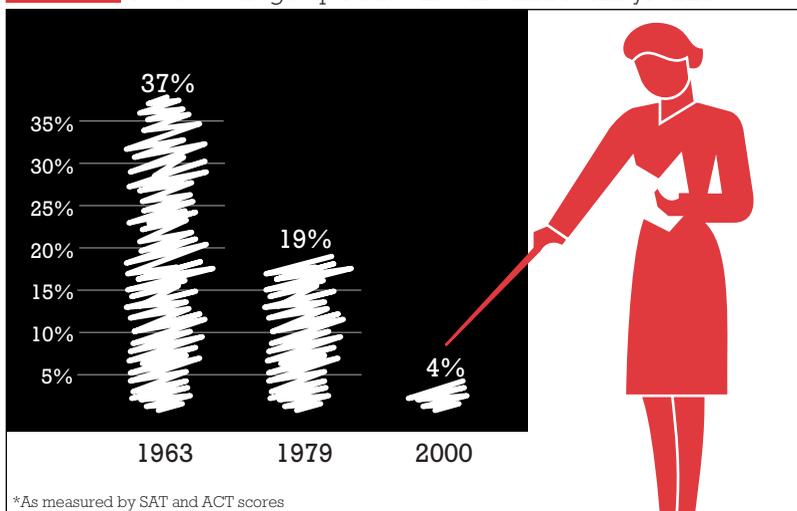
- Use both objective and subjective measures to evaluate teacher performance, including:
  - Valid and objective measures of student learning—when possible, measured through value-added assessment of achievement gains; and
  - Individual teacher evaluations by principals and/or peers;
- Be developed in collaboration with teachers;
- Have sustainable funding streams;
- Create a career ladder whereby teachers can gain status and responsibility as they hone their craft;
- Incorporate other market incentives, specifically rewards for quality teachers who serve in hard-to-staff schools and shortage subject areas.

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### VITAL SIGNS

#### Teacher Pay Compression

Pay differential between teachers of highest and lowest college aptitude\* in Ohio and Pennsylvania



\*As measured by SAT and ACT scores

**Why It Matters** Research suggests that because teachers of high aptitude generally earn no more than teachers of low aptitude, it may be more difficult for teaching to recruit and retain the talent it needs.

Source: Caroline M. Hoxby and Andrew K. Leigh, "Pulled Away or Pushed Out? Explaining the Decline of Teacher Aptitude in the United States," *American Economic Review* (2004).

## Results

Over the last three years, we have seen this agenda attract considerable attention. In their 2005 state of the state addresses, 20 governors mentioned changing the way teachers are paid as part of their reform agendas.<sup>33</sup> While not all of this rhetoric translated into real reform efforts, much less results, the higher profile is a sign of progress.

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The single most profound policy shift is underway in the state of **Minnesota**, where, under the Quality Compensation plan (Q Comp) proposed by Governor Tim Pawlenty and passed by the state legislature in 2005, the state department of education is now providing funds to local districts that develop and implement more modern teacher pay plans. Minnesota has budgeted \$86 million for the program.

Under Q Comp, districts seeking state funds must include in their plans five core components: (1) a career ladder for teachers; (2) ongoing training that is intricately linked to improving the quality of the work that teachers do on a daily basis; (3) instructional observations and standards-based assessments; (4) measures to determine student growth; and (5) alternative compensation and performance pay linked to those observations and assessments.<sup>34</sup> As of January 2006, nine districts were implementing plans, with many more expected to submit successful plans intended for implementation next school year. In sum, 130 school districts and 40 charter schools have submitted letters of intent indicating their interest in participating in the program.<sup>35</sup>

The Teaching Commission believes that the plan's combination of strong state guidelines with local flexibility, along with the presence of a sustainable funding source, greatly increases its chances for long-term success. We are also closely following developments underway in **Florida**, where the state is working to put new regulatory teeth into an existing performance pay law. The current plan, Effectiveness Compensation (E-Comp), will require districts to base a portion of teachers' salary increases on students' actual academic achievement gains, using the state's standardized testing systems or other accepted measures of performance.

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A district reform plan worthy of the spotlight is the Professional Compensation System for Teachers (ProComp) now being rolled out in **Denver, Colorado**. ProComp, initially instituted as a multi-year pilot program starting in 1999, was approved by strong margins by both teachers and the city's voters in 2003 and 2004, respectively. The plan scraps conventional steps and lanes for a system that incorporates teachers' knowledge and skills, their professional evaluations, market incentives, and student growth (measured teacher-by-teacher and schoolwide).<sup>36</sup>

We urge districts and states considering similar changes to study Denver's success carefully. Particularly impressive is the way reformers made teachers a part of the process from the earliest stages; built a broad and bipartisan coalition of city and state leaders, both inside and outside the education establishment; established a separate funding stream—a new tax that will fund the higher levels of teacher compensation; and convinced the general public of the wisdom of these significant investments and complex reforms.

In January 2006, **Houston, Texas** became the second large American city to embrace revolutionary changes in teacher compensation. By a 9-0 vote, Houston's board of education approved a plan that will provide up to \$3,000 in additional pay for teachers who bring about the greatest gains in student achievement. The plan offers rewards in three sections, with up to \$1,000 in bonus pay available in each. The first will give bonuses to all teachers in schools rated acceptable based on scores on the state's main standardized test. The second links pay to value-added student improvement on a standardized test that compares performance to nationwide norms. In the third, reading, math, science, and social studies teachers whose students fare well compared with others in the district on the state's criterion referenced test would be eligible for bonuses.<sup>37</sup> The Teaching

# HONOR ROLL

## THE TEACHER ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM

The Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) was launched in 1999 by the Milken Family Foundation as a new strategy to attract, retain, develop, and motivate talented people in the teaching profession. The program, which is in various stages of implementation in more than 100 schools across the nation, impacting more than 3,100 teachers and 45,000 students, contains four core elements: 1) multiple career paths for teachers within the classroom; 2) ongoing, applied professional growth; 3) instructionally focused accountability; and 4) performance-based compensation.

The career paths component provides teachers with proven records of student achievement with advancement opportunities and compensation increased accordingly. The professional development component requires teachers to meet weekly in subject or grade-level “cluster groups” led by master or mentor teachers to address challenges teachers are facing with actual students. The TAP model requires that teachers are evaluated 4 to 6 times a year by a school “leadership team” composed of the principal and master and mentor teachers trained by TAP. Finally, TAP teachers are provided bonuses based on their classroom evaluations and the achievement growth of their students. TAP also supports incentive pay for “hard-to-staff” schools and subjects.

The program is getting results. In an evaluation of Arizona and South Carolina TAP programs, 65 percent of TAP schools outperformed their control schools. The TAP model has also proven to reduce turnover and attract the highest quality teachers to low-income campuses where TAP is in place.<sup>38</sup>

In May 2005, TAP was reorganized into its own public entity, the Teacher Advancement Program Foundation, to broaden its opportunities for growth.

For more information visit [www.tapschools.org/](http://www.tapschools.org/) or contact TAP directly at 310-570-4860.

### FACT FILE

Created: 1999

Cost: \$150-400 per student

Teachers: 3,100

Students: 45,000

No. of Schools: 100

Located: 10 states and the  
District of Columbia

Funding: Federal, state, local, private

## THE TEACHING COMMISSION

Commission hopes that the city has patience to iron out the inevitable wrinkles that will emerge as this commendable plan is implemented.

Also worthy of note are targeted alternative compensation plans in **Mobile, Alabama; Chattanooga, Tennessee; Anne Arundel County, Maryland;** and elsewhere. These districts have singled out a subset of high-need schools and combined new investments in professional development with intelligent salary incentives—often including monetary rewards for exemplary performance.

The alternative teacher compensation program with the longest track record to date is the **Teacher Advancement Program (TAP)**, designed by the Milken Family Foundation and implemented in partnership with schools and districts across the country. TAP—which gives teachers multiple career paths to pursue, provides focused professional development designed to improve classroom practice, evaluates the teachers' effectiveness using sophisticated new assessments, and rewards top performers—has now taken root in more than 100 public school campuses, impacting over 45,000 students and 3,100 teachers.<sup>39</sup> This significant expansion may well accelerate in the coming years as a result of a \$5.3 million investment from the Broad Education Foundation, Minnesota's statewide commitment to the issue, and complementary federal reforms.

Though teacher compensation innovations are best implemented close to the ground where districts can respond to local needs and get buy-in from local teachers, the Teaching Commission is pleased that the federal government has recently made constructive contributions to the movement. **The Teacher Incentive Fund**, first proposed by President Bush in 2004, was approved by Congress and signed by the President in late 2005. The fund will provide \$99 million to districts and states that develop innovative compensation reform plans

## HONOR ROLL

### **MINNESOTA: QUALITY COMPENSATION FOR TEACHERS**

Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty proposed—and in July 2005, the Minnesota legislature enacted—an alternative teacher professional pay system for school districts that is closely based on the Teacher Advancement Program model. School districts, intermediate school districts, school sites, and charter schools are eligible in 2006-2007 for an additional \$260 per student when they submit to the state a teacher compensation plan that meets a prescribed reform framework.

Acceptable plans must reform traditional salary schedules and base at least 60 percent of any compensation increase for teachers on multiple objective teacher evaluations, school-wide student achievement gains, and measures of student achievement. They must also describe how teachers can achieve career advancement, allowing the most effective teachers to help their peers improve through mentoring and other professional development while remaining in the classroom, where they are needed most. Acceptable plans must also include integrated, ongoing site-based professional development activities to improve instructional skills and learning that are aligned with student needs and led during the school day.

In crafting the legislation that would create the program, the state repeatedly heard from school districts the concern that state funds initially available for compensation reform might dry up in future years. The state has addressed this by structuring the funding stream as a categorical funding item instead of a grant program. In other words, the funding is now part of the state's baseline commitment to education funding and not a discretionary funding program.<sup>40</sup>

For more information see [children.state.mn.us/mde](http://children.state.mn.us/mde) or contact the Minnesota Department of Education Q-Comp program office at 651-582-8200.

#### FACT FILE

**Created:** July 2005  
**Cost:** Varies per district, approximately \$260 per student  
**Location:** Minnesota, 9 school districts and 3 charter schools accepted for 2005-2006  
**Funding:** \$86 million in state funds committed to date

## HONOR ROLL

### DENVER: PROFESSIONAL COMPENSATION FOR TEACHERS

The Denver Public Schools received voter approval in November 2005 for a \$25 million property tax hike to implement a new Professional Compensation System for Teachers (ProComp). ProComp was built on a successful 1999-2003 pilot project at 16

Denver schools that attempted to create a more direct link between student achievement and teacher compensation.<sup>41</sup>

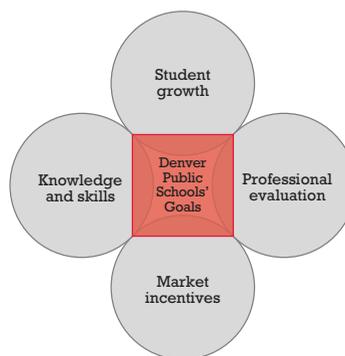
In becoming the first big city public school system to build and implement a comprehensive overhaul of the way teachers are compensated, Denver has set an important precedent.

ProComp rewards teachers based on meeting student growth objectives developed collaboratively with principals, as well as for completing professional development units, furthering their education and certification, performing satisfactorily on profes-

sional evaluations, serving in hard-to-staff schools and positions, exceeding expectations for one year's growth on the state assessment test, and serving in a school determined to be distinguished based on multiple measures of student performance.

The diagram to the right shows how Denver's teachers union and district administrators, who worked closely together to develop the plan, describe the four factors that determine how much additional money teachers earn in any given year. Current teachers can opt into ProComp over the next 6 years; as of January 1, 2006, new teachers will be automatically entered into the new system.<sup>42</sup>

For more information see [www.denverprocomp.org](http://www.denverprocomp.org) or contact the Denver Public Schools ProComp office at 720-423-3900.



#### FACT FILE

Created: November 2005

Cost: \$25 million per year

Scope: District wide

Funding: Property tax

## FINAL REPORT

rewarding teachers and schools that demonstrate success in improving student achievement and closing achievement gaps. The Teaching Commission is confident that this federal investment can catalyze the creation of dozens of innovative teacher pay plans across America.

And in what would have seemed unlikely just four years ago, many **Democrats** have lined up to push for alternative teacher compensation. As noted earlier, in their 2004 presidential campaign, Senators John Kerry and John Edwards endorsed teacher pay reforms. In addition, a national task force of the Center for American Progress urged “states and local school districts, with support from federal financial incentives” to “restructure and upgrade preparation programs and on-the-job training opportunities for teachers and school leaders; redesign their compensation and career advancement systems to reward effective teachers and school leaders through fair performance measures; hold all school leaders and teachers accountable for adding value to their students’ learning; and guarantee the equitable distribution of high-quality teachers.”<sup>43</sup> And Illinois Senator Barack Obama, a rising leader in his party, has argued that “teaching is one of the only professions where no matter how well you perform at your job, you’re almost never rewarded for success,” recommending that in a handful of Innovation Districts around the country, “teachers...who are successful in improving student achievement would receive substantial pay increases, as would those who choose to teach in the most troubled schools and the highest-need subject areas, like math and science.”<sup>44</sup>

As pleased as we are by all of this progress, we are also disheartened by the **obstacles** that have prevented more profound teacher pay innovation from taking root. Late last year, Texas Governor Rick Perry issued an executive order

## THE TEACHING COMMISSION

to reward teachers for improving student achievement in 100 of the state's low-income schools. Political differences may prevent that limited \$10 million program from expanding.<sup>45</sup> A proposal last year by California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to require districts to reward teachers on the basis of merit was abandoned in the face of strong union opposition. It remains to be seen whether Governor Mitt Romney's 2005 proposal to implement performance pay, part of a sweeping education reform bill, will survive the legislative process in Massachusetts. The same must be said, at least for the moment, of Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour's performance pay reforms—which in 2005, as part of a larger school reform bill, became entangled in a complex political debate over education funding formulas.

We have seen far too few attempts, at either the state or local level, to increase pay for specific subject areas facing the most serious shortages of talent, such as math, science, and special education. Whatever one thinks of performance pay, offering premium compensation to attract and retain qualified teachers with such expertise is long overdue—and, almost inexplicably, remains largely untried.

**RECOMMENDATION 2**

# Reinventing Teacher Preparation

**GRADES**

C for effort

D for results

**E**qually important in changing the way teachers are paid is rethinking the way in which they are prepared. There is overwhelming evidence that today, in far too many cases, teachers are not equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to excel.

To cite just one among many examples, a 2004 Florida newspaper report revealed that fully a third of the states’ teachers, teachers’ aides, and substitutes—most of whom had graduated from established teacher preparation programs—failed a portion of their certification tests at least once. This requirement measures basic, not advanced, knowledge and skills, yet nearly 1,400 teachers failed 10 times or more, and children from Florida’s poor neighborhoods were 44 percent more likely than their wealthier peers to have a teacher who failed at least once.<sup>46</sup>

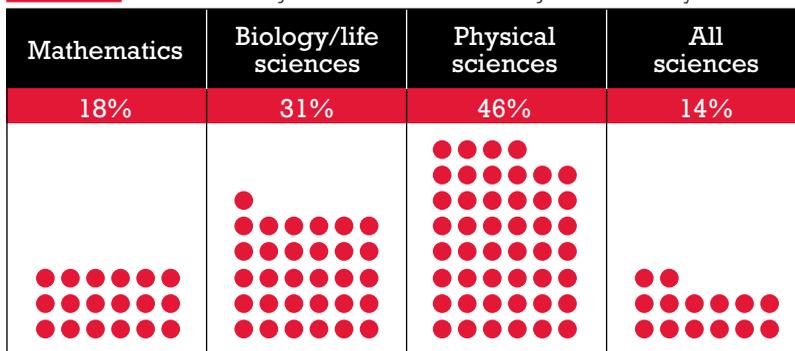
When examining teachers’ knowledge of the specific subjects they teach, the problem becomes especially pronounced. Nationwide, some 44 percent of middle school students take at least one class with a teacher who lacks a major or minor in the subject being taught. In secondary schools, that figure is almost 25

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### VITAL SIGNS

#### Teach What You Know

% of public high school students being taught by teachers without a major or minor in the subject area they teach



**Why It Matters** Many teachers—particularly in the physical sciences—have not themselves become fluent in the subjects they’re teaching.

Source: M. M. Seastrom and others, *Qualifications of Public School Teacher Workforce: Prevalence of Out-of-Field Teaching 1987-1988 to 1999-2000* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

percent—and 32 percent in high-poverty secondary schools.<sup>47</sup> The problem is worst in math and science.<sup>48</sup>

This woeful state of affairs begins but does not end with pre-service teacher education, and it is compounded by district and school staffing practices that often force teachers to teach subjects outside of their area of expertise. (It is also important to note that teachers themselves are not at fault. A teacher who neither majored nor minored in physics, for example, only winds up having to teach the subject because more qualified teachers who can meet the pressing need are hard for his or her principal to find.)

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Nevertheless, we are forced to ask: Who is entering teacher training programs, and how are they being trained once in the pipeline?

Notwithstanding the rapid growth of alternative certification programs, which are usually attached to alternative training routes (discussed in “Overhauling Licensing and Certification,” p. 47), the fact is that the vast majority of teachers are still trained through “traditional” means—meaning, they earn degrees from four-year undergraduate institutions.<sup>49</sup>

And the training that teacher candidates receive adds far too little value. Studies show that a teacher’s level of literacy is the single most important teacher attribute affecting student achievement—more important than certification status, experience, and the amount of professional development a teacher receives.<sup>50, 51</sup> Yet our schools of education do very little to attract students of high academic caliber or to provide those who do not arrive with a strong academic background with quality literacy instruction. Universities still tend to separate schools of education from arts and sciences departments, where the deepest knowledge base on specific subjects resides.

A 757-page tome released in 2005 by the American Educational Research Association panel on teacher research and teacher education reached the pallid conclusion that “few definitive statements can be made about the effects of different structural models for pre-service teacher education programs... Better measures of teacher performance are needed in research that attempts to connect preparation programs to the teaching performance of their graduates.”<sup>52</sup>

This observation hits upon a key point. Today, we simply cannot tell what characterizes the most effective teacher education programs because we have no way of measuring success. Without this knowledge, it is impossible to learn

## THE TEACHING COMMISSION

from the best training programs or to correct or close the worst.

To this end, in *Teaching At Risk*, the Teaching Commission called on states to systematically track the effectiveness of their teacher education programs. At a bare minimum, this would mean publishing graduates' pass rates on certification exams. Ideally, it would include measures of graduates' performance once they enter the classroom. We believe that this data should be made available to the general public—and that new state accountability systems should sanction or close poor programs and reward (and spread best practices from) the most effective ones.

### **Results**

Two years later, we are still deeply disappointed by the state of teacher preparation and by leaders' failure to do anything about it.

Why has overall progress been so halting? First, there is little political incentive for governors to tackle the problem head-on; if teacher preparation institutions are failing, they are failing quietly. Second, university presidents continue to make the mistake of delegating responsibility for teacher education exclusively to deans of schools of education, rather than bringing to bear the focus and resources of their entire academic institutions.

Perhaps most significantly, teacher preparation programs themselves feel little incentive to change. Students continue to enroll in their programs, generating substantial revenue. Districts continue to hire their graduates. Without substantial competition from other providers, general bureaucratic inertia carries the day.

Outgoing President of Teachers College, Columbia University, Arthur Levine has written, "Rather than acknowledging that they have real problems to confront, education schools have for the most part continued to do business as usual.

## HONOR ROLL

### **LOUISIANA TEACHER PREPARATION ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM**

In 1999 and 2000, Louisiana discovered that it had a high percentage of uncertified teachers; low passage rates on the Praxis examination, a standardized exam that measures the basic skills of incoming teachers; a low number of teacher graduates in math, science, and special education; a low number of minorities completing programs; and a perception that preparation programs were of low quality. The state devised an accountability system intended to better measure the performance of teacher preparation programs and encourage them to improve their performance.

By the end of the 2004-2005 school year, the system was tracking the performance of various teacher preparation programs based on, among other indicators: the number of total program graduates; the number of graduates going to work in critical shortage areas; and their graduates' performance on the Praxis test. The system also linked teacher preparation programs to the satisfaction of their graduates during their first year of teaching through a survey aligned with the state's standards for teachers.

In 2005-2006 the state is continuing to develop and test a value-added model that will rate preparation programs on how well their graduates contribute to student achievement growth. Once validity and reliability are shown for the model, it will be added as a factor to the accountability system.<sup>53</sup>

For more information see [asa.regents.state.la.us/TE](http://asa.regents.state.la.us/TE) or contact the Louisiana Board of Regents Division of Academic and Student Affairs at 225-342-4253.

#### FACT FILE

<b>Created:</b>	2001
<b>Parties Affected:</b>	All public and private teacher preparation programs
<b>Cost:</b>	\$150,000 to develop the accountability system and \$565,000 to develop the value-added model, other ongoing costs
<b>Funding:</b>	State funds

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Dismissing their critics as ideologues and know-nothings, too many have chosen to ignore not only their own shortcomings, but also the extraordinary changes in the nation and the world that should have led education schools to reevaluate the ways in which they prepare educators.”<sup>54</sup>

In this context, the good work being done deserves special attention and praise.

A number of states have gotten aggressive about assessing the quality of their teacher education programs and potentially linking these evaluations to real-world consequences.

In **Ohio**, value-added assessment of student learning gains is becoming well established, and the legislature recently passed a law requiring these academic growth measures to be part of the state’s school performance index by 2007. In addition, the Teacher Quality Partnership, a consortium of the state’s 50 teacher preparation institutions, is using student achievement data to gain insight into teacher education programs and systematically hone in on what works in teacher preparation—and what doesn’t.<sup>55</sup> We commend the proactive push.

A similar initiative is underway in **Louisiana**, where researchers are linking value-added student assessment data to teachers’ preparation institutions in order to gain a better understanding of the characteristics of teacher training programs that drive student achievement gains.<sup>56</sup>

And in **Colorado**, the state has been implementing new performance-based contracts for state-funded institutions of higher education, as required under law. These contracts lay out a series of specific standards that teacher preparation programs must meet, including mandates on giving prospective teachers intensive instruction in the subjects they intend to teach and ensuring that all graduates have received training in the effective use of student assessment data.<sup>57</sup>

## HONOR ROLL

### OHIO TEACHER QUALITY PARTNERSHIP

The state of Ohio has initiated a major study of teacher effectiveness called the Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP). Launched in 2003, the TQP—a consortium of the state's 50 colleges and universities offering teacher preparation programs—will undertake five comprehensive research studies focused on connecting how teachers are prepared with their actual classroom effectiveness in improving student achievement.

The Teaching Commission believes that the TQP is a powerful model for states seeking to hone in on the relative quality of their teacher preparation programs. Commendably, higher education institutions themselves are taking the initiative to scrutinize their own strengths and weaknesses so that they can chart a course to better outcomes.

These efforts rely upon and complement the work being done by the Battelle for Kids, a public-private partnership working to use data more effectively to drive student learning gains. Battelle for Kids has been helping school districts to utilize value-added student achievement information through an online database that allows schools to view and use district, building, grade, and student-level performance data. Started as a pilot project in 42 districts, the value-added analysis will go statewide starting in August 2006 and a value-added component will be included in the state accountability system by 2008. The value-added information that has been generated by the Battelle project since the project began will be used in the TQP research of teachers' effects in the classroom.<sup>58</sup>

For more information see [www.tqpohio.org](http://www.tqpohio.org) and [www.battelleforkids.com/b4k/rt](http://www.battelleforkids.com/b4k/rt) or contact the Teacher Quality Partnership Director at 740-392-6868, ext. 3491, or Battelle for Kids at 614-481-3141.

#### FACT FILE

Created: 2003

Duration: 7 years

Cost: \$13 million

Funding: Various private foundations, U.S. Congress through the Fund for Improvement of Post Secondary Education, the Ohio Department of Education, the Ohio Board of Regents, various Ohio universities, Bank One, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

## THE TEACHING COMMISSION

The Teaching Commission also singles out for praise teacher education programs that encourage undergraduates who have excelled in their subject areas to enter teaching—by paving the pathways into the profession and breaking down barriers to entry. **UTeach**, a pioneering University of Texas program that helps high-caliber math, science, and engineering majors get the training and credentials they need to become teachers, is the leading example here. Enrollment in the program has climbed steadily from 28 in the fall of 1997 to more than 400 in the spring of 2005.<sup>59</sup> The model is being replicated in other states, including **California**.<sup>60</sup> And we are also pleased that the City University of New York, New York University, and the New York City Department of Education are working together to create the **Partnership for Teacher Excellence**, which will design and implement new undergraduate and graduate level teacher education programs.<sup>61</sup>

The Commission remains impressed by the work of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, whose **Teachers for a New Era** initiative is changing the way teachers are trained on 11 campuses around the country, with special attention paid to bolstering subject matter knowledge, honing training in pedagogical practice, and providing rigorous in-school induction. Carnegie is committed to measuring the results of these reforms by eventually looking at the actual learning gains made by students taught by these programs' graduates.<sup>62</sup>

For such limited reforms to begin scaling up, however, leadership is necessary. At the federal level, there are two primary levers for change: Title II of the Higher Education Act (HEA) and Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind). Both are due to be reauthorized soon. We are pleased that the Ready to Teach Act, which would toughen teacher preparation standards,

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remains in the operating draft of what will likely become the new HEA, and we urge Congress not to weaken those provisions. We also urge serious scrutiny of Title II of the No Child Left Behind law when it is reauthorized; that law is ultimately responsible for more funding of teacher preparation programs (nearly \$3 billion annually in Improving Teacher Quality State Grants), and it must make a clear statement that teacher preparation in America is inadequate.

The Commission also strongly supports the bipartisan **10,000 Teachers, 10 Million Minds Science and Math Scholarship Act**, legislation drawn from the excellent National Academies Report, *Rising Above The Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future*.<sup>63</sup> For an investment of \$9 billion, that bill would tackle the growing problem of America's deteriorating skills by, among other things, recruiting 10,000 future science and math teachers each year with four-year college scholarships, with bonuses to those who teach in underserved schools. Also being considered at the federal level are two other worthy proposals: **the TEACH Act**, authored by Rep. George Miller (D-CA), which would provide up-front tuition assistance to talented undergraduates who commit to a career in education<sup>64</sup>; and Sen. Barack Obama's still nascent proposal for "**innovation districts**"—school districts that, with federal help, would put in place innovative teacher compensation plans and create "new teacher academies...to recruit effective teachers for low-performing, high-poverty schools."<sup>65</sup>

**W**e urge serious scrutiny of Title II of the No Child Left Behind law when it is reauthorized.

## THE TEACHING COMMISSION

One final area of progress must be mentioned in the effort to overhaul teacher preparation: a series of recent and ongoing studies that look unflinchingly at what works and what doesn't in these programs. In March 2005, Arthur Levine, outgoing president of Columbia University's Teachers College, released the first in a trilogy of reports on the performance of education schools—and the conclusions were deeply critical. Late last year, the National Academy of Education released a report calling for radical changes in teacher education programs to improve student literacy skills. And the Center for Education of the National Research Council has initiated its own sweeping study of teacher preparation in the United States; its findings are due in late 2007 or early 2008.

Being candid about a problem is a prerequisite to marshaling the courage to fix it. But in the end, to be worth their time and effort, these studies must spur bold action, not another cycle of discussion, deliberation, and, ultimately, dysfunction.

## RECOMMENDATION 3

## Overhauling Licensing and Certification

**GRADES**

C for effort

C for results

**T**he Commission believes that the third key to rejuvenating the teaching profession in America is radically reforming certification and licensure systems. The status quo tends to suffer from two seemingly paradoxical problems. First, barriers to entry are too high. Confusing and cumbersome procedures discourage many talented would-be teachers from entering the classroom. Second, entry standards are too low, allowing many underqualified individuals to become teachers without having demonstrated sufficient subject-area knowledge or pedagogical skill. (This problem is complicated by the fact, discussed later in “Strengthening Leadership and Support,” p. 59, that it remains exceedingly difficult to remove an underperforming teacher once he or she is hired.)

The solution is simultaneously to streamline those overly bureaucratic licensing and certification procedures and to raise the *meaningful* standards with which teachers must comply—opening the floodgates to a wider range of talent while ensuring that those who commit to teaching can demonstrate the ability to do the job well.

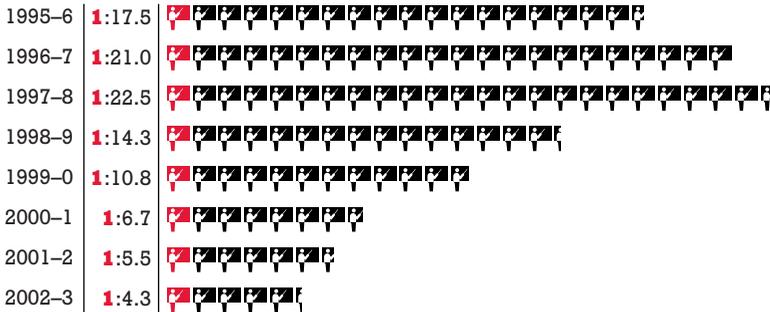
## THE TEACHING COMMISSION

### VITAL SIGNS

### **Alternative Certification Nation**

The growth of alternative pathways into the teaching profession over the last decade

Ratio of **teachers completing alternate certificate programs** to those completing traditional college preparation programs



**Why It Matters** Traditional schools of education are facing increasing competition from new training and certification programs.

Source: Calculated using data from the National Center for Education Information, *State Policy Trends for Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification: A Moving Target* (September 2005).

The No Child Left Behind law's requirement that all states put a "highly qualified" teacher in every classroom by the end of 2005-2006 laid down a meaningful marker in this regard. In response, states are generally administering tougher tests for new entrants into the profession. However, much of the promise of the provision has been squandered. Many veteran teachers are escaping the new requirements because states are building their "high, objective, uniform state standards of evaluation" (HOUSSE provisions) in a manner that essentially makes all veteran teachers qualified by definition. As Stanford University professor Terry Moe has pointed out,

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The HOUSSE provisions create a loophole big enough to drive three million veteran teachers through—and the states have incentives to do just that. They are under intense political pressure, especially from teachers unions, to protect the interests of veteran teachers and to ensure that no one loses a job. It is no accident that bad teachers have long been virtually impossible to remove from the classroom. And it is no accident that most states are now designing their HOUSSE standards to ensure that every veteran teacher can meet them, regardless of their true competence.<sup>66</sup>

The National Council on Teacher Quality has documented the results of this ineffectual state strategy, reviewing all 50 state plans and concluding that “only a handful of states appear willing to comply with the spirit of that portion of the law that seeks to correct the long-tolerated, widespread, and inadequate preparation of American teachers in their subject areas.” In the Council’s December 2004 review of state plans, one state (Colorado) earned an “A” grade; 21 earned “D”’s or “F”’s.<sup>67</sup> As Michael Petrilli, former U.S. Department of Education official and current vice president at the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, has put it, “HOUSSE in most states is...really just an elaborate paper exercise. Teachers get points for serving on curriculum committees, attending conferences, even supervising student-teachers.”<sup>68</sup> States need to be held accountable for their HOUSSE plans.

The Teaching Commission is pleased that one relatively new credential, the certification administered by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, has experienced rapid growth over the last few years. More than 47,000 teachers, including a member of the Commission, have earned the designation. The achievement offers participating teachers a meaningful sense of accomplishment and advancement, useful on-the-job training, and, in many states, significant financial rewards.

## THE TEACHING COMMISSION

But ultimately, the teaching profession needs to experience more profound change. Bureaucratic barriers must be streamlined and standards must be set high and focused on improving student achievement.

### **Results**

How are states doing on these two fronts? The verdict is mixed.

**Streamlining.** Alternative routes to certification have grown dramatically in recent years, producing some 35,000 graduates last year alone. Nationwide, such teachers now represent 20 percent of all new hires.<sup>69</sup> While that is far from earth-shattering, it represents a movement that can no longer be ignored.

But in celebrating these new routes to teaching, we must take care not to appreciate form over function—not to commend process over genuine progress. Alternative certification programs were intended as an avenue for people with strong academic backgrounds to enter the profession, and some are simply relaxing standards broadly. In a study released in late 2005, the Harvard Project on the Next Generation of Teachers looked carefully at 13 alternative certification programs in four states and determined that “these alternative certification programs may have opened the profession to new candidates, but they struggled to provide sufficient preparation and to serve as gatekeepers of quality in the process.”<sup>70</sup>

The Teaching Commission believes these findings make the case for more systematically connecting teacher success or lack thereof back to the programs in which teachers are trained. And when we discover training and certification models that work, states and districts should look for opportunities to replicate success.

Since 2000, **The New Teacher Project** (TNTP) has recruited, prepared, or certified nearly 20,000 new teachers in urban schools, primarily by

## HONOR ROLL

### TEACH FOR AMERICA

Teach For America (TFA) began in 1989 with the objective of recruiting talented college graduates to teach in low-income schools where high-quality teachers are often hardest to find. The program has grown in size and reputation, to the point that in 2005 it received 17,000 applicants for just 3,500 openings. Among those applying to TFA were 12 percent of the senior classes of Yale and Spelman College, 11 percent of Dartmouth's seniors, and 8 percent of Princeton and Harvard's seniors.

TFA trains college graduates who have not had formal teacher training through an intensive summer training session that includes trial teaching under the supervision of an experienced teacher and intensive professional development. After the summer of training, teachers are placed in low-income communities and continue to receive support from TFA for the two-year term of service.

While students from all majors are encouraged to apply to the program, TFA places a special premium on attracting those with backgrounds in shortage subject areas. Sixteen percent of corps members majored in math, science, or engineering. It is also notable that 27 percent of corps members (in 2005) were people of color.

TFA corps members have proven to be effective in the classroom. One study found that, on average, TFA teachers produced a positive effect on their students' achievement levels relative to teachers in the same district recruited and trained through other routes.<sup>71</sup> Another study found that TFA teachers had a positive impact on math achievement when compared to a control group of teachers of all experience levels and that TFA teachers provide roughly one additional month of math learning per year.<sup>72</sup>

For more information see [www.teachforamerica.org](http://www.teachforamerica.org) or contact Teach For America at 212-279-2080.

### FACT FILE

Created:	1989
Teachers:	3500 in 2005
Cost:	\$11,000 per corps member recruited, trained, and supported
Funding:	From more than 4,000 separate sources, mostly private contributions from corporations, foundations, and individuals; also receives federal funding

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working with school districts to establish several alternative certification pathways. These programs are highly selective—the application-to-hire ratio in the TNTP-run New York City Teaching Fellows program in 2005 was 8-to-1; in Oakland, CA and Washington, DC, it was 15-to-1. As a result, individuals attracted to these programs had an average undergraduate grade point average of 3.35. First-year retention rates surpass the national average for urban areas, and principals express high levels of satisfaction with teachers recruited through TNTP. And perhaps most importantly, where it operates, TNTP is not simply on the margins. In New York City, the nation's largest public school district, the non-profit program is responsible for more than 25 percent of all new hires each year.<sup>73</sup>

Worth special commendation is **Teach For America** (TFA). Though not technically a certification program, since TFA's inception in 1989 nearly 100,000 individuals have applied to it, and 14,000 corps members who might not otherwise have entered teaching have been placed in high-need classrooms throughout the country. In fact, today TFA is the nation's 10th largest employer of recent college graduates, attracting applications from 12 percent of Yale University's senior class and 12 percent of Spelman College's senior class. As with the New Teacher Project, standards for entry are high. The average undergraduate grade point average of a 2005 TFA corps member was 3.54.<sup>74</sup>

An independent study released in 2004 made clear that TFA corps members are as or more effective in improving student achievement as are peers who were traditionally certified. The research found that classrooms taught by corps members made more progress in a year in math than classrooms taught by non-TFA teachers, and made equivalent gains in reading.<sup>75</sup> Critics are quick to point out that many TFA teachers leave the classroom after just a few years on the job. We

# HONOR ROLL

## THE NEW TEACHER PROJECT

The New Teacher Project (TNTP) is a non-profit organization formed in 1997 to increase the number of talented people who become teachers in high-poverty, urban school districts and create environments for all educators that maximize their impact on student achievement. The organization works with school districts, colleges of education, state departments of education, and others to develop creative recruiting, selection, training, certification, and support services for teachers or those wanting to be teachers.

Since its founding, TNTP has recruited, prepared, or certified nearly 20,000 teachers, developed more than 40 programs in 22 states, and worked with approximately 150 school districts. Ninety-two percent of principals say they would hire another TNTP teacher and 93 percent say they were satisfied with their TNTP teacher.<sup>76</sup>

On average, 67 percent of all teachers hired through TNTP's alternative certification programs are eligible to teach high-need subjects such as math, science, and special education, and the retention rate for TNTP alternative route hires surpasses the national average for beginning teachers in urban areas, 90 percent to 82 percent. (In New York City, where TNTP has more than 7,000 teachers currently teaching, 73 percent of all TNTP teachers who have entered the classroom are still teaching.)<sup>77, 78</sup>

The cost for TNTP to undertake programs in districts varies depending on the type and size of the teaching cohort needed and the type of service to be provided by TNTP. An approximate cost to recruit, select, train, place and support a new high-need teacher is \$4000 per teacher if the cohort size is 100. School districts typically pay for this service from their district funds.<sup>79</sup> For more information see [www.tntp.org/](http://www.tntp.org/) or contact The New Teacher Project at 212-590-2484.

To see TNTP's growth trend over the last five years, see the graph on the following page.

### FACT FILE

Created:	1997
Total No. of Teachers:	13,000 since 1997
Schools:	Developed over 40 programs in 20 states
Funding:	District funds, sometimes federal grants or outside fundraising

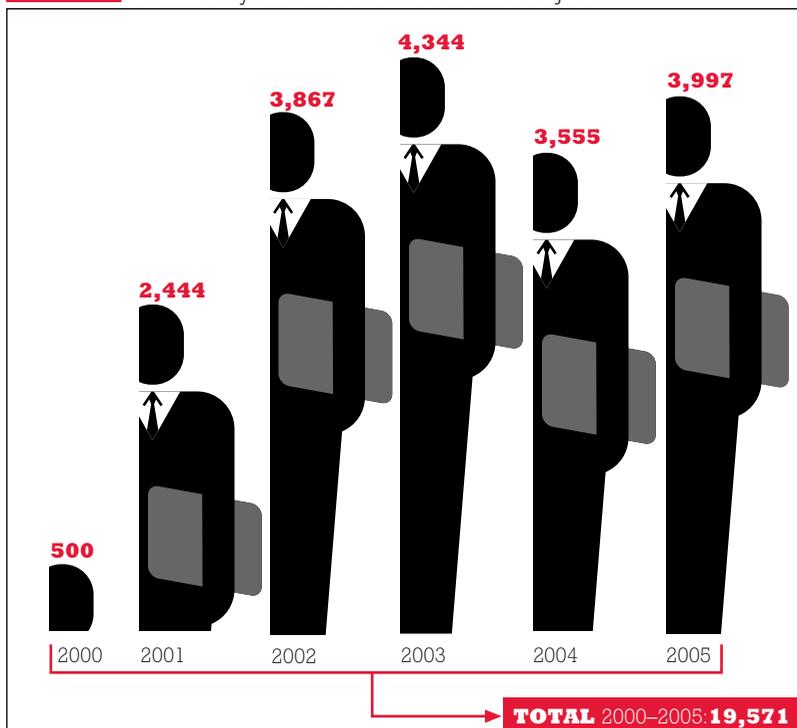
# HONOR ROLL

## THE NEW TEACHER PROJECT

### VITAL SIGNS

#### Hire and Hire

Number of teachers recruited, certified and/or trained by the The New Teacher Project



**Why It Matters** Alternative training and certification programs are beginning to change the paradigm and open the teaching profession to people from all walks of life.

Source: The New Teacher Project, *Teacher Hiring History and 2005 Alternative Certification Results* (New York, NY: TNTP, December 2005).

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believe this misses the point. TFA is, as we speak, the largest, most effective, and most systematic effort to bring quality teachers into low-income American schools. And when corps members do leave the classroom, they do not turn their backs on students. Rather, they find other ways to help improve student achievement—by leading schools, driving public policy change, or focusing their businesses or non-profit organizations on the challenge.

We also commend **Troops to Teachers**, a small-scale but worthwhile federally funded program that over the last four years has helped some 4,000 former military personnel transition easily into classroom teaching. And we urge businesses to emulate IBM Corporation’s launch of the **Transition to Teaching** program. In the pilot stage, the program will move 100 experienced employees with math and science expertise into the classroom. IBM will reimburse participants up to \$15,000 for tuition and stipends while they train to become teachers and will offer online mentoring and other support services in conjunction with partner colleges, universities, and school districts.<sup>80</sup>

While urging the spread of alternative certification programs, the Teaching Commission also called on states to simplify their often onerous certification and licensure systems. Though it is difficult to measure the progress here, our unscientific survey suggests that “mainline” certification and licensure is becoming somewhat easier—though not quickly enough. Two states, **Virginia** and **Florida** (see “Honor Roll,” p. 56), earn kudos for their efforts to reduce the number of needless headaches for those seeking to enter the teaching profession.

**Standards.** Unfortunately, the rapid growth of alternate entry programs and some paving of conventional pathways has not necessarily coincided with state policies raising standards in meaningful ways.

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### **FLORIDA AND VIRGINIA: STREAMLINING BUREAUCRACY**

The Virginia and Florida Departments of Education are two standouts in bringing down barriers to entry and helping to provide prospective teachers with easy access to information on how to enter the profession. They have done this in part by building user-friendly Web sites ([www.teachvirginia.org](http://www.teachvirginia.org) and [www.teachinflorida.com](http://www.teachinflorida.com)) that encourage

all comers to consider teaching and reduce the intimidation and frustration that are often part of the process.

In Florida, teacher candidates can actually submit all certification paperwork—including transcripts, certification test results, and other information—online.

Officials in Florida say that this paperless certification process has, along with other redesigns of the process, enabled them to reduce certification processing time from 120 days to 30 days.<sup>81</sup>

Both Web sites also offer an important and unfortunately uncommon feature for already-licensed teachers who are looking for jobs and school districts looking to fill openings in their schools: They enable teachers to post resumes and school administrators to post job

openings.<sup>82</sup> Though this is common practice in private sector job searches across the country, in far too many states prospective public school teachers are forced to navigate complex bureaucratic terrain. Often, those seeking to teach in large urban districts are forced to wait until late in the hiring season to learn of potential openings, placing many big city schools at an even larger disadvantage in attracting top talent.

For more information see the Web sites above or contact the Virginia Department of Education, Division of Teacher Education and Licensure at 804-371-2522 and the Florida Department of Education, Division of Educator Quality at 850-245-0420.

#### FACT FILE

Location: Florida, Virginia

Creation: 2003-2004

Key Features: Online resume posting, online job posting, links to new teacher mentor programs, licensure manual and applications, list of assessment requirements, teacher certification status lookup tool, guidelines for alternative certification

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For instance, in *Teaching at Risk*, the Teaching Commission urged states to test would-be teachers in specific content areas and generally toughen requirements in this regard. There have been uneven indicators on this score. As of 2005, 37 states required subject-knowledge tests for high school teachers to earn an initial license; just 24 states required subject-knowledge tests for middle school teachers to earn an initial license.<sup>83</sup>

We also called on states to agree on a common national standard for subject-area tests and work together to set cutoff scores at an appropriate level of mastery. This important recommendation has not progressed. We are pleased, however, by the establishment in early 2005 of the first regional reciprocal licensing agreement in the country—the **Mid-Atlantic Regional Teachers Project**'s "Meritorious New Teacher Candidate" designation. This allows talented teachers who meet the plan's rigorous requirements, including a high score on the Praxis II content-knowledge tests in their subject areas, to work throughout the region without having to meet additional state requirements.<sup>84</sup> Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia deserve credit for pioneering and accepting the new stamp of approval.

We encourage continued attempts to change the paradigm of how we give aspiring educators permission to teach. For a host of reasons, both political and operational, the **American Board for Certification of Teaching Excellence**'s "Passport to Teaching," a streamlined process requiring prospective teachers to demonstrate mastery on rigorous examinations of subject area and professional teaching knowledge, has struggled to get off the ground. We hope either this entryway into the profession or one like it survives and spreads around the country.

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Lastly, the Commission is intrigued by the Bush Administration's efforts to create a national **adjunct teacher corps**, which would enable and encourage qualified professionals to enter public school classrooms on a part-time basis to share their expertise and real-world experience with students. We are eager to hear more details on the proposed program, which could be particularly valuable in strengthening math and science instruction.

RECOMMENDATION 4

## Strengthening Leadership and Support

**GRADES**

B for effort

B- for results

**C**hanging teacher compensation, preparation, and certification are all critically important. But unless and until principals have more freedom to hire and fire teachers—and are increasingly held responsible for providing the teachers they hire with high-quality mentoring and on-the-job training—schools will not become genuinely professional workplaces. Exemplary teachers will not be encouraged and rewarded. Ineffective teachers will not be required to improve and, when they fail to improve, they will not be fired. Accountability will remain an empty buzzword, not a motivating principle.

Today, hiring and assignment practices are frustrating and farcical. Far too little emphasis is placed on the quality of a teacher's previous classroom work or, for new teachers, on basic evaluations like interviews. Rigid rules often interfere with basic management decisions.

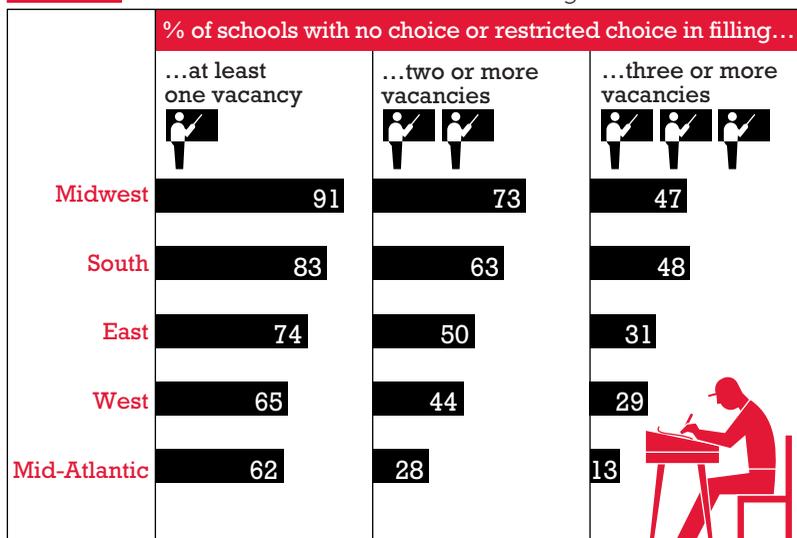
Just how distorted are current hiring constraints? In its study of hiring and

## THE TEACHING COMMISSION

### VITAL SIGNS

#### Staff Infection

% of schools in five representative urban districts that had no choice or restricted choice in filling teacher vacancies



**Why It Matters** Principals are increasingly being held accountable for their schools' success or failure—yet in most urban districts, they have limited ability to hire and fire staff.

Source: Jessica Levin, Jennifer Mulhern and Joan Schunck, *Unintended Consequences: The Case for Reforming the Staffing Rules in Urban Teachers Union Contracts* (New York, NY: TNTP, 2005).

intra-district transfer practices in five representative big-city school districts from all parts of the country, **The New Teacher Project** discovered that restrictive teachers union rules often undermine smart personnel decisions. The study found that fully “40 percent of school-level vacancies, on average, were filled by voluntary transfers or excessed teachers” (meaning teachers who had been cut from a specific

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school, often in response to declines in budget or student enrollment) “over whom schools had either no choice at all or limited choice.” Poor-performing teachers are passed around from school to school instead of being terminated—a process called “the dance of the lemons.” New teacher applicants are often lost to slow and bureaucratic hiring practices; just one month before the start of school, the studied districts still had to hire and place between 67 and 93 percent of their new teachers. Finally, the report revealed that novice teachers are treated as expendable, frequently being bumped from their positions in schools simply because more senior teachers need or want their jobs.<sup>85</sup>

An investigation in **Illinois** uncovered an equally dysfunctional system of dealing with ineffective teachers. The Small Newspaper Group, a consortium of Illinois newspapers, found that “twenty years after the Illinois Legislature tried to bring greater accountability into the classroom by making it easier to fire bad teachers...the data indicates that tenure has evolved into near total job protection that mocks the goal of accountability.” Of nearly 100,000 tenured teachers in Illinois, an average of only two are fired each year for poor performance. Despite millions of hours devoted to evaluating teacher performance, only 1 out of every 930 evaluations of tenured teachers results in an “unsatisfactory” rating. In the past 18 years, 94 percent of school districts in the state have never even attempted to fire anyone with tenure.<sup>86</sup>

### Results

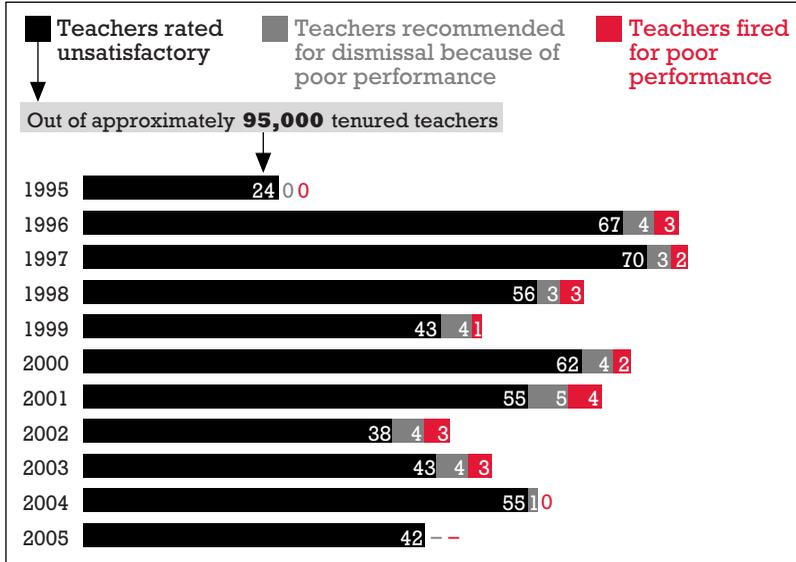
Though far too many counterproductive employment protections for teachers remain in place across the country, some local leaders have managed to start moving the needle. In **New York City** in 2005, the city and the teachers union

## THE TEACHING COMMISSION

### VITAL SIGNS

### Bad Apples, Still on the Tree

The number of tenured teachers rated unsatisfactory and removed for poor performance in the State of Illinois



**Why It Matters** In Illinois, fewer than 1 percent of tenured teachers statewide are rated unsatisfactory in any given year, and far fewer are fired for poor performance.

Source: Scott Reeder (author of "The Hidden Cost of Tenure," Small Newspaper), in discussion with Josh Greenman, January 3, 2006.

reached agreement on a new contract that, among other worthwhile reforms, will eliminate some rights granted to teachers solely on the basis of their seniority.<sup>87</sup> In **Philadelphia**, as a result of contract changes agreed to in 2004, many more teaching positions are being filled by principals themselves rather than being dictated by central, seniority-based rules.<sup>88</sup> And in **Chicago**, principals are exercis-

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### **NEW YORK CITY: MENTORING FOR NEW TEACHERS**

New York has taken actions over the last two years to support its new teachers through a mentoring program and to give school leaders more authority to hire their instructional teams.

In August of 2004, the city announced a \$36 million mentoring program that would provide 300 mentors to each of the more than 5,000 new teachers in New York City. The new mentors are hired full-time to support the teachers and receive rigorous professional development from the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz, a group with a long history of success in implementing mentoring programs. Its mentoring model has been used for 16 years and has shown a retention rate of 88 percent after six years of teaching, compared to the national rate of between 50 and 60 percent after 5 years.<sup>89</sup>

In October 2005, the city moved toward giving administrators more control over hiring and firing decisions when the city and the city's teachers union reached agreement on a new contract. Under the new pact, there would be an end to seniority transfers, which once forced less senior teachers to stand in line behind more senior teachers when vacancies came open. Also, all vacancies, instead of only half, must now be advertised citywide.<sup>90</sup> In addition, the contract should make poor performing teachers easier to remove by prohibiting them from filing a grievance over each and every negative letter placed in their file by a principal.<sup>91</sup>

For more information see [www.nyce.net](http://www.nyce.net) or contact the New York City Department of Education at 718-935-2000.

#### FACT FILE

Created:	2004
Teachers:	300 mentors for 5,000 new teachers
Cost:	\$36,000,000
Partnership:	New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz
Funding:	Predominantly city, but some state and federal funding

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ing newfound power to easily remove untenured teachers who aren't up to the job.<sup>92</sup>

But accountability is a two-way street—and the Commission believes that, as critical as it is to give school leaders more authority, those leaders and upper level district management must also be held accountable for providing initial mentoring and induction, as well as ongoing on-the-job training and staff development. As a 2005 report by **the Finance Project** comparing education to six other fields made clear, the teaching profession is far behind other fields in offering in-service training and induction and opportunities for peer support and learning.<sup>93</sup> Among the conclusions: “Most of the comparison fields have developed more uniform standards for entry, preparation program approval, and in-service training”; “clinical experiences and induction programs in education are less structured and less consistently supervised than those of some other fields”; “education is the only field that requires managers to have separate licensure”; and “in contrast to other public sector employees who receive full public funding of their preservice preparation, public school teachers finance their own.”<sup>94</sup>

Therefore, programs that do offer solid training and support to teachers once on the job need to be recognized and replicated. In the “Honor Roll” on pp. 63 and 65, we spotlight new mentoring and induction programs in **New York, New York** and **Durham, North Carolina**. Programs of this kind aimed at increasing the chances of success for neophyte teachers—as well as those that offer intensive subject knowledge and pedagogical training to veteran teachers—are central to the future of the profession.

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### **DURHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS MENTORING PROGRAM**

In the 2005-2006 school year, the Durham Public School System (DPS) began implementing a mentor program modeled after the full-time mentor model developed by the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz. DPS realized that its previous mentor program, in which full-time teachers mentored one to four newly licensed teachers, was not effective because it compromised the mentor's already demanding schedule.<sup>95</sup>

Under the new program, full-time mentors are working with approximately 16 teachers after being trained by the UCSC. The UCSC model, developed in the Santa Cruz/Silicon Valley schools, has had impressive performance with retention rates of 88 percent over six years.<sup>96</sup> This can be compared to research nationally that finds that 40-50 percent of new teachers leave the classroom within the first 5 years.<sup>97</sup> A cost-benefit analysis of the program shows that the return on investment is 1.5 to 1 after 5 years. Total cost of the program is approximately \$4,400 per teacher per year.<sup>98</sup>

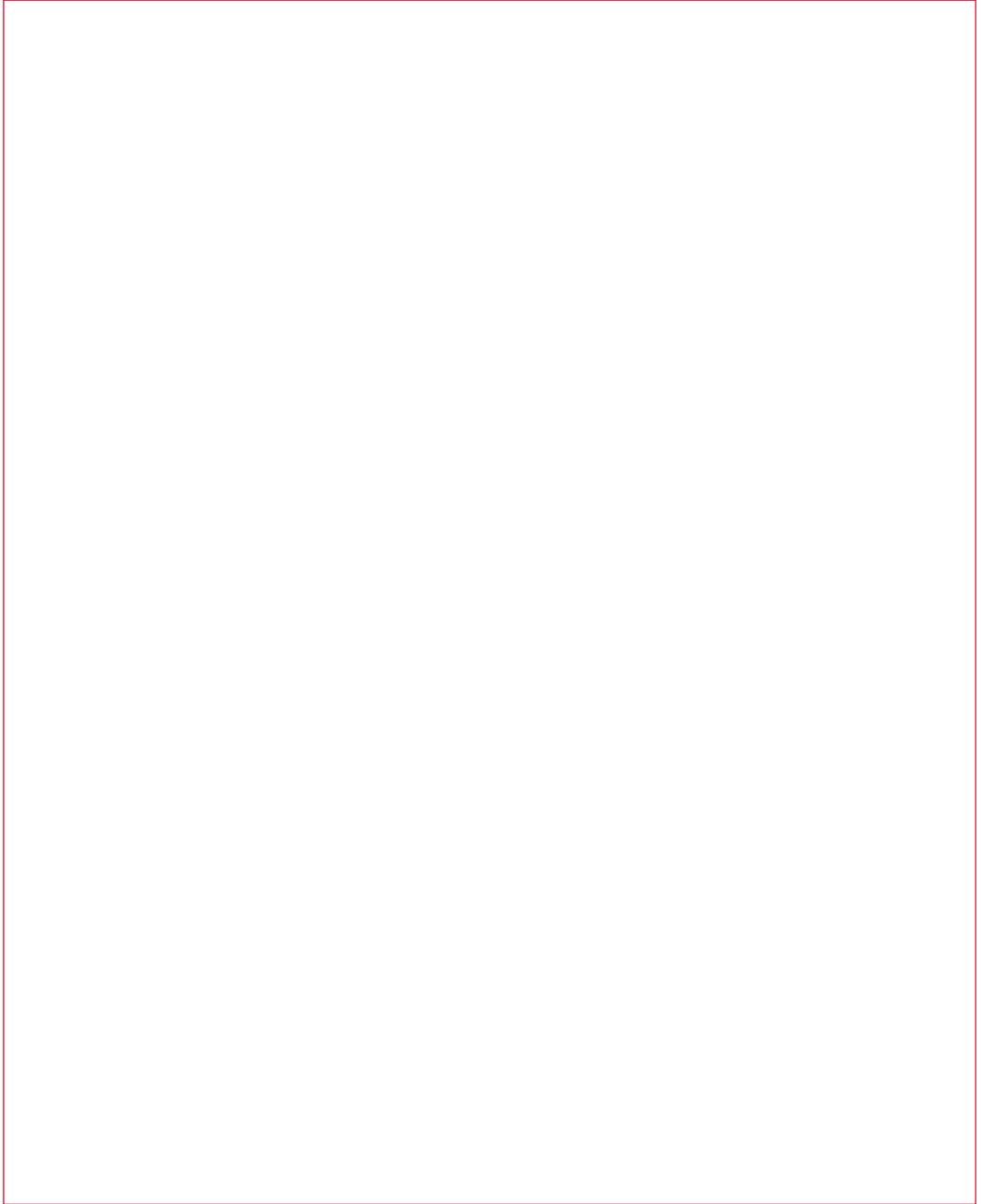
The Teaching Commission believes that all American teachers deserve better on-the-job training. For new teachers, this must include being paired with a successful veteran teacher who can not only "show them the ropes" but also convey successful instructional strategies. So that young teachers have the best possible role models, mentors should be chosen using a variety of measures of excellence, both objective (such as gains on student achievement tests) and subjective (such as structured principal and/or peer evaluations.) And mentors should not be removed from the classroom when they take on these important additional responsibilities.

For more information see [www.dpsnc.net](http://www.dpsnc.net) and [www.newteachercenter.org](http://www.newteachercenter.org) or contact the Durham Public Schools at 919-560-2000.

#### FACT FILE

<b>Created:</b>	2005-2006
<b>Teachers:</b>	32 mentors will each work with 16 new teachers
<b>Cost:</b>	\$6,700 per teacher per year
<b>Partnership:</b>	New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz
<b>Funding:</b>	The Duke-Durham Neighborhood Partnership pledged \$300,000

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## Other Notable Areas of Reform

**C**ontinued movement on the four fronts described in the preceding pages will, we believe, make or break the future of the teaching profession in America. Three related challenges—all of which have emerged in their own right these past two years—demand brief mention.

### **Measuring Teacher Quality and Student Learning Gains**

How do we identify the best teachers? The worst? And how do we give teachers the information and strategies to do better—which is, after all, what they all want to do?

Research into this area is in its infancy. We need to invest much more time, effort, and money into finding the answers and making them useful to policymakers. And as we do, we must not lose sight of the single most important thing that distinguishes superb teachers from subpar ones: the results they get with students. The best teachers improve student academic achievement; the worst teachers do not. And today, most states and districts are far from being

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able to use student achievement data to distinguish between the most and least effective teachers, celebrate the best, and remediate the worst.

As the Education Trust has pointed out, “The reason we don’t have this information is not because it doesn’t exist. It’s mostly because we’re not looking for it.”<sup>99</sup>

The Teaching Commission believes that the great breakthroughs in measuring student learning gains made in the state of Tennessee, in the city of Dallas, Texas, and elsewhere—often driven by private industry and non-profit organizations—are the start of an exciting new era in helping teachers hone their skills and learn from their peers. We welcome the founding of the Data Quality Campaign by 10 national organizations, including Achieve and the National Governors’ Association, and wholeheartedly support its goals. These advances can give principals, management, and the public the opportunity to recognize and reward top performers, and remediate or remove those at the bottom of the barrel. We look forward to additional breakthroughs.

### **Investing in Math, Science, Technology, and Engineering Education**

The fact that the teaching profession writ large needs rehabilitation and reinvigoration should not obscure the special attention the nation ought to be giving to recruiting and retaining top-flight math and science teachers. Those fields are especially crucial to our nation’s economic competitiveness, and the current state of their instruction in our schools is particularly troubling. Two-thirds of math and science teachers who leave the classroom cite dissatisfaction due to poor salaries as an important factor in their reason to leave the field—more than triple the number citing student discipline problems and more than

seven times the number citing class sizes.<sup>100</sup>

The Teaching Commission has been heartened to see this crisis getting special attention at the federal, state, and local level. *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*, the report released in 2006 by the National Academy of Sciences, makes forceful recommendations to improve math and science education in our public schools, including the annual recruitment of 10,000 science and math teachers by awarding four-year, merit-based scholarships to some of our most talented young people, and the systematic improvement of the skills of a quarter million current teachers through summer institutes, science and math master's programs, and stronger curriculum.<sup>101</sup> Some of these recommendations were echoed in the Bush Administration's American Competitiveness Initiative, which seeks to expand low-income students' access to Advanced Placement and/or International Baccalaureate math and science coursework by training 70,000 additional teachers over five years to lead these courses; to encourage up to 30,000 math and science professionals over eight years to become adjunct high school teachers; and to promote research-based practices in math instruction.

### **Correcting the Distribution Problem**

Last but not least, we are encouraged by the growing consensus that America's low-income and minority schools systematically get the short end of a short teacher quality stick. In every way we can measure, schools serving our least privileged students are saddled with the least effective teachers—a state that

**T**wo-thirds of math and science teachers who leave the classroom cite dissatisfaction due to poor salaries.

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worsens economic and racial achievement gaps rather than helping to eradicate them. To cite just one example: In high-poverty schools, secondary classes in core academic subjects are nearly twice as likely, compared to classes in low-poverty schools, to be assigned to a teacher lacking even a college minor in the subject being taught.<sup>102</sup>

Awareness has risen thanks in large part to the tireless efforts of the Education Trust, which has repeatedly found powerful new ways to express the problem and urge policymakers to solve it. Also due credit is the National Partnership for Teaching in At-Risk Schools, chaired by former Virginia Governor Mark Warner, and the researchers from the Center on Reinventing Public Education at the University of Washington, who found that a weakness in the federal Title I funding law and district budgeting practices can result in gaps of several hundred thousand dollars per pupil for poor schools in cities like Houston, Austin, and Denver.<sup>103</sup>

We support policy reforms that offer meaningful monetary rewards to teachers who get results in the schools that need them most, accompanied by focused mentoring and better training. We also support policy changes that expose and repair the little-known problem of “salary cost averaging,” which effectively contributes to intra-district disparities in teacher quality by effectively giving schools that serve the poorest students the least amount of money to pay their teachers.<sup>104</sup>

# Conclusion:

## Where Do We Go From Here?

**L**eaders across America have taken risks and made remarkable progress these last two years. But the work of attracting, training, retaining, and rewarding the teachers we need has only just begun.

As the Teaching Commission closes its doors, we are grateful that other organizations will continue to shine a spotlight on this crisis and keep up the pressure on those with a responsibility for helping to solve it. One such effort is the forthcoming State Policy Yearbook, in which the National Council on Teacher Quality will grade state policy in a range of critical areas and alert the public to the biggest problems that need fixing. We also appreciate the work of the Broad Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, the Education Trust, the New Teacher Project, the Consortium for Policy Research in Education, the Business Roundtable, and many others at the state and local level who are helping solve critical problems.

Given the high stakes of the skills race in which America is competing, it is time for every partner in teacher quality policy to join these reformers and take major steps forward without delay. We therefore call on the following actions by the following stakeholders:

**Federal government.** The U.S. Department of Education should demand that states make good on the spirit and letter of the No Child Left Behind law's promise to put a "highly qualified" teacher in every classroom. The

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U.S. Congress should take strong steps to force teacher preparation institutions to demonstrate results and put teeth into existing accountability measures, invest in better research and student achievement data systems, and attract and retain a new generation of talented math and science teachers. And the President should use the bully pulpit to encourage Americans to consider teaching and advocate for aggressive, bipartisan reforms.

**States.** Governors and other state leaders need to stop reacting defensively to No Child Left Behind and be genuinely responsive to the spirit of the law's teacher quality provisions. They need to give more responsibility to schools themselves for who gets hired and fired, since schools face the consequences of not producing results. They need to recast how they approve teacher preparation programs, establishing clear benchmarks for admission and the overall performance the state expects of program graduates. And they should encourage local innovation in teacher compensation.

**Local districts.** The superintendents and school board members who run school districts must resist the pressure to continue paying teachers more money across the board without any meaningful changes in the way those increases are doled out. They must find new methods for bringing talented managers into schools and give them the staffing authority they need and deserve. Districts need to link teacher performance evaluations to student achievement gains, making evaluation a meaningful tool to nurture employee growth, commend success, and hold poor performing teachers accountable. Much more attention needs to be paid to how teachers are hired, moving up timetables and eliminating transfer rights on the basis of seniority. Finally, districts should develop their own teacher preparation programs or, at the very

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least, partner with local teacher training institutions to pioneer new models of teacher training, mentoring, and induction.

**Universities.** University trustees should pressure the leadership of their institutions to attend to teacher preparation reform and demand an annual report on what the university is doing to put K-12 teaching at the center of the university's mission. To ensure that all teachers get the subject area knowledge they need to succeed, arts and sciences faculty should be far more deeply involved in the preparation of new teachers.

**Teachers.** America's teachers need first and foremost to continue doing the best job they can possibly do. However, we also encourage teachers to raise their voices on public policy matters to help inform ongoing policy discussions and debates. Their official union representatives do not always represent the diversity of voices in our classrooms.

**Businesses.** The business community must continue to awaken to the vital link between teacher quality and global competitiveness, and should partner with education leaders and other public officials to support the changes outlined in this report. In addition, businesses must come to understand that this is not merely a cause to champion with rhetoric; there are concrete steps they can and should take to help strengthen the quality of teaching in America's schools.

**Parents.** Parents should scrutinize existing data on their children's teachers and become active grassroots champions for reforming the way teachers are

**B**usinesses must come to understand that this is not merely a cause to champion with rhetoric.

## THE TEACHING COMMISSION

recruited, trained, retained, and rewarded. Parents should praise exemplary teachers, as many already do, and demand action—in the form of remediation or removal—when teachers are failing their children.

**Journalists.** Journalists must not shy away from looking unflinchingly at the quality of teachers in our schools and peeling away the policies and practices that have created the status quo. Recent investigative reports in Florida and Illinois have led to new awareness and some meaningful movement for change.

Only persistence and political will can translate existing momentum into lasting reform. There are many open pathways to improve America's teaching profession. Leaders must act. The only unacceptable course of action is political paralysis.

# Endnotes

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- <sup>4</sup> Mariann Lemke and others, *International Outcomes of Learning in Mathematics Literacy and Problem Solving: PISA 2003 Results from the U.S. Perspective* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2004).
- <sup>5</sup> Daria Hall and Shana Kennedy, *Primary Progress, Secondary Challenge* (The Education Trust: Washington, DC, March 2006), 20–23.
- <sup>6</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, *2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) Results* (Washington, DC: NCES, 2005), 15, [www.nces.ed.gov/whatsnew/commissioner/remarks/2005/12\\_15\\_2005.asp](http://www.nces.ed.gov/whatsnew/commissioner/remarks/2005/12_15_2005.asp).
- <sup>7</sup> Jay P. Greene, *The Cost of Remedial Education: How Much Michigan Pays When Students Fail to Learn Basic Skills* (Midland, MI: Mackinac Center for Public Policy, 2000), 1.
- <sup>8</sup> Marianne Perie, Rebecca Moran and Anthony D. Lutkus, *NAEP 2004 Trends in Academic Progress: Three Decades of Student Performance in Reading and Mathematics*. National Center for Education Statistics (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2005), 32–35, 41–44.
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- <sup>10</sup> Camille E. Esch and others, *The Status of the Teaching Profession 2005* (Santa Cruz, CA: The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning, 2005).
- <sup>11</sup> John Wirt and others, *The Condition of Education 2004*, National Center for Education Statistics (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2004).
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