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## Improving Teacher Quality and Equitable Distribution of Effective Teachers

By Danny Martinez, MS, SECC Program Associate, Maria Torres, MA, SECC Program Associate, and Chris Times, MBA, SECC Communications Associate

Opportunity. The current economic crisis facing the nation provides a unique opportunity for education. Billions of dollars are being made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). These monies are meant to strengthen education through the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund; Title 1, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; Pell Grants; Federal Work-Study; and other programs (U.S. Department of Education [ED], ARRA, Title I, 2009).

At a recent speech in Iowa, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said, "We need people who are passionate, deeply committed, and determined to help their students succeed despite whatever obstacles they might face in the community and even in their own homes." This call for committed teachers reflects the mandate in NCLB, which includes steps that state educational agencies will take to "ensure that poor and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers" [Section 1111(b)(8)(c)] (ED, 2002). ARRA specifically cites this portion of the law as a key goal of funding.

In looking at the one-time ARRA funds, it is important for decision makers to consider areas in which the funds can make lasting contributions to student achievement. ARRA identifies four reforms that have the potential to help states and districts meet this goal: (a) implement rigorous college- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments, (b) institute data systems and use data-driven decision making, (c) increase teacher effectiveness and assure equitable distribution of



### A Note from the Director

In this edition of the Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC) e-Bulletin we highlight the issues of teacher quality and the equitable distribution of effective teachers. While we all know the importance of this issue from the research on the impact of highly effective and ineffective teachers on student outcomes, many of us also know it through personal experience as educators and parents. As educators, we have watched some teachers struggle while others excel, and as parents we have been part of the discussion about which teachers we want our children to have in a particular school. While it is an issue that we know exists and has a tremendous impact on student achievement, we often struggle with how to address it through policy at the state or local level. Yet many of our children from high-poverty backgrounds are counting on us to ensure that they have the effective teachers they need in their classrooms every day of every year. With the increased emphasis placed on these issues in recent years through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and through a growing body of research in this area, promising strategies are emerging to address the issues and to ensure that every child has an effective teacher.

We hope that the information included in this issue will provide you details on research and practice occurring both nationally and within our region. Be sure to read the stories from our states about their work in this area to find some innovative strategies for addressing both the teacher effectiveness issue and the teacher shortage issue that exists in some areas.

We have enjoyed working with each of our states on the issues of teacher quality and equitable distribution and look forward to continuing this work in the future. We are pleased at SEDL to provide the services of the Southeast Comprehensive Center and look forward to our continuing partnerships with all of you.

Sincerely,

**Robin Jarvis, PhD**  
Director, SECC

teachers, and (d) turn around the lowest performing schools. This article will focus on the reform area of teacher quality and equitable distribution, with emphasis on national data, research, strategies, and the state and federal roles regarding these issues.

## National Data

Provisions of NCLB required all core subjects to be taught by highly qualified teachers (HQTs)—individuals with subject-matter training and demonstrated subject-matter competency—by the end of the 2005–2006 school year. To measure progress toward this goal, ED collects state-level data annually. Using the 2003–2004 school year as the baseline, recent data indicated that the number of core academic classes taught by HQTs has increased over the past few years, but teachers are inequitably distributed among students in high-needs schools (ED, HQT Data, 2009). Furthermore, the data showed that students in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools were assigned teachers that had less experience, were out-of-field, and had marginal credentials.

State-level data compiled by ED indicated that during the 2007–2008 school year, 95 percent of core academic classes in public schools were taught by HQTs. In addition, a higher proportion of core academic classes were taught by HQTs in elementary schools (97 percent) than in secondary schools (94 percent). Also, in most of the states (47 percent for secondary and 41 percent for elementary), high-poverty schools were less likely to have classes taught by HQTs than low-poverty schools.

Regarding teacher content knowledge, The Education Trust (2008) found that during the 2003–2004 school year, 17 percent of core academic classes at the secondary level versus 42 percent of core academic classes at the middle school level were taught by out-of-field teachers. Also, 30 percent of the secondary mathematics classes in high-minority schools versus 16 percent of the secondary mathematics classes in low-minority schools were taught by out-of-field teachers.

Data on teacher experience and qualifications indicated a similar situation. In 2003–2004, 22 percent of teachers in high-minority schools had 3 or fewer years of experience versus 13 percent in low-minority schools (Goldhaber, 2008). Goldhaber also found that in 2003–2004, 40 percent of teachers in high-poverty schools had a master's degree or higher versus 51 percent in low-poverty schools.

Over the years, states and districts have made numerous attempts to address the issues of teacher quality and equitable distribution. Efforts focused on the availability, recruitment, and retention of high-quality and effective teachers for students in high-needs schools, using strategies such as financial bonuses, loan forgiveness, changes in working conditions, etc. Yet little is known about the impact of the various strategies to address teacher inequities, and data on the impact of these attempts on student achievement is lacking.

## Research

The National Comprehensive Center on Teacher Quality (TQ Center) offers a wealth of interactive tools, resources, and events that focus on improving teacher quality and equitable distribution of well-qualified teachers. The TQ Center is sponsoring an upcoming conference on this topic (see box), and other offerings are highlighted in the Additional Resources section of this article.

### Fourth Annual What Works Conference: Beyond Highly Qualified: The Development and Distribution of Highly Effective Teachers and Leaders

The Fairmont Washington, DC  
October 28–30, 2009

This [conference](#) will focus on the latest research on and strategies for addressing teacher effectiveness and equitable distribution. Sessions will address school leadership, Response to Intervention, and the impact of ARRA on states.

In August 2009, the TQ Center published a research and policy brief—[The Distribution of Highly Qualified, Experienced Teachers: Challenges and Opportunities](#)—that provides insight into studies on equitable distribution, policy responses on this issue, and ways that states can use data to identify schools that need targeted support to attract and retain HQTs. In their review of research studies on teacher distribution, authors Imazeki and Goe found that

- Literature on teacher distribution showed a consistent trend that the lowest quality teachers are more likely to teach in schools with higher numbers of high-poverty students.
- Research on factors that affected teacher distribution did not indicate why teachers leave high-poverty schools. But most studies of teacher attrition and mobility showed higher turnover in higher poverty schools.
- Studies showed that institutional policies for transferring and hiring teachers had the potential to disadvantage high-needs schools. Practices such as allowing teachers who began their careers at high-needs schools to transfer to other positions and hiring new teachers late in the summer or near the start of the school year could reduce the quality of new hires in these districts.
- Literature was clear that teachers leave schools that have poor working conditions, such as less autonomy, numerous student behavioral problems, and limited support from administration.

The authors suggested that as states collect data on teacher attrition rates or turnover, they also should collect data on which schools teachers are moving to in order to craft appropriate policies and interventions. Imazeki and Goe emphasized that effective distribution of HQTs is a challenge for both schools and districts, and that much of the variation in findings may be due to differences across schools. Consequently, they indicated that the findings suggested that policies to address inequitable distribution focus on high-needs schools rather than on districts.

## Strategies

A recently published document on use of ARRA funds for school reform and improvement (ED, Using ARRA Funds, 2009) stated that, “Districts and school leaders can improve teacher effectiveness and address inequitable teacher distribution through how they recruit, hire, induct, develop, evaluate, advance, and compensate teachers.” It also detailed the following strategies for accomplishing these goals

- Establish and implement a fair and reliable teacher evaluation system that gives ongoing feedback to teachers and that is used to inform teacher training and advancement
- Attract effective teachers to high-poverty schools and hard-to-staff subject areas by restructuring personnel operations and providing feedback to teacher preparation programs on the success of their graduates
- Redesign teacher training and school schedules to ensure that training is sustained, job-embedded, collaborative, data-driven, and focused on students’ instructional needs
- Provide induction programs for new teachers that include structured mentoring, teacher networks, and extensive professional development (PD)
- Train school staff to partner with families to improve student learning and make informed decisions about academic programs and additional support or services that may be needed
- Improve school leader recruitment efforts and ongoing PD offerings
- Redesign teacher and principal compensation systems to reward factors related to contribution and effectiveness

A number of education and policy research and dissemination organizations offer guidance on use of ARRA funds to improve teacher quality and equitable distribution. In a TQ Center publication, Lasagna (2009) recommended that states use a systematic approach for reform that includes four strategies—provide high-quality induction and mentoring, improve working conditions, create diversified pay structures that reward quality performance, and provide advancement and leadership opportunities for teachers. The author also detailed specific substrategies, provided links to applicable resources, and discussed real-life examples of states that have implemented the strategies.

Two publications from the Center for American Progress (CAP) explore attracting and retaining teachers in high-needs schools and the teacher qualification gap, respectively. In [Ensuring Effective Teachers for All Students: Six State Strategies for Attracting and Retaining Effective Teachers in High-Poverty and High-Minority Schools](#), Chait (2009) discussed why states should work towards assuring that all students have effective teachers, the federal role in this process, and six strategies for improving equitable distribution. The strategies are

1. Analyze and report on teacher distribution between schools

using value-added estimates and other measures.

2. Design a model evaluation system for measuring teacher effectiveness and improving teacher performance.
3. Support programs that offer financial incentives to effective teachers in high-needs schools.
4. Offer funding and models for recruitment and preparation programs that are targeted to high-needs schools.
5. Provide an induction and mentoring program for new teachers in high-poverty schools.
6. Require schools to report their budgets by actual expenditures, rather than positions.

Chait also provided specific examples of states and school districts across the nation that have implemented the strategies—Tennessee’s use of value-added data; eight states that mandate the use of a state-developed evaluation instrument (Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, and South Carolina); beginning teacher training, support, and advancement programs in California, Connecticut, Illinois, and South Carolina; incentive programs in Texas; an urban teacher residency program in Boston and Chicago; a practitioner teacher program in Louisiana; and results-based budgeting in the Oakland Unified School District.

In a CAP publication on teacher quality, Goldhaber (2008) provided insight on the implications of the literature on labor economics on teacher salary structures and suggested several recommendations primarily for state agencies to address inequitable distribution of teachers. The recommendations included creating and maintaining data systems, implementing new teacher policies along with a plan to study their effect, requiring school districts to report spending at each campus to identify spending inequities resulting from teacher qualification disparities, and developing and tapping high-quality pools of teachers that are targeted to schools serving disadvantaged students. Goldhaber cautioned that while these strategies have promise, states must continually look for reform methods, and most importantly, assure that these methods are accompanied by efforts to measure their success.

## State and Federal Roles

State and district policies impact teacher distribution, but according to the Alliance for Excellent Education, federal policymakers play an important role in supporting strategies for recruitment, retention, and improvement in strengthening data systems, teacher preparation, equity in resources, and the use of federal funds to improve teaching. Currently, federal support to assist states in implementing strategies to impact teacher distribution is demonstrated by the availability of ARRA funds to increase teacher effectiveness and assure the equitable distribution of teachers. The time to do something about this issue is now.

"State leaders also need to acknowledge that students in poverty and students of color are shortchanged when it comes to teacher quality, and that states have a moral obligation to do something about that," said Chait (2009). "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds can provide a down payment toward implementing these strategies and put states on a pathway toward ensuring an effective teacher for every student."

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# State Highlights and Events

## Alabama

### Increasing the Effectiveness of Alabama Teachers

By Tony Thacker, Coordinator, Governor's Commission on Quality Teaching  
Mary Lou Meadows, EdD, SECC State Liaison

In 2007, Alabama was proud to report that data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) showed a historic gain of eight points in 4th grade reading for its public school students. The 8-point improvement nearly tripled the national average gain. The 8th grade mathematics gains on the same administration of NAEP were double the national average. The NAEP results, when viewed through the lens of research by Hanushek (1971) and Rockoff (2003) linking student achievement gains to teacher effectiveness and coupled with the high-quality training provided to teachers by the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) and the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI), would seem to indicate that teachers in Alabama are performing effectively in their classrooms. In most instances, that would be correct. However, a closer inspection revealed that no statewide, systemic effort to increase effectiveness had ever been fully implemented.

That recently changed when the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) unveiled The Common Core (see Figure 1), a document that undergirds the premise that the key to effectiveness is a clear understanding of expectations. The Common Core represents a commitment to having two sets of standards, the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders and the Alabama Quality Teaching Standards drive all of the work of ALSDE. It also serves as a reminder that these standards represent what is expected of every professional educator in the state.

## Alabama Quality Teaching Standards

The AQTS—which provides a comprehensive underpinning for Alabama's teaching profession—were developed by the Governor's Commission on Quality Teaching (GCQT) and adopted by the State Board of Education in Spring 2007. AQTS can be accessed from the Shared Documents section at <http://ti.alsde.edu/qt>

## Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development

Based on the five AQTS, the continuum articulates a shared vision and common language of teaching excellence to guide an individual's career-long development within an environment of collegial support. It is a tool for guiding and supporting teachers in the use of reflection, self-assessment, and goal setting for professional learning and growth. The continuum is organized to describe five increasingly complex and sophisticated levels of development of practice: Pre-Service and Beginning, Emerging, Applying, Integrating, and Innovating. The indicators at each level describe what a teacher should know and be able to do at that level. The levels do not represent a *chronological* sequence in a teacher's growth; rather, each describes a *developmental* level of performance. A teacher may be at an Emerging or Applying level of practice for some indicators on the continuum and at an

Integrating or Innovating level for other indicators, regardless of how many years she or he has been in the profession. The continuum is based on two assumptions (a) growth in professional practice comes from intentional reflection and engagement in appropriate professional learning opportunities and (b) a teacher develops expertise and leadership as a member of a community of learners focused on high achievement for all students. The continuum can be accessed from the Shared Documents section at <http://ti.alsde.edu/qt>

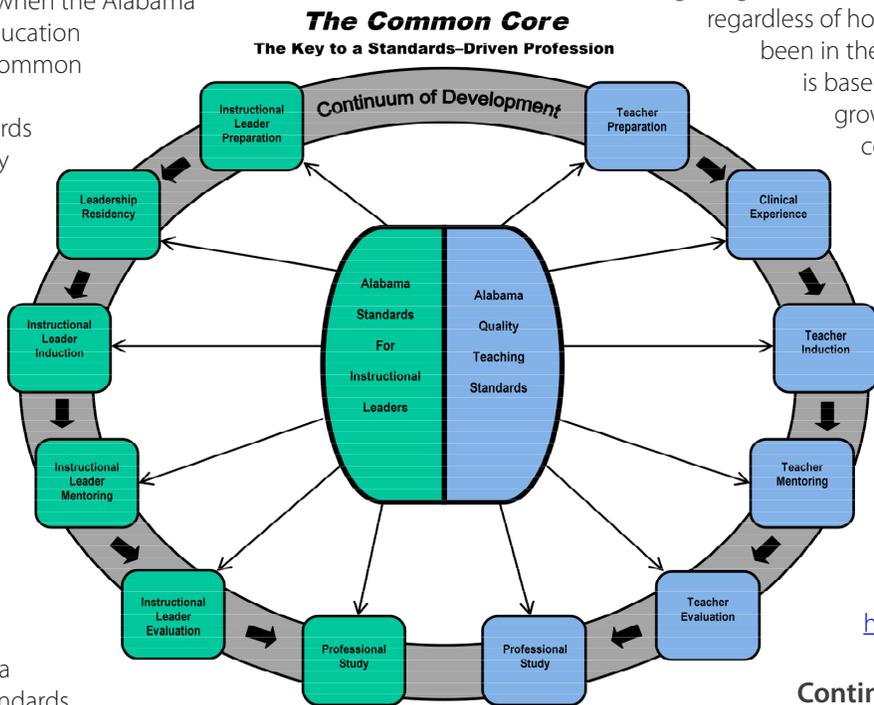


Figure 1

## Continuum Exemplary Practices Video Library

Though the continuum does an exceptional job of explicating AQTS in a way that makes them accessible to all educators, even the most carefully worded passages leave

room for interpretation. Accordingly, ALSDE is developing a video library of best practices aligned to the continuum and AQTS. This will be a collaborative effort of the Alabama Learning Exchange, Special Education Section, ARI, AMSTI, the Alabama Best Practices Center, and the GCQT. The 5- to 7-minute videos will highlight best practices for indicators in all five standards. Each video will be linked to multiple supporting documents.

### Alabama Teacher Mentoring Program

The ATM program was implemented statewide in the 2007–2008 school year. Training for ATM has been facilitated through the 11 inservice centers located around the state, and oversight is provided by designated mentor liaisons in each school system. Though there are guidelines for ATM, individual systems have been provided great latitude to develop programs that meet their specific needs. A mentoring manual and 11 interactive training modules have been developed in support of the program. Additional modules are under development to address needs identified by school-based practitioners. All of the modules integrate the AQTS and continuum into the individual/group exercises and can be accessed from the Shared Documents section at <http://ti.alsde.edu/qt>

### EducateAlabama

EducateAlabama is Alabama's new formative teacher assessment system. It has been designed to emphasize the growth potential of individual teachers and engender constructive communication between teachers and administrators. The foundation of the program is AQTS, and the first step in the evaluative process is a self-evaluation based on the continuum. EducateAlabama, which will roll out in Fall 2009, promises to refocus teacher evaluation across the state on increasing teacher effectiveness, ultimately benefiting all children.

### Teacher Leadership

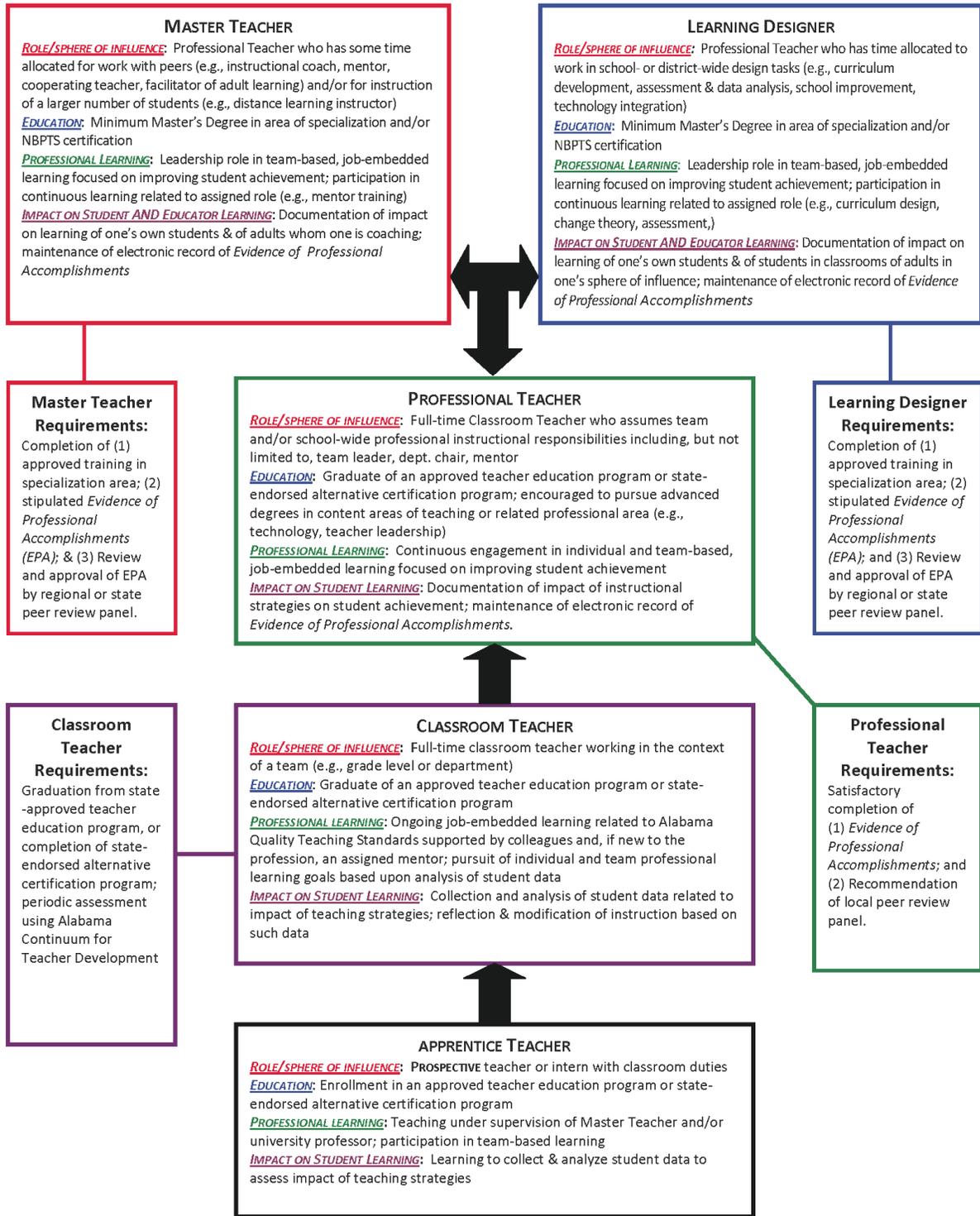
A delegation from Alabama recently participated in a five-state consortium consisting of Alabama, Delaware, Kansas, Kentucky, and Ohio that was tasked with developing a curriculum for an education specialist (EdS) degree in teacher leadership. The curriculum is broken out into four overarching topics, each of which contains at least three courses. Each course consists of three freestanding modules that can be utilized individually for professional development. Research clearly indicates that the skill set needed to function effectively as a teacher leader is very different from the skill set used in effective classroom instruction. The curriculum addresses those differences by focusing on key topics such as developing an understanding of the whole school, working productively with others, deepening the instructional capacity of colleagues, and leading school improvement.

### Professional Pathways

The EdS degree in teacher leadership is of particular import to Alabama when viewed alongside the Professional Pathways developed by GCQT. The Professional Pathways system would provide the option for highly effective teachers to assume broader roles in instructional improvement, while remaining in the classroom. An interested teacher would apply for a state designation as a Professional Teacher, Master Teacher, or Learning Designer. Each designation would provide a teacher with different opportunities. For example, a Master Teacher might spend part of the day providing PD to his or her peers, while a Learning Designer might help the school or system design a new science curriculum. The roles would be different based on the needs of each school, but all teachers who apply for a Professional Pathways designation would meet the same high state standards and would undergo a rigorous review by an outside panel of trained peers to ensure consistent quality. In this way, the Professional Pathways system provides statewide recognition and career advancement opportunities to teachers, allowing them to remain in the classroom with their students but also improving the practice of others in their school and system, as well. The Professional Pathways diagram that follows (see Figure 2) provides an overview of the pathways themselves and of the prerequisites for moving through them. A detailed analysis of Professional Pathways can be found in GCQT's report to the governor and State Board of Education, authored by Dr. Jackie Walsh for the commission (<http://ti.alsde.edu/qt>).

Improving teacher effectiveness is the necessary precursor to improving student achievement in Alabama's public schools, and a clear understanding of expectations is key to improving effectiveness. With a focus on our standards and a commitment to staying true to those standards, Alabama's public schools are clearly poised for a more effective and higher achieving future.

Figure 2. Professional Pathways for Alabama Teachers



## Georgia

### Increasing Teacher Effectiveness

By Kathy Cox, State Superintendent of Schools, Georgia Department of Education  
Glenda Copeland, MA, SECC State Liaison

Strengthening teacher quality and effectiveness is one of our main focuses in Georgia. In the Georgia Department of Education's Strategic Plan, strengthening teacher quality, recruitment, and retention is second only to increasing the number of students that graduate from Georgia's high schools with a meaningful diploma.

There is plenty of evidence that improving student achievement happens in the classroom with an effective teacher. Part of the state's job is to help districts recruit, retain, and prepare teachers so they can meet the goals and standards we set. I want to take this opportunity to tell you a few things Georgia is doing to increase teacher effectiveness and help ensure that we have effective teachers in classrooms all over the state, not just in some areas.

One thing we have done to increase teacher effectiveness is provide a new teacher evaluation system. CLASS Keys will help school leaders evaluate a teacher's performance based on classroom practices and instruction. This system is aligned to the way all research-based classrooms should run, and it's standards-based, just like our curriculum, the Georgia Performance Standards. Best of all, it's a growth model, so it is a better measure of a teacher's progress over time instead of a snapshot of performance on one particular day. CLASS Keys will ultimately give our building-level leaders a better tool to evaluate a teacher based on quality teaching. And, it will give teachers better feedback so they can improve in areas where they may need help.

We completed the CLASS Keys Field Study in March 2009 and are in the initial phase of training and implementation now with 22 schools using the new evaluation system during the coming year and over 25,000 teachers and leaders studying and preparing for implementation. The University of West Georgia is compiling a validity study, and Valdosta State University is completing a reliability study. The field study provided data and feedback, and the team made improvements based on the information gathered. The implementation will be a multiyear roll-out, and we will allow flexibility for local educational agencies (LEAs) to customize for all grade levels and disciplines of teaching.

I know all teachers are looking for ways to improve. They're always concerned with how they can provide more engaging instruction and increase student achievement. I am confident this evaluation system will give teachers some much-needed feedback. I was a classroom teacher for 15 years, and I wish I had the information provided by CLASS Keys. I know it would have helped me be a better teacher.

Another initiative we have begun is a teacher induction program for special education teachers. The purpose of this program is to reduce the number of teachers (special education specific) who leave the profession for reasons of job dissatisfaction. It would provide districts and schools a sound mentoring model for the first 2 to 3 years of a new special education teacher's career.

While this is a "pilot" project for special education teachers, I am hopeful that this model will serve as the future model for ALL teachers in Georgia and increase teacher effectiveness throughout the state. We look forward to learning from the induction program what the concerns and problems are for beginning special education teachers and assist in the movement from teacher preparation to highly effective status.

The jobs of the future will require that our students have the skills necessary to compete against students from all over the world. If a highly effective teacher is the key to providing our students with these essential skills, then we must all work together to ensure that Georgia is where effective teachers want to teach, no matter what school system it is.

## Louisiana

### Louisiana's Teacher Effectiveness and Equitable Distribution Work

By Andrew Vaughan, Director, Division of Certification, Leadership, & Preparation,  
Louisiana Department of Education  
Darlene Brown, PhD, SECC State Liaison

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) has implemented several key initiatives to address the challenge of teacher effectiveness and equitable distribution. The department's Office of Educator Support has worked to create a strong, interrelated set of policies and practices designed to improve teacher quality and provide effective teachers to geographic and academic high-need areas across the state.

### Regional Certification Counselors

Regional certification counselors (RCCs) housed at the state's eight regional education service centers have played a significant role in reducing the numbers of uncertified teachers teaching in Louisiana's public schools. By providing focused face-to-face assistance to all uncertified teachers and to certified teachers seeking the Highly Qualified (HQ) designation, the RCCs are vital to maintaining the high percentage of certified and highly qualified teachers (HQTs) in our state. According to the most recent statewide data, 6 percent of Louisiana's public school teachers were uncertified during the 2008–2009 school year. This is a significant decline compared to 13.53 percent during the 2002–2003 school year. Progress has also been made in terms of HQ with 82.83 percent of classes taught by HQTs during the

2007–2008 school year compared to 79.4 percent during the 2005–2006 school year.

### The Teach Louisiana Web Site

The [Teach Louisiana](#) Web site is another valuable resource provided by LDE to address equitable distribution and teacher effectiveness. This free online job posting management system allows Louisiana public school districts to advertise teaching and administrative positions in their schools. Many Louisiana school districts rely on this free resource to recruit teachers and administrators to fill hard-to-staff positions. There are currently over 300 job postings listed on the Web site, many containing several positions. Verification of certification is easy, since Teach Louisiana is linked directly to the teacher certification database.

The Teach Louisiana Web site also provides publicly available data that shows the distribution of certified and HQTs and highlights areas of greatest need across the state. This data is used to strategically focus technical assistance to those areas. Future plans for the Teach Louisiana Web site include a streamlined job application process, an expanded teacher certification data center, and a system to support districts in the effective recruitment and placement of educational leaders with cutting edge knowledge and skills to lead schools.

### Special Education Teacher Recruitment Symposium

As is the case in many states, Louisiana suffers from an acute lack of certified special education teachers. Each year in Louisiana, over 40 percent of all non-standard teaching authorizations are issued in special education areas. This means that many children do not have access to a teacher fully equipped to meet their needs. In June 2009, the Office of Educator Support spearheaded the Statewide Special Education Teacher Recruitment Symposium to bring together districts, universities, and private teacher preparation program providers to work collaboratively to develop new strategies to successfully recruit and retain special education teachers. A second symposium held in August 2009 will continue this effort and allow providers and districts to develop recruitment and retention plans and strategies that will be implemented at a local level. The symposium is being facilitated by Personnel Improvement Center, National Association of State Directors of Special Education consultant Dr. George Ann Rice.

### Value Added Policy Recommendations

In December 2008, the Louisiana State Board of Regents published the latest value added data results which assessed the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs based on the achievement of students taught by new teachers during the 2004–2005, 2005–2006, and 2006–2007 school years. In September 2009, LDE’s Division of Certification, Leadership &

Preparation will bring policy recommendations to the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to integrate the value added assessment results into the state approval process for alternate teacher preparation programs. In addition, the Teacher Preparation Accountability Task Force is developing recommendations for the Blue Ribbon Commission, the State Board of Regents, and BESE regarding a model for incorporating the value added assessment results into the overall accountability model for teacher preparation programs statewide.

### Title I Stimulus Funds

LDE’s Division of Professional Development is currently working with school districts statewide to ensure the effective use of Title I stimulus funds under Pillar 3: teacher effectiveness and equitable distribution of effective teachers. Targeted initiatives include the establishment of incentive programs to entice effective teachers to work in low-performing schools; the evaluation of student, teacher, and school learning needs via a review of data on teacher and student performance; and the provision of incentives for teachers who earn National Board Certification and add-on certifications in critical areas. Work is also being done to expand the recruitment and retention of teachers through traditional and alternate programs. Plans under this area include partnering with universities to offer programs in critical shortage areas, the provision of classroom management support, and tuition assistance for teachers to become certified in critical shortage areas.

The above summary highlights some of the teacher effectiveness and equitable distribution work currently underway in Louisiana. These initiatives and several other interrelated policies and practices provide a cohesive framework that supports the department’s vision to create a world-class education system.

### Mississippi

#### Reaching the Teachers Our Students Deserve

*By Dr. Daphne Buckley, Deputy Superintendent, and Cecily McNair, Education Bureau Director, Center for Teaching/Recruitment, Mississippi Department of Education*

*Debra Meibaum, MAT, SECC State Liaison*

Research confirms something educators have always known in their hearts—students who have high-quality teachers show significant and lasting achievement gains, while those with less effective teachers continue to fall behind. Mississippi embraces that research and is working diligently to ensure that every child in our state is taught by a highly qualified and effective teacher and that every school is led by a highly qualified and effective administrator. We acknowledge, however, that we face significant geographical, economic, and workforce barriers that impact our progress toward attaining this goal.

Our state is mostly rural, and more than 20 percent of the population lives in poverty. There is a looming shortage of teachers, and compounding the shortage problem is the realization that the gap between the supply and demand for effective teachers is likely to widen due to the large and growing number of teachers eligible to retire, the small number of students pursuing education as a career, and the high number of new teachers leaving the profession within the first 5 years. In addition, our most vulnerable children—those attending high-poverty, low-performing schools—are much more likely to be taught by underqualified and inexperienced teachers than children attending affluent schools.

Mississippi remains undaunted by those barriers because we are a strong, resilient, and determined people focused on providing all of our children access to a quality education. We are aware that to make significant improvements in our educational system, we must explore comprehensive and innovative approaches in the ways we recruit, prepare, license, support, and enhance educators. We are confident that these approaches, in concert with existing successful programs and initiatives, will ensure a continuous supply of talented teachers who are capable and committed to developing all students to their fullest potential.

The following is an overview of the initiatives and programs that will positively impact the teaching profession, and ultimately, improve student outcomes.

## **Summative Report of Mississippi Teacher Supply and Demand**

Work has begun on outlining a comprehensive longitudinal system that once in place, will help guide policy and planning to increase the quantity and quality of teachers and the equitable distribution of effective teachers.

## **Critical Needs Teacher Scholarship Program**

CNTSP offers college tuition and other incentives to teachers who become licensed and teach in geographical or subject shortage areas.

## **Mississippi Teacher Loan Repayment Program**

MTLR is a state-funded loan forgiveness initiative in which teachers holding a valid Alternative Route Teaching license, teaching full time in a geographical shortage area or a subject shortage area, may qualify to receive loan forgiveness for up to \$12,000.

## **Global Initiative to Find Talented Teachers for Mississippi Students (GIFT MS)**

The Mississippi Legislature committed \$900,000 to MDE to develop and implement new strategies to recruit, retain, and

distribute effective teachers to high-poverty, low-performing schools. Funds will support a Web-based international recruitment service, expansion of Grow Your Own programs, and training to ensure that districts are utilizing best practices for hiring effective educators.

## **Teach for America**

For the school year 2009–2010, the state has committed more than \$5 million to TFA to provide 200 highly qualified TFA teachers for Mississippi classrooms to improve student achievement in low-performing districts.

## **Career Ladder for Assistant Teachers Study**

Because of the significant number of assistant teachers holding associate of arts degrees working in high-poverty, low-performing schools, MDE formed a task force to determine the potential benefits of establishing a career ladder to encourage paraprofessionals to take the necessary steps to acquire a standard license to teach.

## **Children First Act of 2009**

A legislative task force was formed to study and report on the status of underperforming schools and school districts, effectiveness measures for improvements of those schools and districts, and the enhancement of accountability and sanctions imposed on those schools and school districts. Based on their recommendations, the Mississippi Legislature passed the Children First Act, making public school administrators more accountable for meeting academic standards. House Education Chairman Cecil Brown and Senate Education Chairman Videt Carmichael believe the bill embodies the state's most sweeping education reform in more than a decade.

## **Beginning Teacher Support Programs**

MDE developed the MS Teacher Induction Framework and the Foundations in Mentoring Module to assist LEAs in developing and implementing strategies to support new teachers.

## **Mentor Stipends**

Veteran teachers who provide mentor services to beginning teachers now receive \$1,000 for each beginning teacher mentored (no more than two beginning teachers per mentor).

## **New Teacher Survey Study**

A study to organize and analyze data gathered from approximately 3,000 new teacher surveys is currently underway. Based on the findings, MDE will make recommendations on ways to improve the state's mentoring program.

## Blue Ribbon Commission on Teacher Preparation

The BRC was created by Mississippi's state superintendent of education and the commissioner of the Institutions of Higher Learning to ensure that teachers possess the skills necessary to accelerate student achievement. The commission recommended that teacher preparation students have more field experience that is consistent, comprehensive, and appropriately supervised; receive strong content preparation and delivery for all developmental levels; are prepared to deliver differentiated instruction; and understand that classroom management means much more than just discipline. The commission also recommended that school leaders concentrate on recruiting and retaining the best teachers and provide the appropriate induction and mentoring programs to ensure success.

## Licensure Management System (ELMS)

The Office of Educator Licensure is building a new teacher and administrator licensing system that will not only streamline the certification process but will also enable educators, school district personnel, MDE staff, and parents to access a "virtual license." These stakeholders will be able to view a teacher's name, subject endorsements in which he or she is licensed, and the validity of the certificate.

## National Board Certification (NBC)

NBC teachers receive a \$6,000 salary supplement. Mississippi NBCs make up 9.4 percent of the state's teaching force, and the state ranks seventh in the nation in the total number of teachers who have achieved certification.

## Other Recruitment and Enhancement Programs

- Mississippi Career Fair for Educators is an annual teacher recruitment fair where prospective teachers meet district personnel to fill vacancies in Mississippi.
- The Mississippi Teacher of the Year Program recognizes outstanding educators from across the state.
- The Mississippi Future Educators Association (FEA) Network is one of the best solutions to our teacher shortage. FEA provides students the opportunity to explore teaching as a career option, attend informative sessions that focus on education scholarships and teaching incentives, and engage in other beneficial activities during their matriculation in middle and high school.
- Mississippi Teacher Renewal Institute is a 3-day retreat in an effort to enhance the teaching profession, develop leadership and professionalism, and retain quality teachers for Mississippi classrooms.
- Personnel Administrators' Workshop is a professional development experience for school district superintendents, personnel administrators, and principals interested in learning about best practices in teacher recruitment and retention.

With the continued vigorous support of policymakers, educators, stakeholders, parents, and community members, Mississippi's dream of providing every child access to a quality education will become a reality.

## South Carolina

### Community Infrastructure and Support Key to Recruiting, Retaining, and Distributing High-Quality Teachers

*By Mark A. Bounds, Deputy Superintendent, Educator Quality and Leadership, South Carolina Department of Education  
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Last September, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) brought together a diverse group of leaders to discuss the challenges of recruiting and retaining a teaching force for the future. The result of their work was a document entitled [Report of the Task Force on 21st Century Teaching and Learning](#).

The task force provided four recommendations. Three outlined a common focus for improving recruitment and retention. First, the task force recommended that we reinvent teacher compensation—acknowledging that teacher salaries in our state are not competitive. The second indicated the need to recast the teaching profession—to attract the best and brightest into the classrooms. The third focused on improving teacher working conditions by creating an atmosphere of respect. The fourth recommendation took on a new twist. The task force recommended that we improve community infrastructure and support for teachers. This idea emerged as the group discussed the challenges of recruiting teachers into rural areas. It was evident that the school's surrounding community structure played a significant role in educators' employment decisions. SCDE has taken several interesting steps to respond to this recommendation.

### Teacher Housing Initiatives

One glaring deficiency in many rural communities is the lack of appropriate housing, causing teachers to commute significant distances to their schools. Consequently, not only do commuting teachers rarely become part of the community, they often take positions closer to home once they become available. Even new teachers that decide to locate near their school, soon grow weary of the lack of housing availabilities and social interaction and end up seeking a teaching position in another community. We have taken the following actions to address this problem.

- [Palmetto Hero Project](#) - SCDE joined forces with the State Housing Authority to provide \$20 million in low-interest housing loans to teachers, giving priority to teachers in our most challenged school districts. The project was a rousing success. The funds were depleted in just over 2 months with 170 teachers receiving loans.

The average amount of each loan was approximately \$117,000. Each qualified borrower also took advantage of down payment assistance up to \$7,000.

- **Teacher Village Concept** – SCDE partnered with an architectural firm to create blueprints for the construction of a new teacher village (see Figure 3). This concept provides inexpensive, contemporary housing for new teachers (similar to the military program that provides housing for personnel in isolated areas). While the economic crisis has slowed progress on this project, we are still working with school districts, local communities, and builders to move this idea forward.

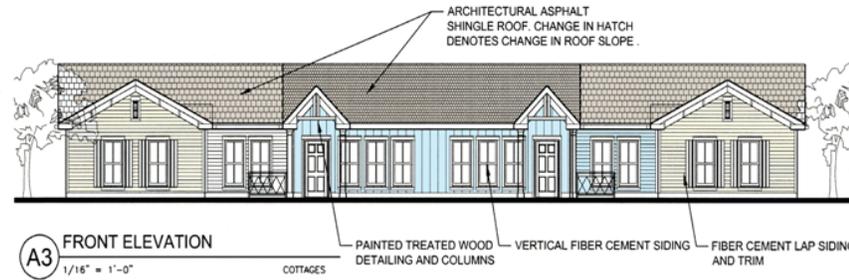


Figure 3. Teacher Village

- **Revitalization Projects** – These projects provide quality teacher housing while giving a facelift to downtown buildings. The first project is underway in Saluda, South Carolina, where a Main Street building is being renovated into six loft apartments to be used exclusively by teachers. The apartments will have environmentally friendly (green) features including energy efficient lighting and appliances. This effort is being made possible by collaboration between SCDE, the South Carolina Commerce Department, the town of Saluda, the School District of Saluda, and a local developer and builder. The lofts opened earlier this school year and were rented to several new teachers.

membership and reach allowing people with special interests to connect within their very own social group. This creates new opportunities, friendships, and conversation as well as a feeling of belonging within an online community. SCTeacherVillage (see

Figure 4) is a closed, highly secure social network that will connect teachers across South Carolina. The “village” is completing its final beta testing and will be opened to thousands of teachers this fall.

## New Pathways to Teaching

Our Program for Alternative Certification of Educators (PACE) continues to provide a strong foundation for career-changers. PACE consistently graduates high percentages of minority and male teachers who are ready to make a positive impact on their students.

Many community college students aspire to be teachers but find there are tremendous barriers to making the transition from a 2-year college to a college of education. The Diverse Pathways Project was created to address this issue. The primary goal is the development of a highly qualified teaching force that reflects the diversity of the state’s population. This effort creates a seamless transition for teaching candidates at 2-year technical schools. They can move to 4-year institutions without losing time or credit hours toward their teaching degree.

## Teacher Online Social Network

Like many states, our most rural districts struggle to recruit and then retain teachers for extended periods. Teachers in these rural communities indicate that they feel isolated and disconnected. The creation of an online social network will help replace the feeling of isolation with a sense of camaraderie and connectedness. Social networks like Facebook and MySpace have exploded in their

SCDE has also found that we need to help leverage community content experts to help our teachers and students. This

September, we planned to recommend to the State Board of Education the creation of an Adjunct Teaching Certificate. This credential will allow content experts to teach in schools part-time. As an example, a local accountant could teach a math class, a journalist could teach an English class, and a physician could teach a class on health. Recent retirees could also become adjunct teachers. Adjunct teachers will have demonstrated content competency and will be highly qualified.



Figure 4. Screenshot of SCTeacherVillage.com

## Creating Schools of the Future

South Carolina is creating strong learning communities by establishing “schools of the future” projects in collaboration with KnowledgeWorks Foundation and the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future. After a rigorous selection process,

two schools were awarded a total of \$25,000 each to develop and pilot initiatives that transform teaching, learning, and community engagement for the future. The Inside-Out Center for Learning (IOCL) approach aims to change schools into personalized learning and service centers. Students will be taught according to their learning needs, while teachers work in teams to create innovative, standards-based and individualized instruction. The centers will use team teaching, looping, community schooling, extended learning time, and other varied approaches. The schools will also be transformed into community hubs where services for students and community members are integrated. The centers will be opened for extended hours and will stay open year-round. Medical, dental, and mental health services

will be located on the center campuses. The IOCL library and gymnasium will serve students and the community. The IOCL will become a place where all community members feel comfortable, where teachers want to work, and students enjoy learning.

By providing low-interest housing loans, contemporary housing in rural areas, social networking among peers, and transforming 20th century schools into 21st century educational campuses, SCDE is pioneering innovative approaches designed to solve the teacher distribution crisis. We also would like to think that we are expanding the world for both our rural teachers and their students.

### Southeast Comprehensive Center e-Bulletin

Quarterly publication of SEDL's Southeast Comprehensive Center

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The Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC) is one of 16 regional centers established by the U.S. Department of Education. The primary goal of the regional centers is to build the capacity of the state education agencies and statewide systems of support to implement NCLB. Links to the other regional centers, the content centers, and the U.S. Department of Education may be found on the SECC Web site ([secc.sedl.org](http://secc.sedl.org)).

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