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Teacher Quality Reports and Resources

Are the states making progress in their efforts to meet the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act standards for highly qualified teachers? The answer is yes according to a recent Education Week article on teacher quality. The article stated that 94% of teachers nationwide met the standard in the 2006–07 school year (Honawar, 2008). However, it also said that only one state—North Dakota—met the 2007 deadline to have highly qualified teachers in 100% of its core-subject classes, based on data from the U.S. Department of Education (ED).

In accordance with NCLB, state education agencies (SEAs) receiving Title I funds must take action to prepare, train, and recruit highly qualified teachers to improve student academic achievement. NCLB defines a highly qualified teacher (HQT) as an individual with full certification, a bachelor's degree, and demonstrated competence in subject knowledge and teaching skills (ED, 2002).

ED requires each SEA to develop a plan to ensure that all teachers are highly qualified by specified time periods and must establish annual, measurable objectives for each local school district and school to ensure that they meet these requirements. If a school fails to make progress in meeting annual objectives for 2 consecutive years, the district must develop an improvement plan that is designed to meet the objectives, and the state must provide technical assistance. If a school fails to make progress toward annual objectives for 3 consecutive years, it is subject to additional sanctions. States also must report the percentage of HQTs and the percentage of teachers who are participating in high-quality professional development in order to become highly qualified.

To review the states' progress in meeting the requirements for highly qualified teachers, ED is conducting monitoring



A Note from the Director

Welcome to the latest edition of our e-Bulletin for Year 3 of the Southeast Comprehensive Center.

The placement of an effective and high-quality teacher in every classroom is clearly one of the critical factors in improving student learning. However, recruiting and placing effective, high-quality teachers is only the first step. States, districts, and schools also must focus on supporting and retaining these educators so that they stay motivated and committed, and have opportunities to sharpen their skills and knowledge. This issue provides information from the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality regarding the U.S. Department of Education's Title II monitoring visits as well as updates from each of our states about their efforts in this area. As you can see in this issue, all our states are making great efforts in this area.

I hope that this edition of our e-Bulletin will be helpful and informative as you work with your state, districts, and schools. If we can be of any assistance to you in this area or any other issue related to improving student achievement or meeting the goals of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, please feel free to contact your state liaison or me.

We are pleased at SEDL to provide the services of the Southeast Comprehensive Center and look forward to our continuing work with all of you.

Sincerely,

Robin Jarvis, PhD
Director, SECC

visits. The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (NCCTQ) has written an article on the Department's second round of monitoring visits and has granted the Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC) permission to reprint the article, which is featured below (NCCTQ, 2008). Additional teacher quality resources are provided below as well.

National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality National Issue Forum

From Planning to Action: Effectively Using Your Professional Development Resources

Ten Early Lessons Learned From Highly Qualified Teacher Monitoring Reports

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) is conducting the second round of monitoring visits for state Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) requirements and the Improving Teacher Quality State Grants. Since Congress has not yet reauthorized the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, the law continues as written until further action is taken. The first round of monitoring visits under NCLB occurred between 2004 and 2006, and the second round will conclude in 2010.

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality reviewed reports from the first five visits in the second round of monitoring to identify early lessons for states that will undergo future monitoring visits. The monitoring reports from these visits, as well as the protocols used to guide the visits, can be found on ED's website (see <http://www.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/performance.html> and <http://www.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/hqt07/index.html>, respectively). A key theme that emerged from our review of early monitoring reports is that HQT and equity plans are not static documents. States should view their plans as guides for defining and implementing strategies that address HQT and equitable distribution goals. As such, these plans need to be reviewed, updated, and implemented on an ongoing basis.

Ten lessons learned from our review of the early monitoring visits are described:

1. Hold LEAs that do not meet annual measurable objectives accountable for their improvement plans. LEAs that have not met HQT annual measurable objectives for two consecutive years are required to develop and implement an improvement plan (see Section 2141 of NCLB: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg24.html#sec2141>). States are expected to assist these LEAs in formulating improvement plans and should have an agreement regarding the use of funds for LEAs that have not met annual measurable objectives and failed to make AYP for three years in a row. During monitoring visits, states

are asked to provide evidence that improvement plans are in place and that the state provided technical assistance to LEAs for implementing their plans. Three states received a finding related to the monitoring of improvement plans and for not assisting LEAs with their plans. ED also cited three states for not implementing monitoring agreements that could eventually result in the state education agency withholding Title II dollars from LEAs that had not met HQT annual measurable objectives for three consecutive years.

2. Review your HQT requirements for special education teachers. States should review their process for defining highly qualified special education teachers to ensure compliance with NCLB and Individuals with Disabilities Education (IDEA) Act requirements. Under NCLB, any special education teacher who is the teacher of record in a core subject area must meet HQT criteria, which includes demonstrating subject matter knowledge for each subject taught. Three states received citations for determining HQT status for special education teachers based on their students' instructional levels rather than by whether or not the students are assessed to alternate standards. ED noted that only teachers who exclusively teach students assessed against alternative achievement standards can demonstrate subject-matter competence at a level lower than their students' designated grade.
3. Confirm procedures for verifying HQT data. Now that states have systems in place to collect and report HQT data, there is an increased focus by ED on the quality of these data. During monitoring visits, states are asked about their procedures for reviewing and validating HQT data. Two states received findings because of inadequate procedures for monitoring data quality. One state only reviewed data for local education agencies (LEAs) that did not meet 100 percent of HQT goals, and the other state did not have a method to audit its HQT data. States should make sure they have procedures to verify HQT data in a "comprehensive and timely fashion." In the monitoring reports, ED recommends creating review procedures, including a random audit of HQT records, systematic monitoring of HQT data from LEAs, or spot-checks of HQT data.
4. Ensure that annual report cards include all required HQT data elements. States need to ensure that their annual report cards include all appropriate data elements. A few of the monitored states failed to report the percentage of classes not taught by HQTs and the percentage of teachers with emergency or provisional certification, and did not disaggregate their HQT data for high- and low-poverty schools. ED emphasized in one report that states should identify on their report cards the percentage of classes not taught by HQTs. In two instances, problems with annual report cards stemmed from issues with how states defined HQT requirements for special education teachers. States should recognize that errors in state HQT requirements for general education, special education, or alternatively certified teachers affect the accuracy of data reported on their report cards.
5. Pay consistent attention to whether or not LEAs hire non-HQTs for Title I positions. States are expected to monitor whether

LEAs hire teachers who do not meet HQT requirements and to take corrective action for any LEAs that hire non-HQTs for Title I positions. ED cited one state for not applying “uniform corrective action” when LEAs are out of compliance and reported that another state did not know that an LEA had hired non-HQTs for Title I positions. Another state received a finding by ED for allowing an LEA to hire non-HQTs that had a plan in place to become highly qualified.

6. Update your HQT plan and equity plan. States should treat their HQT and equity plans as living documents that need to be updated based on changing conditions and new data. In addition, states should share updated versions of their plans with ED. In fact, ED required that two states update and resubmit their equity plan within 30 days of the monitoring visit. A change in the structure and organization of its LEAs resulted in the need for one state’s HQT and equity plans to be updated, and more than one state was asked to revise their equity plans based on the review of more current (2006–07) HQT data. In addition, it was recommended that states revise their HQT plans on a regular basis. When revising their plans, states should update deadlines for HQT activities and consider how the findings from the new data affect their approach to HQT issues.
7. Establish a plan and timeline for resolving unmet HQT requirements. States that do not meet a requirement during their monitoring visit are asked to submit a plan and a timeline describing how the state will address the issue(s). Although states with upcoming visits should strive to resolve any unmet HQT requirements before the visit, a state that is unable to correct an issue before its monitoring visit should develop a timeline and plan for how the requirement will met. By creating a plan of action, a state demonstrates its awareness of the issue and provides evidence of how it will be addressed. States not meeting this requirement in advance of the monitoring visit will be asked to develop a plan and timeline to submit to ED within 30 days.
8. Implement strategies in your equity plan to address equitable distribution. The early monitoring visits have made it clear that simply having an equity plan in place is not sufficient. NCLB requires that the SEA measure progress on the strategies in the plan and report on the strategies included in the equity plan. For example, one state received a commendation for using its equitable distribution plan to encourage districts to review equitable distribution data. The monitoring reports suggest that ED expects states to have a plan for how they will implement specific strategies to address HQT equity issues. States also should make sure that LEAs are implementing strategies to address HQT equity issues. States also should make sure that LEAs are implementing strategies to address equity issues. There is a need to go beyond just having assurances in place to make sure that LEAs are implementing effective strategies for addressing these issues.
9. Obtain evidence that LEAs notify parents of children taught by non-HQTs. Two states received findings for not ensuring that LEAs notified parents whose children were being taught

by teachers not meeting HQT requirements. Even states that have high HQT rates should ensure that LEAs with non-HQTs notify parents. The protocol for ED’s monitoring visits suggests that appropriate evidence for this requirement includes assurances from LEAs, sample of notification letters, evidence of monitoring, and corrective action plans for LEAs that have not notified parents.

10. Ensure that HQT requirements for alternatively certified teachers are accurate. Alternatively certified teachers are not considered highly qualified until they have demonstrated subject-matter competence. One state counted teachers in alternate route programs as highly qualified before they had demonstrated subject competence. Although these teachers have three years to obtain full certification, ED does not consider alternatively certified teachers as highly qualified unless they have demonstrated subject competence.

Areas of Commendation

ED monitoring reports include areas of commendation in which states were recognized for their efforts in achieving HQT goals. For example, Tennessee received praise for creating a database that allows the public to view a teacher’s HQT and licensure status and for developing an online system that LEAs use to submit their consolidated applications. The online system includes a status tool that provides an overview of whether LEAs have completed the required elements and detailed information on the requirements (see <http://www.state.tn.us/education/nclb/conapp/FY08castatpage.shtml>).

In addition, Rhode Island was recognized for promoting consistency in the collection and reporting of HQT data by conducting outreach to districts, schools, and teachers regarding the implementation of HQT requirements. ED also commended Nebraska for its online system to manage LEA grant applications for Title II, Part A funds, and North Dakota was recognized for providing technical assistance and monitoring to meet requirements for services to eligible nonpublic schools. Furthermore, Vermont’s monitoring report noted its state-level collaboration between its fiscal, Title I, Title IIA, and HQT teams.

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Teacher Quality Resources

Lifting Teacher Performance

Leigh, A., & Mead, S. (2005). *Lifting teacher performance*. Washington, DC: Progressive Policy Institute. Retrieved June 12, 2008, from http://www.ppionline.org/documents/teachqual_0419.pdf

This paper analyzes research about teacher quality and incentives. The authors make recommendations to help policymakers improve methods for how teachers are prepared, hired, evaluated, and compensated. Topics include characteristics linked to teacher quality, certification and education requirements, alternative certification, and pay for performance.

Recruiting and Retaining Quality Teachers for High-Needs Schools: Insights from NBCT Summits and Other Policy Initiatives

Berry, B., Rasberry, M., & Williams, A. (2007). *Recruiting and retaining quality teachers for high-needs schools: Insights from NBCT summits and other policy initiatives*. Hillsborough, NC: Center for Teaching Quality. Retrieved June 12, 2008, from http://www.teachingquality.org/pdfs/Nat_Strategy_Forum.pdf

This paper highlights incentive programs, initiatives, and recruitment practices in several states including Alabama, Massachusetts, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. It also details 142 policy recommendations, such as providing time blocks for teacher-led collaboration to improve student learning, recalculating teacher-student ratios, and funding for statewide mentoring programs for new teachers.

Redirecting the Teaching Profession in the Wake of a Nation at Risk and NCLB

Seed, A. (2008). Redirecting the teaching profession in the wake of a nation at risk and NCLB. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 89(8), 586-589.

This article discusses five conditions for improving teaching: providing collaboration time for teachers; empowering teachers by allowing them input into decisions about curriculum, instruction, assessment, and scheduling; encouraging reflective practice; and providing additional time for teachers to work together, support each other, and try new practices.

Strengthening Teacher Quality in High-Need Schools—Policy and Practice

Hammond, L., & Prince, C. (2007). *Supporting teacher quality in high-need schools—Policy and practice*. Hillsborough, NC: Council of Chief State School Officers. Retrieved June 12, 2008, from <http://www.ccsso.org/publications/details.cfm?PublicationID=354>

This report addresses several topics including evaluating teacher effectiveness, attracting mathematics and science teachers in high-needs schools, the special skills required to teach diverse learners, and the role of leadership in attracting and retaining teachers.

Supporting Teachers' Success

Olson, L. (2008). *Supporting teachers' success*. Teacher Magazine. Retrieved June 12, 2008, from <http://www.teachermagazine.org/tm/articles/2008/03/01/02mentoring.h01.html?print=1>

This article highlights the intensive mentoring and staff development efforts of a California school system that have allowed it to improve students' achievement scores and proficiency levels, increase the student attendance rate, and increase the teacher retention rate.

State Highlights and Events

Alabama

Initiatives Focus on Mentoring Program and Leadership Development



Last year, for the first time in its history, Alabama provided a statewide mentoring program for its first-year teachers. The state also surveyed all new teachers and their mentors to obtain feedback about the program. The survey, Alabama Take 20 Teaching and Learning Conditions, gathered information on a host of topics including the amount of time spent each week with mentors, ways in which mentors provided assistance, assignments that were given during the first year of teaching, and areas in which mentors were the most or the least helpful.

In addition to the survey initiative, Alabama is utilizing its teacher standards and Continuum for Teacher Development to promote personal growth for teachers. The department envisions distributing these documents to teacher candidates to spur reflection throughout their careers.

To ensure that teachers are prepared to serve in leadership roles, Alabama is participating in a five-state consortium to develop a comprehensive teacher leadership curriculum. As part of this effort, a committee is developing a definition for teacher leadership and a set of standards for teacher leaders. The committee consists of several state teachers of the year, principals, state department of education personnel, and various leaders in higher education.

Georgia

Efforts Target Recruitment, Retention, and Professional Growth

By Glenda Copeland, SECC State Liaison

The Alliance of Education Agency Heads and its Implementation Team are working on three strategies that support Georgia's State Board of Education goal two, to strengthen teacher quality, recruitment, and retention.

The strategies are as follows:

- Recruit highly effective P-12 teachers and teacher candidates into the profession, particularly in critical shortage areas.
- Improve teacher quality.
- Retain highly effective teachers in the profession.

Imbedded with each strategy will be specific initiatives to accomplish them, which are being finalized.

The Georgia Department of Education is completing development of the CLASS Keys (Classroom Analysis of State Standards), a professional growth model and evaluation process that sets high expectations for teachers in Georgia classrooms and provides a means for assessing and reporting the degree to which teachers are meeting these expectations. The CLASS Keys are intended to provide an approved annual performance evaluation that is closely aligned with the School Keys (school performance standards), the Georgia Framework for Teaching, the Standards-Based Classroom Rubrics, and the Georgia Teacher Duties and Responsibilities. The CLASS Keys model includes an accountability component for student achievement (required by law), promotes continued growth of schools or systems, and provides a set of formal and informal observations that inform annual summative evaluations.



The CLASS Keys model is near completion, and applications are being accepted for a field study that will be conducted during the 2008-09 school year. The study will include 50 elementary schools, 50 middle schools, and 50 high schools. Five teachers from each school will participate. Revisions to the model will be made based on feedback from the study, and statewide implementation will begin in the 2009-10 school year.

In addition to the initiatives described above, school systems have submitted applications for 2008-09 Academic Coach Grants. The number of funded coaches will be limited to 25 for the coming school year due to an anticipated reduction in funding for FY09.

Louisiana

Webcast Highlights Highly Qualified Teacher Requirements

The Louisiana Department of Education recently participated in an interactive webcast on meeting the highly qualified teacher requirements. The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (NCCTQ) held this 1-hour webcast, “Supporting Progress in Meeting the Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) Requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act,” on April 30, 2008. The webcast provided information on how regional comprehensive centers, their states, institutions of higher education, and other stakeholders can continue to meet the HQT requirements of NCLB through specific strategies identified in state plans. These strategies included conducting data analysis, working with local education agencies, providing accountability provisions, and ensuring equitable distribution of teachers.

Panelists featured in the webcast were Amanda Farris, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Strategic Initiatives, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, USDE; Jeffrey Max, Research Associate, NCCTQ; Danny Martinez, Program Associate, Southeast Comprehensive Center at SEDL; and Janice Zube, Title II State Coordinator, Louisiana Department of Education. During the webcast, Ms. Zube discussed implementation of Louisiana’s Equity Plan, which included protocol review, selection of LEAs for telephone interviews, and review of the plan by SEDL. Mr. Max discussed the NCCTQ’s ten lessons learned from HQT monitoring reports (see feature article on page one). In addition, Mr. Martinez provided insight into the role of the comprehensive center in assisting its states. Amy Jackson, NCCTQ, served as moderator of the webcast.

The NCCTQ Web site contains additional information on the webcast including the panelists’ presentations and HQT plan resources and tools (see <http://www.tqsource.org/webcasts/supportingProgress/>). NCCTQ plans to provide a recording of the live webcast on its site.

Mississippi

Survey Focuses on Teaching and Learning Conditions

By Debbie Meibaum, SECC State Liaison

In 2007, under the leadership of Dr. Hank Bounds, Superintendent of Education, Mississippi Department of

Education (MDE), the state and its partners conducted a web-based survey of all school-based licensed educators regarding teaching and learning conditions. The survey, titled Project CLEAR Voice—Cultivate Learning Environments to Accelerate Recruitment and Retention, queried educators on topics related to five central domains: school leadership, facilities and resources, empowerment, time and professional development. In addition, several “new teacher induction” questions were posed to the state’s novices and the mentors who serve them. Nearly 25,000 Mississippi educators (67% of eligible respondents) completed the survey—the highest response rate of any other state that has implemented the TWC instrument. Findings and recommendations from the survey are presented below.

Major Findings

1. Seventy-three percent of Mississippi educators believed that their schools were good places to teach and learn, and they were overwhelmingly positive concerning facilities, resources, and professional development.
2. Nearly half (45%) of Mississippi teachers agreed that leadership was the most significant working condition in determining their willingness to stay at their current schools.
3. Mississippi teachers want more opportunities to lead, with only 21% reporting that they play a role in how Education Enhancement Funds are used.
4. Less than 50% of Mississippi teachers report having been assigned a mentor for their first 3 years of teaching (10% of teachers in their first 3 years were actually asked to serve as mentors themselves).
5. Only 14% of the state’s elementary, 24% of its middle, and 28% of its high school teachers reported having more than 5 hours a week of non-instructional time available to them for planning and collaboration.

Recommendations

1. Many Mississippi schools have created positive working conditions. The MDE should conduct case studies to detail how they have done so (including why some schools had high survey response rates and others did not). The department also should launch a professional development initiative for administrators and teachers, using the data to improve conditions that promote teacher and student learning.
2. The MDE should conduct a thorough review or audit of mentoring efforts statewide and phase in a plan that could systematically serve more novices effectively.
3. The department should develop new opportunities for administrators to learn how to create more time for teachers to plan, collaborative, learn from each other, and minimize routine paperwork.

In its review of the survey data, the Center for Teaching Quality employed a number of statistical analyses and uncovered powerful linkages between certain working conditions and teachers' intentions to remain in their schools and the profession. With more detailed student, teacher, and administrator data systems, survey responses could be tracked longitudinally and linked with teacher turnover rates and robust measures of student achievement.

South Carolina

Teacher Quality Efforts Provide Opportunities and Support

By Sandra R. Lindsay, SECC State Liaison

In South Carolina, there are many efforts underway to recruit and retain high quality teachers. The list includes innovative professional development initiatives, such as



- the Palmetto Hero program, which provides low-interest housing loans and down payment forgiveness to teachers;
- a public-private partnership to build a Teacher Renewal Center; and
- the TEACHouse program, which is designed to provide low-cost housing to new teachers, especially in rural parts of the state.

In this update, two of the state's initiatives are highlighted: the South Carolina Teacher Advancement Program (SCTAP) and the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement (CERRA).

South Carolina Teacher Advancement Program

The SCTAP is based on the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) (see <http://www.tapschools.org/>), which was developed in 1998 as an initiative of the Milken Family Foundation. TAP encourages teachers to grow and allows them to prosper by offering new models for professional entry and training, with new compensation and career advancement possibilities. The following are key elements of TAP (click on subheads to access Web pages):

Multiple career paths. A career continuum for teachers allows them to move up the ranks in the teaching profession with increasing responsibilities, qualifications, performance,

and professional development requirements. The increased responsibilities and requirements are compensated with an addendum up to \$10,000 per year. This allows teachers an alternative to pursuing administrative positions.

Market-driven, performance-based compensation. All teachers are eligible for additional compensation based on student progress, academic achievement, and performance demonstration. The performance-based compensation can be an additional \$10,000 above the base salary.

Instructionally focused accountability. This comprehensive, research-based system is used to determine the effectiveness of performance through demonstration and is based on clearly defined instructional standards and rubrics.

Ongoing, applied professional growth. Weekly professional growth blocks are built into the teacher's work schedule. Collaboration among instructional personnel is used to identify students' needs and improve instruction through research, learning, planning, and reflecting.

SCTAP will provide its comprehensive school reform model in approximately 50 schools across the state in 2008–09, a substantial increase from the original seven pilot schools in 2001–02. Based on the 2006–07 high-stakes test data, SCTAP continues to be successful in South Carolina with 88% of schools demonstrating at least the projected years' growth. Five schools showed tremendous growth by being two or more standards errors above their projected years' growth.

Center for Recruitment, Retention, & Advancement (CERRA)

CERRA is the oldest and most established teacher recruitment program in the country. Now in its 22nd year of operation, CERRA was established by the Commission on Higher Education in 1985 and funded by the South Carolina General Assembly.

The center pursues a variety of programs for increasing the number of potential teachers in the education pipeline and recruiting and retaining certified teachers. CERRA's ProTeam Program for middle school students and Teacher Cadet Program for high school students are used by other states as well. For college education majors, CERRA oversees the South Carolina Teaching Fellows Scholarship Program. In addition, the center manages the state's Online Application System for employment and certification as well as the Educator Job Bank.

CERRA also targets groups of accomplished teachers through programs including mentoring, teacher leadership, and

National Board Certification. The network of educators in CERRA programs overlaps in powerful ways to increase the level of collaboration for recruitment, retention, and advancement of South Carolina educators.



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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).

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