

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Ensuring that high-quality teachers are equitably distributed so that all students—no matter where they live, the kind of school they attend, or the background from which they come—have an equal opportunity to be taught by a highly qualified, experienced teacher is a fundamental goal of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

Unfortunately, in most states and in many districts, poor students, students of color, and students in rural and urban areas are far more likely than other students to be taught by inexperienced and/or unqualified teachers. Research reveals the following:

- A growing body of literature on teacher distribution suggests highly qualified teachers “self-select” into higher achieving schools. A particularly revealing study of New York teachers by Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff<sup>1</sup> found that teachers who transferred to another district or left teaching altogether tended to have better qualifications than their peers who remained.
- According to the National Center for Education Statistics<sup>2</sup>, 20 percent of teachers in high-poverty schools have three or fewer years of teaching experience, compared with 11 percent of teachers in low-poverty schools.
- There is a significant disparity in content knowledge between teachers in high-poverty schools and those in more affluent schools. Research conducted by Richard Ingersoll<sup>3</sup> of the University of Pennsylvania found that when compared with teachers in more affluent schools, significantly more mathematics, science, English, and social studies teachers in high-poverty schools lack a major or a minor in their teaching field. For example, 43 percent of mathematics teachers in high-poverty schools lacked a major or minor in their field, compared with 27 percent in more affluent schools.

This issue of NCCTQ’s *TQ Research & Policy Brief* explores the issue of teacher distribution, offers valuable tools for advancing and documenting state efforts toward equitable distribution, and suggests strategies for recruiting and retaining related services personnel for students with disabilities in rural and urban schools.

We know that states are working diligently to revise their State Plans, including the “equity plan” for ensuring that poor or minority children are not taught by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers at higher rates than other children. We look forward to continuing to provide information and technical assistance to state education agency leaders and other policymakers working to ensure that all children have access to our most important educational resource: high-quality teachers!

Sincerely,  
 Sabrina Laine, Ph.D., NCCTQ Director

<sup>1</sup>Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2002). Teacher sorting and the plight of urban schools: A descriptive analysis. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24(1), 37–62. Retrieved June 16, 2006, from [http://www.teacherpolicyresearch.org/portals/1/pdfs/Teacher\\_Sorting\\_and\\_Urban\\_Schools\\_EEPA.pdf](http://www.teacherpolicyresearch.org/portals/1/pdfs/Teacher_Sorting_and_Urban_Schools_EEPA.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>Mayer, D. P., Mullens, J. E., & Moore, M. T. (2000). *Monitoring school quality: An indicators report* (NCES 2001-030). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved June 16, 2006, from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/2001030.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>Ingersoll, R. M. (1999). The problem of underqualified teachers in American secondary schools. *Educational Researcher*, 28(2), 26–37. Retrieved June 16, 2006, from <http://edtech.connect.msu.edu/era/epubs/ingsol3.pdf>

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Hold November 8–9 for the annual What Works Conference.

## Tools for Advancing and Documenting Teacher Distribution

By Marnie Thompson  
 ETS

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act makes new demands on states to document their good-faith efforts to ensure that all students—no matter where they live, the kind of school they attend, or the background from which they come—are taught by highly qualified teachers.

Two useful online tools are available to help states develop and refine their State Plans to ensure an equitable distribution of teachers and address the types of data useful in demonstrating progress.

### Tool 1: *Template for State Teacher Equity Plan*

<http://www.ccsso.org/content/PDFs/StateTeacherEquityTemplate.doc>

**What It Can Do:** Help state education agencies (SEAs) develop and refine NCLB-required State Plans to ensure that poor and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, underqualified, or out-of-field teachers.

This template was developed by Cynthia Prince, director of Teacher Professional Development at the Council of Chief State School Officers, and adapted from her forthcoming publication, *Good Faith Efforts: What States Can Do To Ensure Quality Teachers for the Students Who Need Them Most*. It provides a framework and guided process for states to follow in analyzing their current situations and arriving at appropriate policies and practices that will lead to more equitable teacher distribution. These State Plans are required by the U.S. Department of Education; but more important, the State Plans can serve as guideposts for some of the most important work done by states to equalize opportunity for students who struggle in schools that have not had their share of effective, experienced teachers.

The online template guides SEA leaders through a careful examination of their current and planned strategies for improving the distribution of high-quality teachers across the following eight elements:

- Data and reporting systems
- Teacher preparation
- Out-of-field teaching
- Recruitment and retention of experienced teachers
- Professional development
- Specialized knowledge and skills
- Working conditions
- Policy coherence

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For each of the eight elements, the template guides SEA leaders through the following four steps to consider in building their equity plans:

Step A: Take an inventory of current policies and programs.

Step B: Name specific strategies the state will adopt.

Step C: Describe specific steps to implementation.

Step D: Set up measures the state will use to evaluate and publicly report progress.

Within any one of these steps, the template asks useful questions of the SEA leaders who are using it. For example, in Step C (implementation), the template asks what agency, area, and person(s) are responsible for developing the program or policy; what resources are required; and whether the initiative requires rules, legislative action, and/or State Board action. It also prompts the leaders to write down a timeline for completion of each step in the implementation plan.

The template provides multiple examples of policies and practices that already are in use in states around the country. For example, the element focusing on the recruitment and retention of experienced teachers provides five different strategy ideas, explaining how they are being used in different states across the country. SEA leaders can look to these examples to round out their own plans, choosing and adapting strategies that best match their goals and context.

## **Tool 2: *Planning Tool to Provide Evidence of Progress Toward Equitable Teacher Distribution***

<http://www.ncctq.org/TeacherDistributionPlanningTool.pdf>

**What It Can Do:** Help states address the types of data that might be useful in demonstrating baseline status and progress toward addressing the problem of inequitable teacher distribution.

Created by the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, the *Planning Tool to Provide Evidence of Progress Toward Equitable Teacher Distribution* helps states define and adopt measures of equitable teacher distribution and consider the types of data they need to collect in order to document baseline status and demonstrate progress over time. This tool combines information with a guided process for SEA leaders to walk through to achieve a usable plan for improvement.

The tool focuses on the indicators and data systems that SEAs need to measure and show progress toward a comprehensive view of equitable distribution of teacher quality. The tool has two main purposes:

- Helping states think through the various dimensions of a more comprehensive definition of *highly qualified teacher*, a necessary step in aiming for a more equitable distribution of qualified teachers.
- Helping states use the enhanced definition to determine specific types of data that will be needed to document and understand current and future status on teacher distribution.

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### Building a Comprehensive Definition of *Highly Qualified Teacher*

The tool helps SEA leaders consider how they would like to build on the basic definition of *highly qualified teacher* provided in the NCLB Act and embrace a more comprehensive definition that adds the following:

- How long the teacher has been teaching (teacher experience).
- The match between a teacher’s qualifications and his or her teaching assignment (including but not limited to whether the teacher is teaching “in-field”).
- Teacher effectiveness—or performance in the classroom—as measured by any number of means.

Adopting a more comprehensive definition of *highly qualified teacher* is central to the whole issue of equitable teacher distribution. The tool helps SEA leaders think about which aspects of this comprehensive definition are important to add to their state definition of *highly qualified teacher* to account for progress in making strong teachers available to the students who need them most.

### Determining Data for Equitable Teacher Distribution

With the state’s new definition in hand, the tool then guides SEA leaders through a series of questions regarding specific types of data that will be needed to document and understand current and future status on distribution.

The types of data that are considered include state, district, and school-level indicators (e.g., percentage of classes taught by highly qualified experienced teachers, out-of-field teaching rate, and turnover—broken out by school poverty, characteristics of student population, grade level, and subject). SEA leaders are asked to identify what kinds of existing data-collection strategies permit access to each type of data, where the data are housed, and (if the data are not currently collected) what steps need to be taken if the state deems that these data would be helpful to its planning and reporting process.

One of the most challenging data problems faced by states is the appropriate use of unique, longitudinal identifiers for teachers so that teachers can be tracked over time as they change schools and/or districts, or as they leave and reenter the profession. Currently, only 14 states have the ability to match teachers with students—even though this ability is considered “critical to understanding the connection between teacher training and qualifications and student academic growth.”<sup>1</sup> Having this kind of capacity allows states to analyze the interplay between policies and practices on a wide range of teacher and student outcomes, not just the distribution of teacher quality. The tool contains information about the use of such identifiers and helps SEA leaders think about the kinds of analyses and tracking that they might want to undertake to identify both progress and problematic trends as the first step in reaching for the next level of equitable distribution of teacher quality.

<sup>1</sup> Data Quality Campaign. (2005). *Results of 2005 NCEA survey of state data collection issues related to longitudinal analysis: The 10 essential elements in detail for 2005–06*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved June 23, 2006, from <http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/activities/elements.cfm>

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# Strategies for Recruiting Highly Qualified Related Services Professionals for Student With Disabilities

By Daniel J. Reschly, Ph.D., Vanderbilt University,  
 and Kathleen A. Whitmire, Ph.D., American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)<sup>1</sup> was established to “ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education *and related services* [emphasis added] designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living.” (IDEA, 2004, Section 602[25])<sup>2</sup>

Many students with disabilities need educational services that go beyond what can be provided by special education teaching staff. The *related services* (see sidebar for examples) component of IDEA is essential to providing an appropriate education for many students with disabilities and those with at-risk characteristics.

But recruiting providers of related services is often a significant challenge for schools and districts. This article focuses on two areas that can help schools and districts meet the challenge:

- Reasons for the shortages of related services providers.
- Strategies for identifying and recruiting related services providers.

### “Related Services” Include:

- Transportation
- Developmental, corrective, and other supportive services:
  - Speech-language pathology and audiology
  - Interpretation
  - Psychological services
  - Physical and occupational therapy
  - Recreation and therapeutic recreation
  - Social work services
  - School nurse
  - Counseling and rehabilitation counseling
  - Orientation and mobility services
  - Medical services (for diagnostic and evaluation purposes)

## The Related Services Shortage

The primary issue with regard to providing related services to students with disabilities is the limited availability of highly qualified related services providers for schools, especially in urban and rural communities. Reasons for shortages in rural and urban settings are many and varied, including social isolation, inadequate support for complex services, and lower salaries and benefits.

Several factors contribute to this shortage, including the following:

- Insufficient numbers of graduates from training programs.
- Attrition rates that are largely unstudied but influential.
- Loss of graduate training programs due to shortages of faculty and funding issues.
- Retirement of persons brought into the field during the rapid expansion of special education personnel in the decade following the federal Education of the Handicapped Act<sup>3</sup>, IDEA’s precursor.

<sup>1</sup> The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 was signed by President Bush in December 2004. Proposed regulations were published in June 2005 for public comment. The final regulations are expected in August 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Individuals with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2004 (PL 105-17). 20 U.S.C. Chapter 33, Sections 1400 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> Education of the Handicapped Act. (1975, 1977). PL 94-142, 20 U.S.C. 1400-1485, 34 CFR-300.

Factors within schools and/or districts also contribute to the limited availability of related services in public schools. Such factors include budget cuts and the underutilization of services, and a high ratio of students to providers.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) will soon be releasing *Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Speech-Language Pathologists*<sup>4</sup>, a report that provides information gathered through ASHA surveys conducted during the past several years as well as a number of national reports and surveys conducted by other organizations. This new report highlights several factors considered by speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who are seeking employment, including salary, working conditions, advancement opportunities, and professional development opportunities. The report also identifies several barriers to achieving these priorities in public schools:

- **Low Salaries**

Thirty-eight percent of school-based SLPs report low salaries as one of their greatest challenges. In a comparison of salaries for school-based SLPs and those working in other settings, reported by years of experience, significant discrepancies were found. Table 1 indicates those discrepancies:

**Table 1. Salary Levels of Speech-Language Pathologists**

Experience	School-Based	Other Settings
1–3 years	\$33,000	\$40,000
7–12 years	\$40,378	\$47,000

This trend continues, as those with 13 to 21 years of experience who work in school-based environments earn on average \$3,860 less per year than those working in other settings.

- **Difficult Working Conditions**

Inadequate or unacceptable working conditions in schools can discourage SLPs from working in school-based environments. In the ASHA 2000 Schools Survey, a number of SLPs reported concern about several of these conditions:

- Unmanageable caseloads: 62 percent
- Others’ lack of understanding about SLP role: 41 percent
- Inadequate work space and facilities: 33 percent
- Lack of training for special population: 24 percent
- Lack of administrative support: 24 percent
- Lack of materials and assessment tools: 20 percent

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<sup>4</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (in press). *Recruitment and retention of qualified speech-language pathologists*. Washington, DC: Author.

- **Excessive Paperwork**  
Eighty-four percent of school-based SLPs reported excessive paperwork related to assessments, individualized education program (IEP) preparation, quarterly reports, and daily therapy logs.
- **Insufficient Planning/Meeting Time**  
Seventy-four percent of school-based SLPs reported lack of time for planning, collaboration, and meeting with teachers.
- **Limited Technology**  
Respondents to the 2000 ASHA Schools Survey cited limited or nonexistent access to computers and software programs for instructional strategies and accommodations and for management of paperwork.

Although these data are illuminating about problems faced by SLPs, there is little research that directly looks at the causes of shortages across the range of related service providers. We need more research into the availability and attrition of particular types of professionals (e.g., speech-language-hearing specialists, school psychologists), especially regarding their attrition from schools to nonschool employers and departures to wholly different fields.

## Strategies for Recruiting Related Services Providers

Shortages of related services personnel likely will continue in the immediate future. However, there are a number of emerging strategies to improve the availability and recruitment of related services professionals:

- **Strategy 1: Utilize Proven Strategies**  
The strategies common to the recruitment of qualified teachers are often appropriate and effective for SLPs. Some of these strategies include financial incentives, such as sign-on bonuses, relocation stipends, salary supplements for advanced training, and tuition reimbursement; workload management; clerical and technical support; mentorship and induction programs; and partnerships with local universities for “grow your own” personnel.
- **Strategy 2: Pursue Those in Training**  
Training programs throughout the United States are good places to actively seek personnel. Iowa is an example of a state pursuing this approach. Because the state does not train enough school psychologists to meet its needs, Iowa area education agencies recruit from 180+ active training programs located across the country.

Most training programs can be located by contacting the national associations for the specific professions. Searching the Internet also can be effective: A recent search of “physical therapy training programs” led to a website ([http://www.gradschools.com/programs/physical\\_therapy.html](http://www.gradschools.com/programs/physical_therapy.html)) that has a lengthy list of physical therapy graduate and doctoral programs, organized by state.

- **Strategy 3: Establish a Statewide Recruitment Office**  
Just as states are establishing statewide teacher recruitment offices (see, for example, the Ohio Department of Education’s Center for the Teaching Profession Web-based recruitment system at <http://www.ode.state.oh.us/jobs/>), it pays to do the same for related services professionals. Such

recruitment offices can be established through the state education agency or the state professional association (or in partnership), to ensure that prospects have good access to employers and information, and immediate response to inquiries. The statewide recruitment office can develop marketing materials that emphasize the positive features of the locations where services are most needed. For example, in rural settings, materials should emphasize features such as lower housing costs, community support, and family-oriented lifestyles. Urban settings can emphasize access to cultural events and resources, sports teams, sophisticated shopping, specialized services, and higher education opportunities.

- **Strategy 4: Get the Word Out**

There are several venues to advertise position vacancies. Regular advertisements can be placed in key professional trade publications that are specific to the specialty areas needed. Also, training programs can be kept abreast of vacancies and needs. In addition, many organizations offer online career centers or similar websites that include employment resources and job postings. Some also include information regarding effective strategies that state and local education agencies have implemented for recruitment and retention efforts. Following are a few examples:

- The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association has an online Career Center at <http://www.asha.org/about/career/> where employers can post open positions and review posted applications.
- The National Association of School Psychologists has a similar Career Center website located at <http://www.naspcareercenter.org>.
- Ohio Master's Network Initiatives in Education offers a website for recruiting speech-language pathologists and educational audiologists at <http://www.omnie.org>. This website allows employers to post position vacancies and potential employees to post their availability.
- The National Center for Special Education Personnel and Related Service Providers' partnership with Teachers-Teachers.com provides access to free placement services for individuals looking for positions in the field of education for early intervention and related services at <http://www.personnelcenter.org>.

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## State Policy and the Equitable Distribution of Highly Qualified Teachers

By Rebecca Phillips, Learning Point Associates, and Tricia Coulter, Ph.D., Education Commission of the States

The recruitment and distribution of highly qualified teachers is an unfulfilled goal that continues to plague the field of education. Policies and practice that govern the hire and transfer of teachers have contributed to a situation in which the best teachers—usually judged by experience—tend to migrate to the least challenging schools in what has come to be considered an unofficial reward system for seniority. A new report from The Education Trust<sup>1</sup> with data on three of the largest urban school systems in the country (Chicago, Cleveland, and Milwaukee) confirms once again that students in high-poverty and high-minority schools are on average more likely to be assigned teachers new to the profession and/or lacking a strong background in the subjects they teach.

This article discusses current federal and state activities under way to address the inequitable distribution of teachers, provides key findings from the State Performance Reports (SPR) with regard to meeting the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) highly qualified teacher (HQT) requirements, and describes the role that effective state policy can play in ensuring that all students are taught by a highly qualified teacher.

### Federal Requirements for States

Evidence indicates that children already challenged by circumstance are not being taught by the best of our teaching corps. This inequity garnered the attention of the federal government and was addressed in the HQT requirements of the NCLB Act. NCLB requires each state education agency (SEA) to provide evidence of a highly qualified teacher corps and describe its approach to addressing inequitable teacher distribution. By July 7, 2006, each state must submit to the U.S. Department of Education a completed revised plan—of which the equity plan is a part—for reaching 100 percent HQT status by the end of the 2006–07 school year. The plan also must meet the following requirements:

- Provide information on HQT status in each district and the steps the SEA will take to ensure each district has plans in place to assist teachers who are not highly qualified to attain HQT status as quickly as possible.
- Include information on the technical assistance, programs, and services the SEA will offer to assist districts in successfully completing their HQT plans (particularly where large groups of teachers are not highly qualified) and the resources that the local education agencies (LEAs) will use to meet their HQT goals.
- Provide a detailed analysis of the core academic subject classes in the state that currently are *not* being taught by highly qualified teachers. In particular, the analysis must address schools that are not making adequate yearly progress and must indicate whether these schools have more acute needs than other schools in attracting highly qualified teachers. The analysis also must identify the districts and schools in

<sup>1</sup> Peske, H. G., & Haycock, K. (2006). *Teaching inequality: How poor and minority students are shortchanged on teacher quality*. Washington, DC: The Education Trust. Retrieved June 16, 2006, from <http://www2.edtrust.org/NR/rdonlyres/010DBD9F-CED8-4D2B-9E0D-91B446746ED3/0/TQReportJune2006.pdf>

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the state where significant numbers of teachers do not meet HQT standards and examine whether there are particular hard-to-staff courses frequently taught by teachers who are not highly qualified.

- Describe how the SEA will work with LEAs that fail to reach the 100 percent HQT goal by the end of the 2006–07 school year.
- Explain how and when the SEA will complete the high objective uniform state standard of evaluation (HOUSSE) process for teachers not new to the profession who were hired prior to the end of the 2005–06 school year.
- Include a copy of the state’s written “equity plan” for ensuring that poor or minority children are not taught by inexperienced, underqualified, or out-of-field teachers at higher rates than other children.

## State Compliance

Below are a few key dates detailing the process that states have followed, leading to the required revised State Plans due on July 7, 2006.

**October 21, 2005**—States receive a letter from Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings indicating that despite the substantial progress many states are making in meeting the goal of having all core academic subject classes taught by highly qualified teachers by the end of the 2005–06 school year, states are still facing difficulties in fully meeting this requirement. If a state is falling short of the 100 percent HQT goal but meets the four requirements for implementing NCLB that constitute a “good-faith effort” to reach the goal, the Department of Education requests that the state submit a revised plan detailing specific steps it will take to reach the HQT goal in the 2006–07 school year, paying particular attention to schools identified as “in need of improvement” and those with high concentrations of poor and disadvantaged students.

**March 8, 2006**—States submit their 2004–05 HQT data via Part I of the Consolidated State Performance Report. These performance reports include data on the distribution of highly qualified teachers<sup>2</sup> between high-poverty and low-poverty schools and include a breakdown on the percentage of core academic classes taught by highly qualified teachers in elementary and secondary schools.

**March 8–12, 2006**—U.S. Department of Education reviews state-provided data and determines that although most states have made progress during the past three years, none of the states is likely to reach the goal of 100 percent HQT by the end of the 2005–06 school year. Department officials notify individual states of the results of their assessment of HQT progress and request that a revised plan be submitted. The revised plan must detail specific new actions that will be taken to reach the HQT goal in the 2006–07 school year. The data also reveal the following:

- The percentage of highly qualified teachers teaching core academic classes varies widely by state, with states reporting from 29 percent to 100 percent in elementary schools and 37 percent to 99 percent in secondary schools.
- For both elementary and secondary schools, the majority of states report a distribution gap between high-poverty and low-poverty schools of less than 5 percent, with some states reporting a greater percentage of core academic classes being taught by highly qualified teachers at high-poverty schools than at low-poverty schools.

<sup>2</sup> These data are preliminary and have not been formally released by the Department of Education.

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- Fifteen states report a gap of at least 5 percent, with one state reporting that almost 30 percent more core academic classes are taught by highly qualified teachers at low-poverty schools.

## Effective State Policy

One outcome resulting from the inclusion of the HQT provisions in the NCLB Act is the conversations that have occurred in states—both within and between state agencies and organizations that influence teacher quality. In order to collect and present data on teacher quality and distribution, SEAs have been working with state certification and licensure agencies and commissions on higher education that track information on the number of teaching degrees awarded in a state, teacher unions, and local district administrators. Improving teacher quality traditionally has been the domain of local districts through support for teacher professional development—with little attention paid to the challenges that exist across the teacher pipeline (e.g., teacher preparation, certification, recruitment, induction, advancement). Multiple agencies have needed to come together to provide accurate data for federal reporting and to propose solutions to address the gaps that the data illuminate.

In a recent report from Education Sector, Kevin Carey<sup>3</sup> demonstrates an unfortunate truth: State policy that seeks primarily to meet federal requirements is not always effective in meeting the goals it intended to address. In addition, no amount of incentives and sanctions on states will ensure that effective state policy is developed, proposed, and adopted in response to the challenge of meeting the NCLB highly qualified teacher provisions and ensuring that all students have access to highly qualified teachers unless policymakers consider the continuum of each teacher's career holistically (from recruitment to retirement), as opposed to applying short-term solutions to systemic problems. Creating quality state policy necessitates a process that includes the careful analyzing of data to confirm the problem, reviewing research on promising strategies to develop targeted state solutions, and evaluating implementation to enable midcourse corrections. While NCLB may have forced states to begin a series of uncomfortable conversations in response to federal requirements, only state and local decision makers can create the types of policies necessary to ensure significant and sustained improvements in teaching quality and student achievement.

<sup>3</sup> Carey, K. (2006). *Hot air: How states inflate their educational progress under NCLB*. Washington, DC: Education Sector. Retrieved June 20, 2006, from [http://www.educationsector.org/usr\\_doc/Hot\\_Air\\_NCLB.pdf](http://www.educationsector.org/usr_doc/Hot_Air_NCLB.pdf)

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## Action Steps

### Creating Quality State Policy

Quality state policy serves two primary functions: It establishes parameters of authority and activity, and it sets requirements that reflect the goals and priorities for the issue that the policy addresses. In addition, state policy also should:

- Be based on quality research and practice.
- Establish a system whereby outcome or accountability measures are specified and checked.
- Be revisited after an appropriate interval to ensure it is effective and be changed if necessary.
- Serve as a vehicle by which to focus attention and resources on a designated challenge if accountability and outcome measures are required.

To create quality state policy, the following three steps are essential:

1. **Analyze data to identify focus.** Using an analysis of your data, identify the area or issue in which your policy will focus. For example, a state with low percentages of highly qualified teachers in both high- and low-poverty schools will likely need to focus on recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers overall. However, a state where there is a large gap between high- and low-poverty schools related to highly qualified teachers will want to create and implement policies that specifically address recruiting and retaining teachers in high-poverty schools.
2. **Use research to inform promising action.** Write policy that is research based and incorporates best practices.
3. **Evaluate effectiveness.** Identify appropriate outcome measures to ensure adequate time between policy implementation and assessment. If the policy focuses on retention of teachers, for example, the length of time that a teacher must stay in the in the profession to be considered “retained” must first be chosen; assessment of the policy’s success should not occur until that time has passed. Information gained through assessment of a policy should then be put to use to inform additional or replacement policies.

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## Highlights

### What's New

#### **Hold the Date! NCCTQ Annual Conference to be held November 8–9, 2006**

NCCTQ will hold its annual What Works Conference on November 8–9, 2006, at the Doubletree Hotel, 1515 Rhode Island Avenue N.W., in Washington, D.C. The conference will focus on the connection between highly qualified teachers and student achievement with keynote presentations, concurrent sessions, and opportunities for networking and information sharing. Additional information is forthcoming.

#### **Webcast: *Focusing Teacher Preparation on At-Risk and Hard-to-Staff Schools***

The next NCCTQ webcast—to be held at 3 p.m. EDT September 21, 2006—will look at how teacher preparation programs can prepare teachers for challenging urban areas, isolated rural locales, and other school environments that are typically high poverty and low performing. More information will be available in the coming weeks.

#### **Recruiting Quality Teachers for Mathematics, Science, and Special Education**

A new topic area on “Recruiting Quality Teachers for Mathematics, Science, and Special Education” has been added to NCCTQ’s online *TQ Tips and Tools: Emerging Strategies to Enhance Teacher Quality* (<http://www.tqsource.org/strategies/>). This new installment currently features resources for recruiting mathematics and science teachers at the middle and high school levels, and resources for recruiting mathematics and science teachers for rural areas.

### Our Continuing Work

#### **NCCTQ Provided Technical Assistance on State Equity Plans**

In collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education, NCCTQ provided technical assistance meetings on May 16 and 17, 2006, for Comprehensive Assistance Center teacher quality liaisons. The goal was to support them as they receive requests for assistance from states about the revised State Plans. The agenda included a review of the charge to states for equity plans as well as a demonstration of the *Planning Tool to Provide Evidence of Progress Toward Equitable Teacher Distribution* (described under Resources, page 14).

#### **NCCTQ National Issue Forum Addressed Personnel Shortages and Recruitment**

On May 24–25, 2006, NCCTQ hosted its inaugural issue forum. Participants learned of the latest in research, policy, and practice relating the recruitment of quality teachers in special education, mathematics, and science in at-risk schools. A variety of experts in the field—including Richard Ingersoll, Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania; George Ann Rice, Ph.D., Clark County (Nevada) Schools; Patricia Ross, U.S. Department of Education; and Eric Hirsch, Center for Teaching Quality—reflected on a diverse range of perspectives and ideas on the topic. Materials from the meeting are available online at <http://www.ncctq.org/issueforums/atrisk/>.

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and is a collaborative effort of Education Commission of the States, ETS, Learning Point Associates, and Vanderbilt University.




**Resources**

- *Planning Tool to Provide Evidence of Progress Toward Equitable Teacher Distribution* (2006)  
<http://www.ncctq.org/TeacherDistributionPlanningTool.pdf>

States, districts, and schools have an obligation to work toward ensuring that all students—regardless of race, poverty, or geography—have access to highly qualified teachers. Moreover, states, districts, and schools have a responsibility to make concerted efforts toward reducing the concentration of underqualified teachers in high-poverty schools. This planning tool will help states address the types of data that might be useful in demonstrating that they have made significant progress in this effort.

- *Teaching Inequality: How Poor and Minority Students Are Shortchanged on Teacher Quality* (2006)  
<http://www2.edtrust.org/NR/rdonlyres/010DBD9F-CED8-4D2B-9E0D-91B446746ED3/0/TQReportJune2006.pdf>

Just released from The Education Trust, this report does the following:

- Describes teacher distribution patterns nationally, along with selected findings in pilot states and districts.
  - Summarizes evidence about how differences in teacher quality affect student achievement, especially among low-income students, students of color, and low-achieving students of all races.
  - Explains the NCLB requirement that all groups of children receive their fair share of strong teachers.
  - Shares key lessons from the pilot states and districts that may be useful to other states and districts as they move to address the problem of teacher distribution.
  - Sets forth a range of strategies that can be used to address this problem—some from the stakeholder groups in the pilot states and districts, and others from The Education Trust.
- *Recruiting and Retaining Teachers in Alabama: Educators on What It Will Take to Staff All Classrooms With Quality Teachers* (2006)  
[http://www.teachingquality.org/pdfs/al\\_recruitretain.pdf](http://www.teachingquality.org/pdfs/al_recruitretain.pdf)

Following a survey of approximately 4,200 educators in three Alabama school districts, the Center for Teaching Quality compiled this report as a way to inform policymakers on what incentives and school conditions are most essential in recruiting and retaining teachers for all Alabama classrooms.

**Special Thanks to Our Reviewers for This Issue:**

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