



State Policy Principles for Strengthening the Educator Pipeline

The following principles support the advancement of research- and evidence-based state policies as recommended by the educator preparation community. To achieve significant and sustained improvements to their education systems, states must take a comprehensive approach to education policy that addresses the preparation and placement of novice educators, compensation, working conditions, school and district leadership, parent and community engagement, wrap-around services for students, and a host of other issues. The principles below address one piece of the comprehensive approach: strengthening the preparation of school personnel. While adopting these principles would not solve all of the challenges related to PK-12 educator quality, they are essential to improving the quality of new educators.

INVESTMENTS IN THE EDUCATION WORKFORCE

States should invest in initiatives that promote systemic approaches to improving the educator workforce; that recognize teachers, school leaders, and other education personnel as professionals; and that value the contributions that educators make to society. For example, states could invest in pilot programs (with clear guidelines and expectations) that support recruitment of a high-quality, diverse educator workforce; rigorous clinical experiences and internships for candidates; high-quality mentor and induction programs to support novice educators; and collaborative partnerships between educator preparation programs and local school districts—among other activities. Although such work would be complex, it would result in a significant and sustained return on investment including increased student learning, increased persistence of educators in the workforce, reduced district expenses for training new educators, and stronger relationships between local schools and educator preparation programs.^{i,ii}

- Resources
 - [Learning to Practice: The Design of Clinical Experience in Teacher Preparation](#)
 - [Talking Points: Learning to Practice: The Design of Clinical Experience in Teacher Preparation](#)

EQUITABLE PATHWAYS INTO TEACHING

State licensing systems must hold all teachers—no matter what route they take into teaching—to the same standards. Because fully prepared teachers are more effective than teachers-in-training, teachers should complete a preparation program by an approved provider prior to becoming a teacher of record.ⁱⁱⁱ All children deserve to be taught by fully prepared teachers, but currently, low-income students, English language learners, and students with disabilities are more likely to be taught by teachers-in-training than are other children. Furthermore, because extensive, supervised practical training for teachers in the classroom leads to improved outcomes for their students, state policies should require all teacher candidates, irrespective of their pathway into the profession, to complete a high-quality clinical internship

under the supervision of a mentor teacher.^{iv} Through exit or licensure assessments, including a valid and reliable teacher performance assessment, state policies should require all candidates, prior to becoming a teacher of record, to demonstrate they have the skills and knowledge necessary to be successful novice teachers.

- Resources
 - [Strengthening State Teacher Licensure Standards to Advance Teaching Effectiveness](#)
 - [Talking Points: Strengthening State Teacher Licensure Standards to Advance Teaching Effectiveness](#)
 - [What We Know: How Teacher Preparation Affects Student Achievement](#)

PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY

States should evaluate all educator preparation programs, including those in higher education and in other settings, using the same standards. States should provide time, resources, and technical assistance to those programs that need to improve and should close programs that continue to fail. States should require program evaluation to be designed and conducted in a transparent manner by credible bodies that include representatives of the profession.

Given that no indicator alone can accurately determine program quality, states should evaluate educator preparation programs using multiple measures that are selected based on research that is valid and reliable. There are many metrics that might comprise an accountability system, such as graduates' job placement and retention rates in the first few years after program completion, graduates' performance on evaluations, graduates' satisfaction with their preparation programs, employers' satisfaction with graduates, whether preparation programs are graduating students prepared to fill vacancies in their localities, and the impact of graduates on student learning. Policies should be sensitive to the lack of consensus in the research as to whether value-added measures can accurately differentiate effectiveness across preparation programs^{v,vi} and whether value-added measures can accurately account for the different contexts of PK-12 schools where graduates are employed.^{vii}

States should use caution when linking program evaluation models to high-stakes consequences and should pilot accountability systems before they become consequential. During the pilot phase, the state should convene practitioners to ensure the system accurately captures program quality and to ensure practitioners have confidence in the integrity of the system.

- Resources
 - [Higher Education Task Force: Principles for Evaluating Prep Programs](#)

DATA SYSTEMS

Preparation programs are eager to receive and use data about their graduates to help identify program strengths and weaknesses. Such data may be able to answer questions such as which factors affect retention rates and how program graduates fare under various state evaluation and effectiveness policies. Future state policies on longitudinal data systems should require the state to share any relevant data with the preparation programs, and current state policies should be amended if they do not already require data sharing.

Policy makers should work with practitioners to determine what information should be included in the data system. State resources should be allocated to the collection of data that will be most beneficial for program improvement. Policies should provide the opportunity for preparation programs to review the data to ensure the system records match the program records and should ensure that data systems are capable of differentiating among separate certification programs at a single institution.

- Resources
 - [Leveraging State Longitudinal Data Systems to Inform Teacher Preparation and Continuous Improvement: A Data-Sharing Template to Prompt Discussion and Strategic Planning](#)
 - [Using Longitudinal Data Systems to Inform State Teacher Quality Efforts](#)

SELECTIVITY

State policies should recognize that selectivity occurs throughout the educator preparation program—at the point of entry, during course work and clinical practice, and upon exiting the program. Policies on selectivity requirements should allow for some discretion on the part of the preparation program faculty to exercise professional judgment as they admit, prepare, and graduate individuals they deem capable of becoming effective teachers committed to the classroom. States should also honor the integrity of institutional identity and institutional mission in whatever policies they enact to strengthen program selectivity.

Although some research indicates that students who have attained higher educational achievement, as measured by multiple factors, go on to be more effective teachers,^{viii} states should be cautious in enacting policies mandating entry requirements based on a single measure such as GPA or standardized test scores; there is no evidence that these individual metrics are predictive of future success in the classroom. Other important admissions criteria can include candidates' personal dispositions, communication skills, and ability to persist in challenging schools, as well as diversity. More important than selectivity into a program, though, is selectivity at the conclusion of the program. State policies should ensure that candidates who complete preparation programs are indeed ready to be successful in the classroom. For example, policies requiring a rigorous performance-based exit assessment allow teacher candidates to demonstrate they have honed their teaching skills to a level appropriate for a novice teacher.^{ix,x}

- Resources
 - [Where We Stand: Selectivity of Educator Preparation Programs](#)

ⁱ Henry, G., Bastian, K., & Smith, A. (2012). *The North Carolina Teaching Fellows program: A comprehensive evaluation*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, Education Policy Initiative at Carolina.

ⁱⁱ Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2009). Teacher education and student achievement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 31(4), 416-440.

ⁱⁱⁱ AACTE. (2012). *What we know: How teacher preparation affects student achievement*. Washington, DC: Author.

^{iv} Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. H. (2008). *Teacher preparation and student achievement*. NBER Working Paper No. W14314. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

^v Koedel, C., Parsons, E., Podgursky, M., & Ehlert, M. (2012). *Teacher preparation programs and teacher quality: Are there real differences across programs?* Washington, DC: National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research.

^{vi} Goldhaber, D., & Liddle, S. (2012). *Assessing teacher preparation programs based on student achievement*. Washington, DC: National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research.

^{vii} Mihaly, K., McCaffery, D., Sass, T., & Lockwood, J. R. (2012). *Where you come from or where you go? Distinguishing between school quality and the effectiveness of teacher preparation program graduates*. Washington, DC: National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research.

^{viii} Henry, G. T., Bastian, K. C., & Smith, A. A. (2012). Scholarships to recruit the “best and brightest” into teaching: Who is recruited, where do they teach, how effective are they, and how long do they stay? *Educational Researcher*, 41(3), 83–92.

^{ix} Newton, S. (2010). *Preservice performance assessment and teacher early career effectiveness: Preliminary findings on the performance assessment for California teachers*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University, Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity.

^x Wilson, M., Hallam, P. J., Pecheone, R., & Moss, P. (2010). *Using Student Achievement Test Scores as Evidence of External Validity for Indicators of Teacher Quality: Connecticut's Beginning Educator Support and Training Program*. [Unpublished draft]