



Educator Quality

is a crucial factor in student achievement

Educator Quality Committee Report

**A report to the Texas P-16 Council
On Recommendations Produced FY 2006-2007**

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THE P-16 COUNCIL

HISTORY OF THE P-16 COUNCIL

In Texas, the P-16 collaborative began in 1998 as an informal network called the Public Education/Higher Education Coordinating Group. That group was formed by the Commissioners of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), along with the executive director of the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC). Representatives from the legislature, the Governor's office, university systems and other state agencies, as well as education associations and business coalitions were invited to the meetings. It was important for the stakeholders and strategic partners to have a structure, however informal, to present ideas and discuss issues of mutual concern and interest such as the Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate (AP/IB) Incentive Program, college readiness projects, role of community colleges, teacher recruitment and retention, dual/concurrent enrollment, and minority enrollment and assessment.

In 2003, the Texas Legislature formalized the system by passing Senate Bill 286 which created the P-16 Council as defined in Sections 61.076 and 61.077 of the Education Code. In 2005, the Legislature modified and strengthened the P-16 statute by passing House Bill 2808, which amends [Section 61.076](#) and repeals Section 61.077 of the Education Code. Section 61.076 outlines Council membership.

COUNCIL MEMBERS

In 2005, the 79th Regular Texas Legislature established the statutory members of the P-16 Council in [House Bill 2808](#). Council members represent four Texas state agencies: the [Texas Education Agency](#) (TEA), the [Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board](#) (THECB), the [Texas Workforce Commission](#) (TWC), and the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). Note: The State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) remains a statutory member; however, subsequent legislation moved SBEC's responsibilities under the purview of TEA.

MEMBERS

Dr. Shirley Neeley (Council Co-Chair)
Commissioner of Education
Texas Education Agency

Dr. Raymund A. Paredes (Council Co-Chair)
Commissioner of Higher Education
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Mr. Terrell I. Murphy
Commissioner
Texas Department of Assistive and
Rehabilitative Services

Mr. Larry Temple
Executive Director
Texas Workforce Commission

COMMITTEES AND SUBCOMMITTEES

P-16 Committees are comprised of education stakeholders from public and higher education, legislative staff, and business and community members. The committees advise the Council on a number of topics, and membership is open to all interested persons. Current committees and subcommittees include:

- **ADULT, CAREER, AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION**
Addresses issues related to community colleges and adult education.
 - Developmental Education Subcommittee
- **EDUCATOR QUALITY**
Addresses issues related to excellence in educator recruitment, preparation, development, and retention.
- **STUDENT ACADEMIC PREPARATION AND READINESS**
Addresses issues related to students' readiness and academic preparation.
- **TEXAS P-16 PUBLIC EDUCATION INFORMATION RESOURCE (TPEIR)**
Addresses issues related to data compilation and research. Maintains the Texas PK-16 Education Information Resource.

EDUCATOR QUALITY COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE CHAIR

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past decade, a number of education stakeholders have come to agree that educator quality is an important determinant of student achievement, outside of home and family influences.¹ A growing body of research continually emphasizes educators as a crucial factor in student learning and success. Research has shown that students taught by the most qualified and effective teachers achieve at high levels, and that teacher quality should be a major focus of efforts to improve our schools.

Efforts to address educator quality and student achievement encompass a number of factors, conditions, policies, and institutions. The P-16 Committee on Educator Quality (“Committee”) approached the issue from a P-16 standpoint aimed at ensuring that the public education and higher education systems can work together to improve relations and strengthen educator quality and public education throughout the state. The Committee chose to focus on three major issue areas: educator recruitment and selection, education preparation, and educator retention. These broad areas encompass a number of specific issues, influencing the quality of the educator workforce including, but not limited to: the quality of educator recruitment and preparation programs; the existence and quality of induction/mentoring programs; compensation and benefits; the relevance and quality of professional development opportunities; the quality of teacher retention programs; and working conditions.

Despite the best efforts to prepare beginning teachers and support their continued learning, Committee members feel that the state must take a more active role in strengthening policies that contribute to the retention of effective teachers. State policy is essential to achieving system-wide change to increase and retain the number of high quality teachers in the state. Legislation that addresses these issues is particularly crucial in order to adequately prepare and retain teachers in Texas public schools. The following recommendations offer a framework necessary to developing and successfully implementing an integrated, seamless approach for quality teacher induction and retention within a career pathway supported by strong professional development, mentoring, enhanced compensation and benefits, and improved working/learning conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee has identified three major recommendations designed to inform policy and improve educator quality in Texas. The Committee understands that the P-16 Council can approve the following recommendations, in whole or in part. However the Committee feels strongly that all components are interrelated and necessary to produce, grow, and retain the high quality educators needed in our state. Therefore it is preferable that each recommendation be viewed as one component of a necessary larger strategic plan.

¹ Education Commission of the States (2000). *In Pursuit of Quality Teaching: Five Key Strategies for Policymakers*. Denver: CO, Education Commission of the States.

(1) Educator Recruitment and Selection

Recommend that Texas provide tools to recruit more high quality educators to the field, particularly in shortage areas, such as math and science, and underserved schools.

(2) Educator Preparation

Recommend that Texas require its educator preparation programs to provide structured quality experiences to better align with current P-12 classroom needs, provide more emphasis on content knowledge and pedagogy that is tied to scientific research and clinical experience throughout the term of the program, and create and strengthen educator leadership programs.

(3) Educator Retention

Recommend that Texas enact a comprehensive strategy to retain high quality educators through the following measures:

a. Induction/Mentoring

Recommend that Texas implement a comprehensive, research-based induction and mentoring program that is vertically aligned with teacher preparation programs so that all new educators in Texas have high-quality, standardized skills and knowledge when entering public education.

b. Professional Growth

Recommend that Texas enact a comprehensive, systemic statewide professional growth strategy that is job-embedded, results-driven, and differentiated based on research-based professional development standards and indicators.

c. Working/Learning Conditions

Recommend that Texas promote policies and practices that support a quality work and learning environment in schools, including promoting innovative redesign of the work day to create time for teacher professional development and collaboration.

d. Multiple Career Pathways

Recommend that Texas enact a comprehensive, systemic statewide strategy to retain high quality teachers by designing multiple career pathways, which provide career advancement opportunities for classroom teachers. The comprehensive strategy includes enhanced pay and benefit opportunities.

e. Enhanced Pay and Benefits

Recommend that Texas develop a compensation structure that addresses the compression of the current state minimum salary schedule and extends the salary schedule by providing proportional long-term salary gains to educators, as well as additional salary increases for certain steps on the salary schedule representing years in which teacher attrition is high as supported by research, such as in years 3-6.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, a number of education stakeholders have come to agree that educator quality is an important determinant of student achievement, outside of home and family influences.² A growing body of research continually emphasizes educators as a crucial factor in student learning and success. Research has shown that students taught by the most qualified and effective teachers achieve at high levels, and that teacher quality should be a major focus of efforts to improve our schools.³

As we explore the landscape of educator quality in the state of Texas, it is important to look beyond the classroom and school building. Educator quality is influenced through a systemic approach that involves multiple levels of the P-16 pipeline. Institutions of higher education, community colleges, and alternative routes to certification impact student achievement through education preparation programs. Linda Darling-Hammond, a leading research on educator quality, claims that in order to produce effective teachers, it is important for districts and educator preparation programs to collaborate through P-16 initiatives and operate differently by providing: 1) a coherent curriculum that tightly intertwines theory and practice; 2) fieldwork that is integrated with class work, coupled with support from carefully selected mentors; 3) an extended clinical component, with a minimum of 30 weeks of student teaching; and 4) an emphasis on learning theory and child development, with extensive training in the ability to address the needs of diverse learners.⁴

There are currently a number of entities in Texas exploring the issue of educator quality. Several of these organizations have placed an emphasis on hiring, training, and retaining *effective* teachers and school leaders. While it has become quite common to talk about effective teachers and school leaders, the complexity of defining “effective” has proven to be a challenge for education groups and researchers and has led a number to adopt their own definition or list of characteristics. While some definitions or characteristics overlap, others do not. This lack of clarity and consensus around the definition of “effective” contributes to a lack of standard practices around teacher preparation and induction. The Committee feels that defining “effective” is an important task which would help to clarify policy discussions with respect to educator quality. Similar statewide efforts have been undertaken successfully with respect to early education, and aspects of the research and models would likely be applicable to this effort.⁵

Given the absence of a definition of what characteristics may mark an effective teacher, the Committee chose to address (external/environmental) issues known to impact the quality of educators in the field. These can be grouped into three broad categories: recruitment and selection, preparation, and retention. The Committee believes that research-based systemic changes in the following areas will create an environment in which high quality candidates are recruited into

² Education Commission of the States (2000). *In Pursuit of Quality Teaching: Five Key Strategies for Policymakers*. Denver: CO, Education Commission of the States.

³ Fergusson, R. (1991). Paying for public education: New evidence of how and why money matters. *Harvard Journal on Legislation*, 28, 475.

⁴ Darling-Hammond, L., (1998). *The Effective Components of Teacher Preparation*.

⁴ Fergusson, R. (1991). Paying for public education: New evidence of how and why money matters.

⁵ For more information on the definition of educator effectiveness in the context of school readiness, as well as recommendations regarding a statewide effort to define educator effectiveness, see Appendix B.

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education, given the knowledge and tools to create a school environment where their students excel, and feel supported and valued as professionals.

RECOMMENDATION ONE

Recommend that Texas provide tools to recruit more high quality educators to the field, particularly in shortage areas, such as math and science, and underserved schools.

A 1999 TEA study reports that entry to the teaching field in Texas is mostly self-selected.⁶ That is, educator preparation programs and public school districts are not actively encouraging and recruiting non-traditional individuals into the education field. The state must work to engage recruitment efforts to increase both the quantity *and* quality of educators entering public schools.

The shortage of high quality educators, specifically in the math and science fields, prompts districts to hire under-qualified individuals to teach. State regulatory requirements and district incentives exist, yet they do not sufficiently increase the number of highly qualified educators needed. This phenomenon is particularly prevalent in low income, high minority communities. Due to low educator retention rates in these districts, the problem is exacerbated when highly qualified educators leave the field due to poor working conditions and other factors.⁷ The Texas Legislature recently approved increasing the core curriculum requirements for all high school students to four years.⁸ This decision will likely exacerbate the teacher shortage in Texas, particularly in math and science.

By focusing on recruiting more highly qualified candidates to the teaching field, educator preparation programs can produce more effective teachers and improve educator quality in schools across the state.

The committee has determined that this could be accomplished by:

- (4) Increasing the quality and preparedness of educators by funding the cost of additional certifications, tuition, and advanced degrees for classroom teachers, particularly in shortage areas and underserved districts.
- (5) Encouraging preparation and certification programs to conduct outreach efforts to actively recruit high quality individuals.
- (6) Implementing a pilot program and provide additional funding to expand transition to teaching programs, particularly related to teacher shortage areas, that allow mid-career professionals to enter the teaching profession. Encourage district partnerships to allow flexible schedules and part-time teaching opportunities, and facilitate hiring retired teachers for these positions.
- (7) Funding a pilot program to encourage an increase in the rate of community college student transfers from 2-year to 4-year institutions for students pursuing teaching.

⁶ Texas Education Agency (1999). *Texas Teacher Recruitment and Retention Study*. Texas Center for School Educational Research. Retrieved [October 16, 2006] http://www.tcer.org/tcer/publications/texas_teacher_full.doc

⁷Linda Darling-Hammond and Gary Sykes (2003).

⁸ Texas House Bill 1, 79th Legislature, Third Called Session (2006).

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- (8) Funding retention stipends for those teaching in subject shortage areas for a certain number of years.

RECOMMENDATION TWO

Recommend that Texas require its educator preparation programs to provide structured quality experiences to better align with current P-12 classroom needs, provide more emphasis on content knowledge and pedagogy that is tied to scientific research and clinical experience throughout the term of the program, and create and strengthen educator leadership programs.

Nationally, there is widespread criticism of teacher education. A recent report concluded that, “The nation’s teacher education programs are inadequately preparing their graduates to meet the realities of today’s standards-based, accountability-driven classrooms, in which the primary measure of success is student achievement.”⁹ This report further contends that “many educator preparation programs are not supporting high quality teacher production. Numerous programs harbor low admission standards and minimal recruitment efforts; curriculum is often not aligned with state standards and classroom relevance; programs lack practical classroom experience; programs lack standards and quality control; and institutions do not maintain data systems to properly evaluate program effectiveness.”¹⁰

Other researchers, however, believe it is too simplistic to paint all of teacher education with a single brush when in reality there are wide discrepancies among programs, including a range from very high quality to very low quality programs. Further, they emphasize that the “quality issue” is not a matter of traditional vs. alternative certification programs. They contend, “The line between alternative and traditional certification is an illusion; the line between effective and ineffective novice teachers is real.”¹¹ Finally, they point out that school practitioners are often not well-informed about the differences in preparation programs and, as a result, fail to take these differences into consideration when hiring and making decisions about the support needs of novice teachers.

The Committee recommends that Texas institute systematic reform measures to ensure the availability of high quality educator preparation programs and guarantee high quality teacher production. Quality teacher preparation, knowledge of content material and teaching methods, are two important measures of teacher effectiveness and student success.¹² By ensuring high quality preparation programs that encompass this knowledge, the state can improve student achievement and learning. Better-prepared educators also tend to remain in the teaching field, thus high quality preparation programs will contribute to retention efforts.¹³

⁹ Arthur Levine (2006). *Educating School Teacher: Executive Summary*. Washington DC, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, The Education Schools Project. Retrieved [October 16, 2006] http://www.aacte.org/News/ExSum_Educating_School_Teachers_Levine.pdf.

¹⁰ Arthur Levine (2006).

¹¹ Daniel C. Humphrey & Majorie E. Wechsler (2006). *Fighting the Wrong Battle In the Teacher-Preparation Wars*. *Education Week*, August 30, 2006.

¹² Linda Darling-Hammond (1997). *Doing What Matters Most: Investing in Quality Teaching*. Washington DC, National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future.

¹³ Education Commission of the States (2000). *Two Paths to Quality Teaching: Implications for Policymakers: An ECS Staff Comparison of the Positions of the National Commission of Teaching and America’s Future and the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, Based on the Debate Between Linda Darling-Hammond and Chester E. Finn, Jr.* Denver: CO, Education Commission of the States.

Without proper standards and monitoring, there is no assurance of program effectiveness. Texas needs to measure the effectiveness of educators produced by the state's preparation programs and implement reform strategies to address the above-mentioned issues and ensure an adequate supply of high quality educator preparation programs.

The committee has determined that these programs could be accomplished by:

- (1) Redesigning educator preparation coursework
 - Align coursework with teacher accountability in public schools.
 - Put emphasis on educator preparation providers to engage in ongoing classroom experience and embedding this interface with public schools into the higher education reward system.
 - Require grade level specific training during undergraduate training in content areas, specifically mathematics concepts and science content, with additional certificates of completion.
 - Create mathematics academies for grade level review of mathematics.
- (2) Strengthening educator leadership programs
 - Emphasize leadership qualities needed to support educator quality and student achievement.
 - Promote understanding of quality instruction within school leadership programs.
 - Require principals to participate in training related to creating a quality work/learning environment as a component of initial certification. Emphasize effective site-based decision-making.
 - Require principals to participate in professional development related to student discipline as a component of initial certification and/or ongoing professional development for practicing administrators.
 - Require school leaders to engage in training related to an in-depth understanding of the importance and complexity of professional development, as well as how to lead and support professional development initiatives at the campus level.
 - Require training for school leaders to become astute consumers of education research.
- (3) Exploring new methods for teacher certification and internship opportunities such as 5th year paid internships/provisional certifications/alternative certification processes
 - Create an internship requirement before teacher certification that would include one full year in paid practice under the supervision of a school principal, mentor, and the educator preparation provider support staff.
 - Successful performance on the PDAS after the internship year would be the measure required before certification would be granted. Initiate due process, including right of appeal, for the certification candidate.
 - University fees would be paid to the University for advisement only.
 - During this year, the supervision team would look for pedagogical traits.
- (4) Providing additional specialized preparation programs for teacher shortage areas, such as math and science, similar to UTeach and other innovative programs that merge coursework from colleges of natural sciences and colleges of education.

RECOMMENDATION THREE

Recommend that Texas enact a comprehensive strategy to retain high quality educators.

Nearly 30% of new teachers leave the profession within the first three years of their careers,¹⁴ citing job characteristics, such as environment, salary, and working conditions, as primary reasons.¹⁵ Teacher retention affects student achievement and accountability. Schools that fail to meet performance standards are stigmatized, leading to low teacher morale and additional turnover.¹⁶

It is imperative that policymakers work to break this cycle. While it is not an easy task to determine the specific characteristics of an effective educator, a large body of research supports the use of professional learning communities to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the educator workforce. School districts that implement characteristics of professional learning communities have been proven to promote teacher effectiveness. A learning community stimulates ongoing, collective inquiry into teaching and learning. Educators share knowledge, the excitement and challenges that come with learning difficult materials, and the benefits reaped through learning to produce effective teachers.¹⁷

Multi-faceted collaborative professional learning communities including those within the campus environment and between public and higher education are evidence of a commitment to continual learning throughout the P-16 continuum.

SUB-RECOMMENDATION A

Implement a comprehensive, research-based induction and mentoring program that is vertically aligned with higher education/alternative certification programs so that all new educators in Texas have high-quality, standardized skills and knowledge when entering public education.

The Committee recommends that Texas enact a mandatory, comprehensive induction and mentoring program for all new educators in order to increase the likelihood of producing and retaining high quality educators. Poor professional support, particularly within the first few years of teaching, is a main contributing factor to teacher turnover.¹⁸ An NCES study reports that teachers involved in formal support and induction programs remain in the teaching field longer than those

¹⁴ Linda Darling-Hammond (2000). *Solving the Dilemmas of Teacher Supply, Demand, and Standards: How We Can Ensure a Competent, Caring, and Qualified Teacher for Every Child*. New York: NY, National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

¹⁵ Eric Hanushek, John Kain, and Steven Rivkin (2004). *The Revolving Door: A Path-Breaking Study of Teachers in Texas Reveals that Working Conditions Matter More than Salary*. Education Next.

¹⁶ Linda Darling-Hammond and Gary Sykes (2003). *Wanted: A National Manpower Policy for Education*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States.

¹⁷ DuFour, R., DuFour, R. & Eaker, R., (2000). Getting Started: Reculturing Schools to Become Professional Learning Communities. Bloomington, IN: National Education Service.

¹⁸ Linda Darling-Hammond and Gary Sykes (2003).

who do not.¹⁹ A study conducted by the Texas State Board of Educator Certification reports that retention rates for Texas teachers three years after mentoring and induction program participation was almost 10 percent higher than teachers who did not participate. These teachers reported these programs positively affected their feelings of a supportive environment and professional growth.²⁰

Texas must address this issue in order to increase retention rates of high quality individuals in the education field. “Teachers do not enter the classroom as finished products. Most teachers who remain in the profession improve and grow over time.”²¹ In order to improve educator quality and retention, the early years of teaching must include practical learning, linking theory to practice, and ongoing support.²² Well-supported induction and mentoring programs are key to accomplishing this goal.

The committee has determined that this strategy could be accomplished by:

- (1) Implementing and supporting a high quality statewide mentoring program for new teachers.
 - Include training for mentors and support for behavior management and discipline.
 - Require mandatory assignment of mentors to teachers with less than two years experience under Texas Education Code §21.548.
 - Provide funding for mentors in terms of (1) release time, (2) stipends, and/or (3) credit for certification renewal.
 - Provide common planning and release time for professional collaboration of mentor and mentees.
- (2) Creating a statewide collaborative three-year induction year program for new teachers that includes support from higher education and campus-based mentors:
 - Year 1: Teacher preparation based on state-approved induction year model which includes:
 - Higher education or alternative certification course work and student teaching/internship experience;
 - Common planning time and/or release time for both mentor and induction year teacher during the work day.
 - Year 2: First Year Teacher supported by mentoring cohort consisting of higher education mentor and campus-based mentor.
 - Year 3: Second Year Teacher supported by campus-based mentor and external technology-based support.

These induction and mentoring programs should examine and include the following:

¹⁹ National Center for Education Statistics (2002). *Progress Through the Teacher Pipeline: 1992-93 College Graduates and Elementary/Secondary School Teaching as of 1997*. Washington DC, US Department of Education.

²⁰ State Board for Educator Certification (2002). *Texas Beginning Educator Support System: Evaluation Report for Year Three, 2001-2002*. Study conducted by the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin.

²¹ Education Commission of the States (2004). *Where We Stand of Teacher Quality*. Denver: CO, Education Commission of the States.

²² Linda Darling-Hammond (1997). *Doing What Matters Most: Investing in Quality Teaching*. Washington DC, National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future.

- (1) Higher education/alternative certification coursework;
- (2) Student teaching/internship experience;
- (3) Common planning time and/or release time for mentors/mentees to collaborate;
- (4) Stipends for mentor teachers;
- (5) Credit for certification renewal;
- (6) Mentor/mentee relationships paired by subject area of expertise and/or grade level; and
- (7) Accountability/standards for mentor positions.

SUB-RECOMMENDATION B

Enact a comprehensive, systemic statewide professional growth strategy that is job-embedded, results-driven, and differentiated based on research-based professional development standards and indicators.

In order to retain high quality educators, the campus environment must foster educator success. Career advancement opportunities, time for collaboration, and professional development help promote an encouraging, professional environment. Educators who have access to knowledge about teaching and learning produce significant gains in student achievement, even more than with subject matter knowledge alone.²³ A comprehensive strategy including time for collaboration and ongoing job-embedded professional development to enhance student achievement will increase the likelihood of retention and improved educator quality in schools around the state.²⁴

The committee has determined that this strategy could be accomplished by:

- (1) Implementing a grant-funded pilot program focused on the innovative redesign of the school day to create time for professional growth and collaborative instructional planning.
 - Create opportunities for collaboration among teachers.
 - Provide an individualized professional development plan for each teacher that is based on student achievement data, specific teacher needs, and aligned with the campus improvement plan. The professional development plan will be constructed and implemented through a collaborative process by the individual teacher and campus administrator.
 - Provide opportunities for self-selected professional development for teachers that reflect state-approved standards.
 - Promote policies that maximize time for individual and group planning and professional development through a flexible process that allows greater choice in professional development based on student achievement data and individual needs of teachers. Implement a process by which teachers can comp out of district required staff development if the teacher obtained relevant professional development on his/her own time.
- (2) Creating and implementing a statewide professional development program based on adopted research-based professional development standards and indicators.

²³ Education Commission of the States (2000), *Two Paths*.

²⁴ *Ibid*.

- Potential research-based models include: National Staff Development Council Standards, Indiana Professional Development Standards, and the Texas Professional Development Imperative.
 - Provide professional development in the use of research-based best practices to address needs/challenges of individual students.
 - Professional development needs to be “job embedded” and differentiated.
- (3) Addressing the use of data as a component of professional development.
- Provide professional development in the use of data to determine needs/challenges of individual students.
- (4) Placing high quality professional development programs and opportunities under the purview of a division at TEA.
- (5) Implementing a statewide technology leadership academy for teachers that addresses technology integration as a teaching tool and component of professional development.
- (6) Providing an education benefit—for example, offer tuition reimbursement for teachers to earn additional certifications. Support transferability of college credit hours for professional development, particularly in shortage areas.
- (7) Implementing a statewide ongoing professional development program for existing school leaders that would:
- Focus on quality work/learning environment in schools
 - Focus on student discipline
 - Emphasize the importance and complexity of campus-led professional development initiatives.
- (8) Provide a mechanism for meaningful evaluation of teachers and school leaders, including a measure for implementing professional development in the classroom.
- (9) Engaging in a research study to analyze evaluation systems for teachers and school leaders—including PDAS and others.

SUB-RECOMMENDATION C

Recommend that Texas promote policies and practices that support a quality working and learning environment in schools, including promoting innovative redesign of the work day to create time for teacher professional development and collaboration.

The committee recommends that the state explore ways to improve working and learning conditions for classroom teachers, including innovative redesign of the workday, time for professional collaboration, and improved working conditions for all educators.

The committee has determined that this could be accomplished by:

- (1) Promoting innovative redesign of the workday to create time for teacher professional development and collaboration
 - Implement a statewide program to pilot innovative use of time that supports job-embedded professional development, collaborative planning, and quality individual teacher planning time.
 - Establish a clearinghouse of best practices in the innovative use of time for professional development, teacher collaboration, and planning.

- (2) Improving working conditions in schools
 - Promote policies and practices that support a quality work/learning environment in the schools.
 - Implement policies that encourage in-field teaching assignments.
 - Promote use of behavior coaches. Teachers should have access to behavior coaches either through a district or multi-district consortium. The purpose of the behavior coach is to provide technical assistance related to behavior and discipline issues in the classroom.

SUB-RECOMMENDATION D

Recommend that Texas enact a comprehensive, systemic statewide strategy to retain high quality teachers by designing multiple career pathways, which provide career advancement opportunities for classroom teachers. The comprehensive strategy includes enhanced pay and benefit opportunities.

The Committee recommends that the state design multiple career pathways which provide career advancement opportunities for classroom teachers. The comprehensive strategy includes salary and benefit enhancements, mentoring and induction programs, and professional development opportunities.

The committee has determined that this program could be accomplished by:

- Creating a grant program to pilot career pathway models in Texas schools, including mentoring, induction, and professional development components. Such programs will design and implement multiple career pathways and options for career advancement through positions such as mentor and master teachers with clearly defined roles that correspond with increases in responsibility, compensation, and leadership duties.
- Provide salary augmentations to mentor and master teachers in order to compensate for increased responsibility and time commitment.
- Develop performance standards and evaluation frameworks that define mentor and master teacher positions and prescribe accountability measures for teachers serving in differentiated staffing positions such as master and mentor teachers.

- Establish district-level committees to locally administer career pathway programs, select teacher leaders, collaborate with and solicit advice from career teachers at participating campuses, and provide ongoing support throughout the school year.

SUB-RECOMMENDATION E

Recommend that Texas develop a compensation structure that addresses the compression of the current state minimum salary schedule and extends the salary schedule by providing proportional long-term salary gains to educators, as well as additional salary increases for certain steps on the salary schedule representing years in which teacher attrition is high as supported by research, such as in years 3-6.

The committee has determined that this program could be accomplished by:

Revamping the current state minimum salary schedule structure to improve teacher retention, address the issue of compression in the current state minimum salary schedule, and provide career potential by:

- Granting long-term salary gains to educators by extending the salary schedule beyond step 20
- Providing percentage salary gains to educators on all steps of the extended salary schedule which are proportional to the educator's underlying salary
- Providing additional salary increases for certain steps on the salary schedule representing years in which teacher attrition is high as supported by research, such as in years three through six.

SPECIFIC POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Because policy recommendations are broad by nature, the Committee would like to offer the following specific policy considerations as examples of implementation in the three core focus areas.

(1) Educator Recruitment and Selection

- Fund a pilot program to expand *Transition to Teaching*, particularly related to shortage areas and provide funds to teacher candidates to become certified in shortage subject areas.
- Fund a pilot program to provide funds for current teachers to add subject shortage area certificates and retention stipends for those teaching in subject shortage areas for a certain number of years.
- Expand funding for educational aid and tuition exemption programs for teachers.
- Design and fund a pilot program to increase the rate of community college student transfers from 2-year to 4-year institutions for students who pursue teaching: 1) with GPA's of 3.0 or higher; and 2) who complete core requirements or an Associate of Arts in a teaching degree, in an effort to recruit candidates into the teaching field.
- Provide incentives to teacher preparation entities that: 1) increase the required entrance GPA and test scores (SAT, ACT) for teacher preparation program applicants; and 2) maintain consistent enrollment figures.

(2) Educator Preparation

- Authorize THECB and TEA, with the assistance of a qualified research organization, to establish a research study to review the quality of Texas education preparation programs and courses of study. The task force would review and set criteria for course content alignment to: 1) state standards; 2) state accountability systems; and 3) scientifically-based research. These recommendations support work currently underway at SBEC and a long-term goal to identify core knowledge required of all teacher preparation candidates in Texas.
- Expand funding for the principal leadership pilot program required under HB 1 and institute a corollary requirement for principal certification programs to include the program criteria recommendations from this report.
- Expand funding for and require research-based statewide teacher induction and mentoring programs outlined in HB 1; allow TEA the authority to evaluate systems for quality programs and sanction districts that do not implement quality induction and mentoring programs for new teachers.

(3) Educator Retention

- Support a grant program designed to pilot career pathway models that meet state standards and increase student achievement.
- Support a grant program designed to pilot innovative designs of the school day and use of personnel to: 1) create time for teacher professional development activities and collaboration; 2) increase teacher retention rates; and 3) engage in activities that lead to increased student achievement.
- Create and adequately staff a division and/or group at TEA designed to manage and monitor high quality educator professional development programs and providers (including ESC's) in order to ensure providers: 1) meet state research-based professional development standards and indicators, such as those outlined by the National Staff Development Council; 2) improve the quality of professional development; and 3) increase student achievement.
- Revamp the current state minimum salary schedule structure to improve teacher retention and career potential by: 1) extending the salary schedule beyond step 20; 2) providing proportional salary gains to educators on all steps of the extended salary schedule; and 3) providing additional salary increases for certain steps on the salary schedule representing years in which teacher attrition is high as supported by research, such as in years three through six.

CONCLUSION

In an effort to enhance student achievement, the Committee recommends that the P-16 Council adopt a transformative systemic approach to increase educator quality in the state. The policy recommendations laid out in this report offer a framework necessary to successfully develop and implement an integrated, seamless P-16 approach in which public education and higher education can work together to increase the quality of educators in Texas. Texas is engaged in a serious effort to coordinate and integrate the education systems with which students interact from preschool through post secondary education. The potential, across these same systems, to improve educator quality and effectiveness remains largely untapped.

The recommendations address the focus, scope, and quality of recruitment, selection, preparation, induction, professional growth and retention by establishing a common core of program elements essential for all Texas educators and, thereby, ensuring that standards-based preparation along with strategic professional growth will enhance student learning. Each of the components are interrelated, woven together into a systemic, comprehensive plan that will allow Texas to produce, grow, and retain the high quality educators needed in our state.

The Committee respectfully submits this report and asks that the P-16 Council adopt the recommendations, in whole or in part, in order to direct future state action with respect to educator quality.

APPENDIX A

BACKGROUND AND PROCESS

The P-16 Council Committee on Educator Quality convened for the first time on April 12, 2006. At this meeting, an overview from the P-16 Council of the intended work for the committee was provided.

During the meeting, the committee reviewed a planning document on the purpose and scope of work that the former committee had drafted. After reviewing the draft document, the committee members were asked to refine and/or expand upon the current draft and approve a focused purpose and scope for the Educator Quality Committee. As a result of this activity, the committee engaged in an exercise called affinity diagramming. During this exercise, the committee chair asked members to think about the key factors that impact educator quality in Texas. She then instructed the members to write down each thought on a Post-It note. All Post-It notes were then put on the wall and organized by theme.

The themes that were targeted by the committee are as follows:

- Induction/Mentoring
- Pay/Benefits
- Time/Collaboration/Working Conditions
- Professional Development, including technology
- Leadership
- Teacher Preparation
- Teacher Evaluation
- Use of research data
- Recruitment
- Career pathways for teachers
- Miscellaneous

The themes that emerged from this meeting were used to guide the work of the committee over the next few months.

The committee conducted research on each of the areas identified to determine which areas most closely aligned with the overall mission of the P-16 Council. Committee members reviewed and refined the areas identified and engaged in a multi-voting exercise in which each member voted on ten specific factors that they felt were the most crucial to improving educator quality in Texas. Votes were tallied and interest areas were further defined and condensed.

The Committee decided on five key factors to address:

- Career Pathways/Pay and Benefits
- Teacher and Leadership Preparation/Recruitment and Selection- Math and Science
- Professional Development, Technology Development, Teacher Evaluation, and Use of Data
- Time, Collaboration, and Working Conditions
- Induction and Mentoring

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Five subcommittees were formed to address each key factor. Subcommittees met individually in the month of August to work on key focus areas and devise a work plan that included feasible, research-based recommendations. Subcommittees brought their work plans to the September Committee on Educator Quality meeting for presentation and feedback.

The key areas were further researched and refined in the development of the committee's final report. In October 2006, policy recommendations from each subcommittee were analyzed for congruence. Key factors necessary to retain high quality educators in the field emerged from the analysis and were portrayed along a continuum of an educator's career. Throughout the months of November, December, and January, the Committee worked to refine the report and produce the final document for the P-16 Council meeting in February 2007.

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

As mentioned in the Introduction section of the report, there are currently a number of entities in Texas exploring the issue of educator quality. Several of these organizations have placed an emphasis on hiring, training, and retaining *effective* teachers and school leaders. While it has become quite common to talk about effective teachers and school leaders, the task of defining an effective teacher or leader is not so clear cut. The complexity of defining “effective” has proven to be a challenge in education research. A number of educational researchers and entities have adopted their own definition or list of characteristics. While some definitions or characteristics overlap, others do not. This lack of clarity and consensus around the definition of “effective” contributes to a lack of standard practices around teacher preparation and induction.

Given this conundrum in education policy, the Committee recommends that the state of Texas engage in a rigorous comprehensive scientifically-based research study to explore the practice of effective teaching and school leadership using measures which are scientifically statistically validated for the purpose of measuring teacher effectiveness. The goal of this research study would be to explore characteristics of effective teachers and school leaders as evidenced by student achievement and ultimately provide a common definition of *effective* teacher and school leadership to use in our state. A similar study was mandated through legislation passed by the 78th Texas Legislature (SB76) to establish a research model named the Texas Early Education Model: (TEEM) –Achieving Higher Levels of School Readiness in Cost Effective Ways.²⁵ The Committee advises using this model as a foundation to build upon and convert into a P-16 research model to identify standards of effective teaching and leadership.

²⁵ Selected communities received materials and services for two years in a pilot study of the TEEM model. Communities integrated services to ensure high teacher quality by participating in research-based online professional development, systematic mentoring from a highly skilled mentor using reliable and valid observation measures, progress monitoring of children, and research-based early childhood curriculum from a state approved list. This model requires teachers to implement scientific, research-based instructional approaches in programs for three and four year old children, further increasing the likelihood of this research project having a positive effect on children at high risk for school failure. Student performance data in TEEM classrooms in the pilot study was compared to that in non-TEEM classrooms in a clinical trial. A report of findings was provided to the Senate Education Committee. Efficacy data from the pilot study was so compelling that during the 79th Session, the implementation of this model was expanded into additional Texas communities.