education sector policy briefs

A Measured Approach to Improving Teacher Preparation

By Chad Aldeman, Kevin Carey, Erin Dillon, Ben Miller, and Elena Silva

EDUCATIONSECTOR
www.educationsector.org

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

CHAD ALDEMAN is a policy analyst at Education Sector. He can be reached at caldeman@educationsector.org.

KEVIN CAREY is the policy director at Education Sector. He can be reached at kcarey@educationsector.org.

ERIN DILLON is a senior policy analyst at Education Sector. She can be reached at edillon@educationsector.org.

BEN MILLER is a policy analyst at Education Sector. He can be reached at bmiller@educationsector.org.

ELENA SILVA is a senior policy analyst at Education Sector. She can be reached at esilva@educationsector.org.

ABOUT EDUCATION SECTOR

Education Sector is an independent think tank that challenges conventional thinking in education policy. We are a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization committed to achieving measurable impact in education, both by improving existing reform initiatives and by developing new, innovative solutions to our nation's most pressing education problems.

1201 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 850, Washington, D.C. 20036
202.552.2840 • www.educationsector.org

Every year for the last six years, the state of Kentucky has identified the teacher preparation programs at Union College, a small private institution in Appalachia, as "at-risk" or "low-performing." Yet Union still grants education degrees each year, sending nearly 300 graduates into Kentucky schools, all with the full backing of the state.[1]

Kentucky is not the only state to let low-performing teacher preparation programs stay in business. In fact, it does better than most, simply because it bothers to identify the low performers at all. Although all states are required to identify substandard teacher preparation programs, over half of all states have never identified a single program. The few programs that are named face few consequences, even if, like Union College, they are continually called out. At the same time, good programs, those that consistently do the best job of preparing teachers to help students learn, receive little recognition or reward. The result is a teacher education system—supported by an ever-expanding set of federal financial aid programs and multimillion-dollar federal grants—that offers few signals or guarantees of quality for anyone involved, from the college students who often borrow thousands of dollars to attend the programs to the districts, schools, and children that depend on good teachers.

The problem is immense. The nation will need more than a million new teachers in the next five years and will rely almost exclusively on the existing 1,434 colleges that are approved by states to train elementary and secondary teachers.[2] These new teachers will have enormous influence on their students' success. Research proves the critical effect of individual teachers on student learning.[3] As such, policymakers and major philanthropies are moving on a variety of fronts to improve the effectiveness of teachers once they are in the classroom, from strengthening evaluation systems to proposing new compensation schemes. But without ensuring the best possible preparation for beginning teachers, these efforts are likely to fall short.

Fortunately, the need to reform teacher education is gaining attention and momentum on both federal and state levels. The focus is on moving beyond just inputs, or counting program graduates and placement rates, to measuring outcomes, or how well graduates are performing in the classroom.[4] In a 2009 speech at the University of Virginia, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan lamented the fact that teacher education programs often "act as the Bermuda Triangle of higher education—students sail in, but no one knows what happens to them after they come out."[5]

Similarly, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education recently issued a report arguing for more rigorous accountability of teacher preparation programs, writing, "All teacher education programs should be accountable for—and their accreditation contingent upon—how well they address the needs of schools and help improve P-12 student learning."[6] NCATE (now merged with a rival accrediting agency, TEAC, to create the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation) has pledged to develop stronger standards and close programs that don't meet those standards. Finally, a handful of states have launched initiatives to track the student learning outcomes of program graduates, and 31 states included plans to track such outcomes in their applications for federal Race to the Top funding.

But these efforts alone will not suffice. Strong federal action is needed to accelerate and scale these reforms. In 1998 Congress amended the federal Higher Education Act to require states to hold teacher preparation programs accountable by publicly identifying (and then improving) low-performers. When the law was reauthorized in 2008, Congress went a step further, requiring institutions to provide "assurances" to the secretary of education that their teacher preparation programs meet the recruitment needs of local districts and the instructional demands of new teachers.[7] And yet, struggling institutions

like Union College continue on without signs of improvement, and thousands of ill-prepared new teachers enter classrooms every year.

When Congress reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, followed soon after by a new Higher Education Act, it will have an opportunity to do better. Past experience proves that relying solely on states to set and enforce high standards for teacher preparation will not work. Thus, a new federal approach is needed. This would include:

1. A new federal framework for assessing and improving teacher preparation programs, one that encourages accurate and honest reporting on outcomes-based indicators of quality.

2. A new set of competitive grants that will encourage states and institutions to make ambitious changes to how, and how rigorously, they monitor, evaluate, and improve their teacher preparation programs. The grants should focus on both systemic improvement for all programs and immediate action for programs that consistently fail.

3. A new strategy to streamline existing financial aid programs and better align those programs with current efforts to improve the quality of the teacher work force. This should involve eliminating TEACH Grants, an ineffective pre-service grant program, and using those resources to expand debt forgiveness benefits for high-quality classroom teachers.

Combined, these strategies will create the right conditions for states and institutions to reform poor-performing teacher preparation programs, improve preparation as a whole, and help keep more well-prepared teachers in the classroom after they graduate.

The Current State of Teacher Education

With more than 1,400 institutions in the United States offering education degrees, there is no shortage of options for prospective teachers to earn their teaching credentials. Programs vary in almost every way imaginable—in selectivity, design, duration, and course and fieldwork requirements. Most are housed in schools of education, but a substantial number of "alternative route" programs, where teachers can bypass university-based pre-service preparation, have emerged in recent years.

All these choices might seem like a good way to meet the diverse education needs of our nation. After all, these programs combined produce plenty of teachers—nearly 300,000 each year—to meet the overall demand.[8] They don't, however, produce the right kind of teachers in the right places.

Programs pay almost no attention to the labor needs of states or local districts, much less the nation. As a result, teacher education produces a glut of elementary teachers; too few subject experts in science, math, and special education; and insufficient numbers willing and able to teach in high-need communities.[9] And at a time when minority students are growing fast in number and are soon to be the majority, graduates of teacher education programs are still disproportionately female and white. Research has found no conclusive link between the race of a teacher and the performance of students, but the absence of male minority teachers is staggering. As the achievement of black male students dips to a crisis point, with dropout rates now double that of their white peers, less than 2 percent of the nation's teachers are African-American men.[10] And since most programs accept nearly all applicants, new teachers are also unlikely to be among top performers academically. According to a recent analysis of beginning teachers, only 14 percent teaching in high-poverty schools come from the top third of college graduates.[11]

Teacher education programs, then, are good at churning out teachers, but far less successful at ensuring that those teachers are effectively meeting the needs of public schools and students. The two existing mechanisms for holding programs accountable, state approval and voluntary accreditation, have done little to solve this problem. State departments of education set requirements that teacher preparation programs must meet for their graduates to be eligible to teach in the state.[12] But state program approval is largely *pro forma,* and examples of states revoking approval—or even mandating significant changes—are scarce. The value of accreditation, where programs voluntarily

Teacher education produces a glut of elementary teachers; too few subject experts in science, math, and special education; and insufficient numbers willing and able to teach in high-need communities.

choose to seek the imprimatur of national accrediting bodies like NCATE, has been the subject of debate in recent years. Research has found no difference in the student achievement outcomes of teachers educated at accredited programs versus those educated at non-accredited programs, and half of all institutions are not accredited at all.[13]

The rigor of program content is also suspect. Typical programs concentrate on a combination of theoretical and basic academic coursework. This type of coursework is necessary, but not sufficient for preparing new teachers to succeed. Candidates also need direct exposure to teaching itself. But typically, not enough time is spent on specialized instructional areas such as reading and classroom-based or "clinical" training, two areas experts have identified as key to preparing effective teachers.[14] The National Council on Teacher Quality has analyzed teacher preparation programs and found wide variability—even within institutions—in the quality of reading and math content.[15]

Beyond this, we know almost nothing about whether new teachers from a given teacher preparation program succeed or fail once they reach the classroom. Despite being staffed by university-trained scholars with doctoral degrees, most university-based schools of education have conducted little or no research about whether the graduates of their own teacher preparation programs are successful in helping students learn.[16]

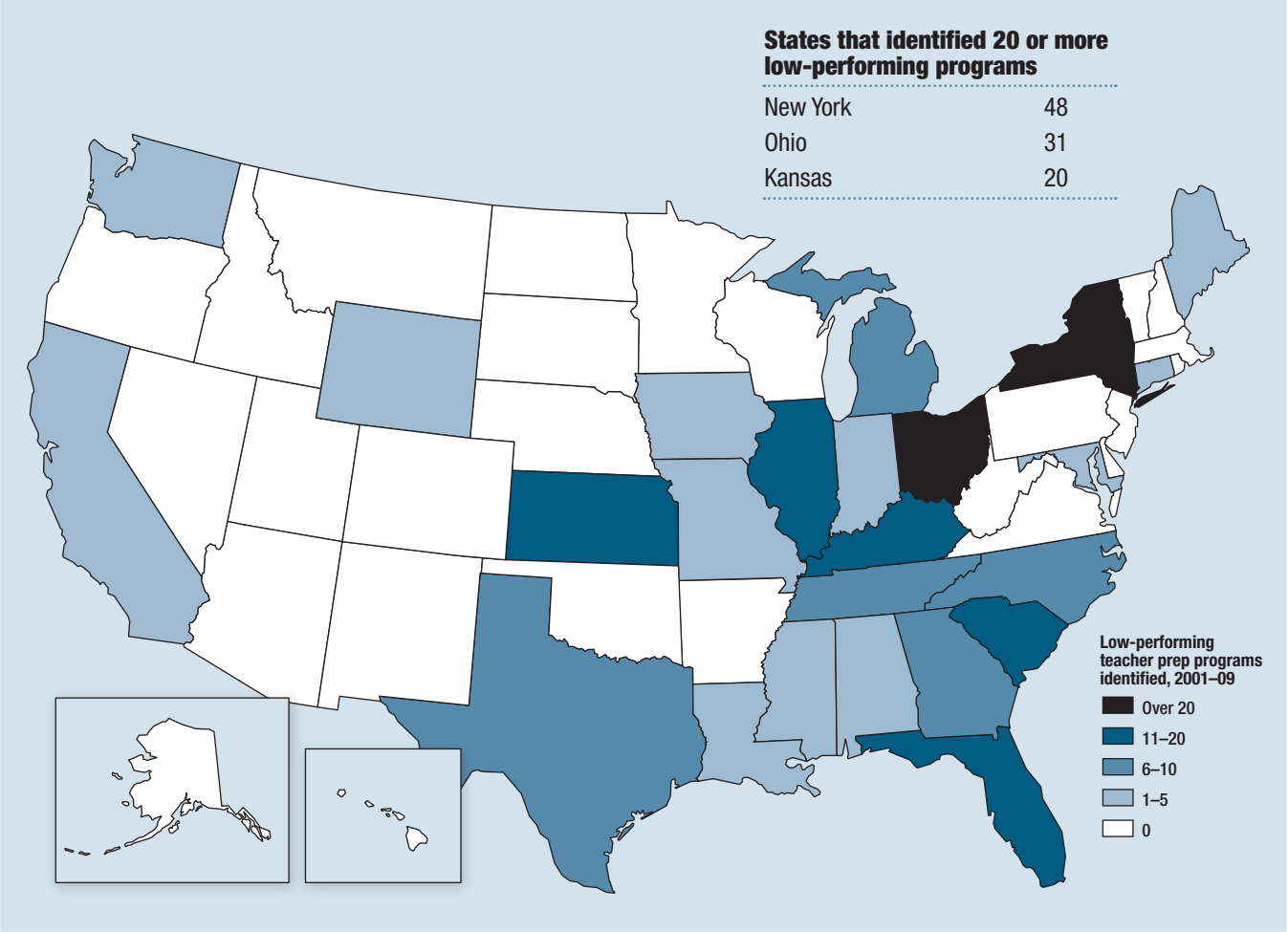
Instead, most programs focus primarily on what happens before students begin teaching, tracking, for instance, the number of students entering the program or the type and amount of course and clinical work provided. The most commonly reported measure of a program's performance is the percentage of students from a given program who pass state certification exams, data that schools are required to report under the Higher Education Act.[17] But exam pass rates are a weak marker of quality. Most program pass rates exceed 95 percent, in part because the majority of states allow candidates to retake again and again what is often a very low-level basic skills test.[18]

Since 2001, when states began reporting teacher preparation program performance information (as required by the 1998 Higher Education Act), most (27) have never identified a single program as low-performing. Another 12 have named five or fewer institutions as low performers.[19] (See Figure 1 on page 4.) On average, less than 2 percent of colleges offering state-approved teacher preparation programs nationwide are reported each year to be low-performing or at-risk, despite overwhelming evidence that significant numbers of new teachers are ineffective and ill-prepared.[20]

The initial response to the 1998 HEA accountability requirements illustrates the level of intransigence and bad faith among state policymakers when it comes to improving teacher preparation.[21] Some states rated programs based on the number of program participants who passed the program's *entrance* test. Thus, by definition, all programs in those states reported 100 percent pass rates. Other states rated programs based on the licensure exam pass rate of "program completers"—and then defined "program completer" as "a person who has passed the licensure exam."

The most meaningful measure of a program's performance is lacking from teacher education: how well new teachers can teach. In fairness, the ability to accurately and reliably judge teacher effectiveness in the classroom—and thereby judge teacher preparation program graduate performance—remains limited and highly contentious. Reasonable questions about the reliability and validity of nascent models, many of which promise to assess individual teachers on the learning growth of their students, serve as a reminder that so-called "value-added" data are no panacea and should be used carefully.

Figure 1. Over Half of All States Have Never Identified a Single Teacher Prep Program as At-Risk or Low-Performing, 2001–09



Source: Authors' calculations from https://title2.ed.gov/default.asp.

But substantial research and analysis is currently under way to better understand and measure teacher effectiveness. For example, the Measures of Effectiveness in Teaching research project, led by the Gates foundation, includes researchers from ETS, RAND, Stanford University, the University of Virginia, Harvard University, and the Danielson Group. Together, these researchers are exploring which combination of measures is best to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers, including those teaching non-tested subjects and grades and special populations of students.[22] There is little doubt that more data on teacher effectiveness will soon become available to teacher education programs. And many states are already making strides to develop and test evaluation models for teacher preparation.

Louisiana is at the forefront of this movement, having spent the past five years building a data system that can link students to teachers and teachers to their preparation programs. Called the Louisiana Teacher Preparation Value-Added Model, the system matches student achievement data from all school districts in the state with 22 public and private university-based teacher preparation programs and two non-university programs (The New Teacher Project and the Louisiana Resources Center for Educators). Louisiana is connecting the preparation of teachers with the classroom practice of teachers, an attribute missing from many preparation programs, at the same time that it is improving its ability to distinguish between programs that produce effective and not-so-effective teachers.

A Different Approach for Leaders

The phrase "…and leaders" is common in descriptions of federal education programs. Leadership preparation is often referred to as an add-on to teacher preparation in both the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Higher Education Act. The description of the Teacher Quality Partnership Grants under HEA, for example, lists several possibilities for how funds could improve teacher preparation and then simply states that the grants "may also support school leadership programs."[1] That leadership is an afterthought is reflected in the grants awarded. Of 40 grants made in 2009 and 2010, just one explicitly mentions leadership preparation in schools—and that is only after describing how the program will prepare almost 200 new teachers.[2]

While research on school leadership preparation documents many of the same problems as teacher preparation programs—including an insufficient focus on practical skills, an abundance of unnecessary courses, and a lack of rigor in selecting candidates and awarding degrees—the solutions are substantially different for leadership preparation than for teacher preparation programs.[3] The scope of the leadership preparation problem alone—there are only about 500 university-based leadership preparation programs, compared with over 6,000 teacher preparation programs—provides more opportunity for reform through competition from non-university based providers, including nonprofit organizations and districts or states establishing their own preparation programs. The New York City Leadership Academy, for example, is an independent nonprofit organization established in partnership with the New York City Department of Education that prepares principals specifically for roles within New York City Public Schools.[4]

Also, the path to becoming a principal is becoming more varied, with less focus on traditional university-based preparation. Alternative routes include nonprofit programs, district, and state-based programs, and the ability to substitute work experience for university credits.[5] Chicago Public Schools, for example, has articulated "principal competencies and success factors," which potential principals must document as part of the application process and may gain through a variety of experiences, either within or outside of a university-based program. One option available to aspiring principals is Chicago's Pathways to Leadership program, a 10-week, intensive preparation program for those with teaching and leadership experience within Chicago Public Schools.[6]

Given the increasing diversity in the type of preparation provided to principals and the reduced reliance on university-based programs, there is less need for a heavy state role in improving programs across a state's higher education system. Instead of establishing a new state grant program to encourage improvement in leadership preparation, it makes more sense to invest federal funds in competitive grants for districts, nonprofit organizations, and universities interested in dramatically changing the way leadership preparation is provided. Grants like these are already provided through the federal School Leadership Program under ESEA and are more likely to spur programs that better meet district needs. Grants awarded under this program have gone to partnerships among school districts and universities and/or nonprofit organizations to develop and strengthen leadership training, with some promising programs focusing on areas such as training leaders to manage autonomous schools, preparing leaders to turn around low-performing schools, and creating mentoring and apprenticeship programs for principals.[7]

Better data, however, are needed on the performance of principals and their training in order to understand which alternative preparation routes or traditional institutions are doing the best job of preparing them. There is a dearth of research on what makes a high-quality principal preparation program and whether university-based or alternative providers are more successful. The federal government should establish a list of outcomes-focused reporting requirements for states to track the performance of school leadership programs and other preparation routes, much like the data requirements proposed for teacher preparation programs.

Some of these requirements should be immediately reported by states, such as placement rates for principals graduating from leadership preparation programs and retention rates once leaders are employed. This will help to identify programs that provide a pipeline of school leaders, as opposed to programs that primarily provide advanced credentials to teachers that remain in the classroom. Other data, like the retention rates of teachers in principals' schools or parent satisfaction surveys, may need to be added. Also, data on basic management, like budget audits, are important to understanding whether principals are effective in all aspects of their job.

Rather than simply add "…and leader" to the accountability and data requirements for teacher preparation programs, policymakers should be thoughtful about what data is particularly important for assessing principal preparation and how those programs should be held accountable. To support these reporting requirements, the federal government must first invest in research on assessing principal effectiveness, understanding high-quality principal preparation programs, and the data elements necessary to hold those programs accountable for performance.

continued on next page »

A Different Approach for Leaders, cont.

Notes

1 U.S. Department of Education, "Teacher Quality Partnership Grant Program: Program Description," http://www2.ed.gov/programs/tqpartnership/index.html (accessed: January 19, 2011).

2 U.S. Department of Education, "Teacher Quality Partnership Grant Program: Awards," http://www2.ed.gov/programs/tqpartnership/index.html (accessed January 4, 2011).

3 Arthur Levine, *Educating School Leaders* (Washington, DC: The Education Schools Project, March 2005); National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration, *Leaders for America's Schools* (Tempe, AZ: University Council for Educational Administration, 1987).

4 For more examples of alternative preparation programs, see Margaret Terry Orr, Cheryl King, and Michelle LaPointe, *Districts Developing Leaders: Lessons on Consumer Actions and Program Approaches From Eight Urban Districts* (Boston: Education Development Center, Inc., October 2010) and Arthur Levine, *Educating School Leaders.* For more information on the NYC Leadership Academy, see Sean P. Corcoran, Amy Ellen Schwartz, and Meryle Weinstein, *The New York City Aspiring Principals Program: A School-level Evaluation* (New York: Institute for Education and Social Policy, New York University, August 2009).

5 Margaret Terry Orr, Cheryl King, and Michelle LaPointe, *Districts Developing Leader: Lessons on Consumer Actions and Program Approaches From Eight Urban Districts.*

6 Chicago Public Schools, "Building a Career to the Principalship in Chicago Public Schools," http://www.oppdcps.com/Paths.html (accessed January 4, 2011); Office of Principal Preparation and Development, "CPS Principal Competencies and Success Factors," Chicago Public Schools http://www.oppdcps.com/downloads/CPS_Principal_Competencies_Success_Factors.pdf (accessed January 4, 2011).

7 U.S. Department of Education, "School Leadership Program: Awards," http://www2.ed.gov/programs/leadership/awards.html (accessed January 4, 2011).

Recently, a handful of other states have followed suit. Florida, for example, is now using student scores on the math and reading portions of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test to track what percentage of graduates from each program had 50 percent or more of their students make a year's worth of progress in a given academic year. (Florida Gulf Coast University in Ft. Myers scored the highest in 2008–09 at 91 percent, while Florida A&M University in Tallahassee scored lowest at 64 percent.)[23] The Florida Department of Education plans to analyze and publish this data every year. Tennessee, Texas, and Colorado have launched similar statewide efforts.

But this still represents only a handful of states. Of the 31 states that proposed tying student learning outcomes to teacher preparation programs in their Race to the Top plans, only a dozen received funding to support those efforts. It remains unclear how well the losing (and, for that matter, the winning) states will follow through with their proposed plans.

NCATE, for its part, has recently pledged to develop stronger standards for teacher preparation programs and to close programs that don't meet these standards. But national accrediting bodies have so far been unable or unwilling to impose strong minimum requirements on institutions that make up their membership (and funding). Of the 18 institutions that states identified as having at-risk or low-performing programs in 2009, eight continue to be accredited by NCATE, and another three are members of TEAC.

States, meanwhile, ignore even their own low standards. To become a teacher in Delaware, for example, students must attend a regionally accredited four-year institution that also has been accredited by NCATE. Yet, when Wesley College recently lost NCATE accreditation due to overworked faculty, poor organization, and a lack of institutional focus, Delaware officials stepped in, ignoring their own rules in the process, and allowed Wesley to continue graduating teachers for at least the next 18 months.[24]

The efforts of leading states, as well as the new NCATE-TEAC merger and its commitment to reform, have potential. The commitment to strengthen the clinical component of teacher preparation, build broad-based partnerships for teacher education, and improve methods for evaluating teacher preparation could represent a major opportunity for change. But it will take more than a few states and a promise from accreditors to create a coherent system of teacher preparation that addresses the education needs of this nation. Strong federal action is needed to accelerate and scale these reforms.

The Federal Role in Reforming Teacher Preparation

Federal education policymaking has grown steadily more active over the last 20 years. In the 1990s, the dominant strategy was to create new accountability systems with extremely ambitious top-line goals and strong "get tough" rhetoric while simultaneously granting great deference to states in implementation on the ground. Arguably, this concept culminated with the accountability language contained in the 1998 Higher Education Act and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

The strategy has produced, at best, limited results. Requiring states to shift their relationship with local educational institutions from a "compliance and funding" mode to one of assessment, accountability, and enforcement proved to be far easier to assert than to achieve. Education federalism in the 1990s and 2000s is a long history of states grudgingly meeting the letter of new federal education policies while actively defying their spirit. The 1994 reauthorization of ESEA asked states to draft standards, deliver assessments aligned to those standards, and report disaggregated results. By 2002, only 11 states followed these minimal requirements.[25] Both the 1998 HEA and the 2001 NCLB reauthorizations required states to set their own guidelines for determining which schools were successful and which were failing. But, to comply with both laws, states devised clever tricks to limit the number of identified schools, and, in both cases, states have proven unwilling to force strong improvement efforts on struggling schools.[26]

The legal and political capacity of the U.S. Department of Education to force all 50 states to simultaneously build strong accountability systems, often against their will, has been limited. Tinkering with this failed paradigm will not improve teacher preparation in a substantive way. Instead, the federal government should build on promising new approaches to education reform developed in recent years. They should use competitive grants to create new incentives for states to build the data systems necessary to accurately report on program quality and to use that data to identify and improve underperforming teacher preparation programs.

The federal government also needs to rethink how it uses federal financial aid dollars to encourage high-quality students to enter teaching and remain in the classroom. In addition to the Pell Grant and federal student loan programs, which provide billions of dollars in financial aid to students each year, the federal government also provides grants and loan forgiveness targeted solely to teachers. But to date, teacher-directed financial aid programs have been largely ineffective. Grants designed to attract students to the teaching profession have been under-utilized

Of the 18 institutions that states identified as having at-risk or low-performing programs in 2009, eight continue to be accredited by NCATE, and another three are members of TEAC.

and show little evidence of having attracted additional high-quality students into the teaching profession. Similarly, current federal and state loan forgiveness programs for existing teachers are cumbersome and make no distinctions between the best and worst teachers. The latter should have *fewer* incentives to keep teaching, not more. Financial aid resources should be consolidated and focused on keeping high-quality teachers in the classroom through enhanced and improved loan forgiveness.

The federal government should pursue a three-part strategy:

1. Evaluate State Capacity to Measure and Use Outcomes of Teacher Preparation Programs

No teacher preparation accountability system can fully function without detailed information about the success of program graduates in the classroom. But states currently are at widely different stages in developing the capacity to gather this information, with the implementation of integrated data systems

and evaluation processes, state data policies, and the terms of collective bargaining agreements ranging broadly nationwide. States also vary in their entrance requirements, program standards, and many other dimensions of teacher preparation.

Congress should begin by repealing the little-used and ineffective accountability reporting framework in place today and replace it with one that takes an honest stock of which states have the capacity to measure their teacher preparation programs' performance and what they choose to do with that information. Figure 2, "Comparing Existing Input-Based and Proposed Outcome-Based Requirements" contrasts the current, largely input-based federal requirements with the elements of a new, quality- and outcomes-based system. (See Figure 2 on page 10.)

The new framework would start with every state defining "highly effective teacher" (an element that will likely be required in the next ESEA reauthorization) and "highly effective teacher preparation program." Definitions must include multiple measures of teacher effectiveness and be based in significant part on student growth.

Every state should also be required to report on its collection, and plans for collection, of the following data:

- Learning outcomes, over time, of students taught by the graduates of individual preparation programs.[27]
- Employment and retention rates by individual teacher preparation program.
- State labor market demand for teachers, especially for high-need fields, populations, and the schools that serve them, and placement data of graduates from individual programs to meet this demand.
- Entry requirements of teacher preparation programs.

Where possible, states should avoid redundancy by collecting this data in existing statewide longitudinal data systems. In addition to collecting data on their teacher preparation programs, states must also report on their ability and plans to use that information to:

- Recognize and reward preparation programs with the best records of success.
- Identify low-performing preparation programs and either improve or close them.
- Meet demonstrated labor market demand for teachers, especially for high-need fields, populations, and the schools that serve them.
- Incorporate the outcomes listed above into existing state program approval systems.

On all measures, states must include both traditional and alternative certification programs. As in current law, the secretary of education must present a regular report to Congress on the progress states make.

2. Create New Incentives for States and Programs to Improve Teacher Preparation

The U.S. Department of Education's signature Race to the Top and School Improvement Grant programs have demonstrated that many states will aim high if given the right combination of encouragement, structure, and flexibility.[28] RTT provided funds for reform-minded states to implement their plans that went beyond existing NCLB accountability requirements, while SIG money focused attention and resources on persistently low-performing schools in nearly every state. Both were voluntary, meaning states were not required to compete for the funds, and they offered large pots of federal money to fund state reform efforts. They were also proactive, in the sense that they gave money in the present to fund future program development, as opposed to the reactive nature of traditional regulatory reform that threatens to take away existing money if the state does not comply with the law. Perhaps most importantly, both programs offered help in improving the status quo, not punishment for failing to change it.

A reauthorized Higher Education Act should take the same approach to teacher preparation systems. Using a combination of new grant funds and money from existing but flawed programs designed to support teacher preparation, HEA would provide two competitive grant programs that would encourage states and individual teacher preparation programs to improve quality and increase accountability. (See "Where the Money Comes From" on page 16.) One program would be targeted toward states and

programs that propose innovative ideas for large-scale reform, and the second program would mirror the federal SIG program for K-12 improvement by providing funds to preparation programs identified by states as low-performing but committed to fundamental change and improvement.

Reward States and Programs That are Committed to Tangible Improvement

These highly competitive grants, with awards only going to states with the strongest and most innovative plans to improve their teacher preparation programs, would be based on the new reporting framework described earlier.

The emphasis would be on state systems, not individual institutions, because many of the elements required of strong accountability frameworks—such as data collection, standard setting, and assessment—are best done at the state level. Under current law, states have the responsibility to hold their institutions accountable but do not have corresponding capacity or incentive to do so. This competitive grant program would be the first of its kind to specifically reward states seeking to develop robust statewide accountability systems for teacher preparation.

Winning states would be able to show that they have comprehensive K-12 teacher evaluation systems in place or in progress, that they are investing in and building statewide data systems that follow teachers from their preparation programs into districts and schools, and that they are willing and able to collect student outcomes data and connect it to individual teacher preparation programs. State applications should also address how states are using or planning to use outcomes data to reward high-performing programs or consortia of programs; identify and improve low-performing programs; and substantially increase the selectivity, curricular quality, and connection to the classroom among teacher preparation programs. To ensure labor market needs are being met, preference would be given to states with strong partnerships between teacher preparation programs and the local school districts that hire their graduates. States must outline their capacity in these areas and address how they plan to deal with their shortcomings.

In addition to outlining their data capacity, policy environment, and leadership ability, states must describe the human and financial resources available for reform. Where appropriate, state plans should address any potential roadblocks and describe how those will be mitigated. Successful applicants will be able to demonstrate local buy-in from institutions of higher education, school districts, and other relevant stakeholders. The Department of Education will be expected to evaluate the progress of winning states and share best practices for future reform efforts.

Under current law, states have the responsibility to hold their institutions accountable but do not have corresponding capacity or incentive to do so.

Since many states will not receive new grant funds or may not choose to compete for them in the first place, it is important to recognize the institutions in those states that run cutting-edge programs that strive to meet the framework's goals. This would be accomplished through an expanded version of the Teacher Quality Partnership grants already provided under HEA.

Current TQP grant recipients must use funds to improve either their pre-baccalaureate teacher training program, teacher residency program, or school leadership development program. Though the exact activities expected of each program vary, the TQP grants place an emphasis on preparing teachers to understand and use research in guiding their instruction, improving the curriculum and evaluation system of preparation programs, and aligning these activities with ongoing state education reforms. In addition, recipients are also expected to provide more clinical opportunities for students and improve teacher mentoring. Grants are competitively awarded to partnerships that consist of institutions of higher education, their teacher preparation department, and either a high-need school district, school, or early childhood program. Grants are awarded for five years,

Figure 2. Comparing Existing Input-Based and Proposed Outcome-Based Requirements

Type of requirement	Existing input-based requirements in Title II of the Higher Education Act	Proposed outcome-based requirements
Collecting data: **Learning Outcomes**	Write a "description of … the average number of hours of supervised clinical experience required for those in the program," "the percentage of students who have completed 100 percent of the nonclinical coursework and taken the assessment who pass such assessment," and "the number of full-time equivalent faculty and students in the supervised clinical experience." Report "the average scaled score for all students who took [required] assessments" and compare "the program's average scaled scores with the average scaled scores for programs in the State." Provide a teacher preparation program with any and all pertinent information possessed, controlled, or accessible by the State that may enable the teacher preparation program to evaluate the effectiveness of the program's graduates or the program itself, including K-12 academic achievement and demographic data for students who have been taught by graduates of the teacher preparation program and teacher effectiveness evaluations for teachers who graduated from the teacher preparation program.	Can the state link the learning outcomes of students to graduates of teacher preparation programs?
Collecting Data: **Employment**		Can the state track employment and retention rates by teacher preparation program, even for programs not operating within the state's boundaries?
Collecting Data: **Entry Requirements**	Write a "description of … the criteria for admission into the program."	Has the state set strong entry requirements to improve the academic credentials of future teachers?
Collecting Data: **Data Linkages**	"To the extent practicable, collect data comparable to the data required under this part from States, local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, or other entities that administer such assessments to teachers or prospective teachers." States "shall provide to a teacher preparation program, upon the request of the teacher preparation program, any and all pertinent education related information that … may enable the teacher preparation program to evaluate the effectiveness of the program's graduates or the program itself."	Does the state have a longitudinal data system that includes teacher preparation programs?
Using Data: **Reward Exceptional Performance**		Does the state recognize and reward preparation programs with the best records of success?

Figure 2. Comparing Existing Input-Based and Proposed Outcome-Based Requirements, cont.

Type of requirement	Existing input-based requirements in Title II of the Higher Education Act	Proposed outcome-based requirements
Using Data: **Encourage Improvement**	Identify whether the program has been designated as low-performing by the state. "Any teacher preparation program from which the State has withdrawn the State's approval, or terminated the State's financial support, due to the low performance of the program … shall be ineligible for any funding for professional development activities awarded by the Department…" and "may not be permitted to accept or enroll any student who receives aid under Title IV in the institution's teacher preparation program."	Does the state identify low-performing preparation programs and hold them accountable for results, including helping struggling institutions improve or, if need be, close them down?
Using Data: **Work Force Alignment**	Report on "the extent to which teacher preparation programs are addressing shortages of highly qualified teachers, by area of certification or licensure, subject, and specialty, in the State's public schools," and the extent to which teacher preparation programs prepare teachers, including general education and special education teachers, to effectively teach students with disabilities and students who are Limited English Proficient. Write a description of "the number of students in the program (disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender)."	Does the state meet the labor market demand for teachers, especially for high-need fields, populations, and the schools that serve them?
Using Data: **State Approval**		Does the state incorporate the above outcomes into existing state program approval requirements?

and recipients must provide a one-to-one match of federal dollars.

The revised version of the TQP grants would provide funds for institutions located in states that do not receive new grant funds to implement research-based practices and curricular improvements. TQP grants would also provide opportunities for existing innovative programs to expand within and across states. For example, the UTeach Institute, which evolved from a successful secondary math and science teacher preparation program out of the University of Texas-Austin, received $2.25 million in TQP grants to replicate its program at Cleveland State University in Ohio. Under the revised TQP program, UTeach would be eligible for additional funding to continue its expansion.

The reach of TQP grants would be expanded in two ways. First, its annual allocation would be increased by taking on any funds going to the existing Teacher Quality State grants, a partnership program funded in Title II of ESEA. That program receives 2.5 percent of funds appropriated for Title II each year, or about $72 million in the 2010 fiscal year, which is distributed to states on a formula basis and then given out as subgrants to support partnerships of universities and districts. Although these grants distribute funds to similar recipients as the TQP grants, their structure and priorities are not as well aligned toward meaningful teacher preparation reform. States receive the money through a formula, not a competition, and are not required to make colleges compete for funds. In addition, grant activities focus more on professional development, rather than pushing for meaningful changes to curricula and instructional methods that would produce better teachers. Therefore, these funds would be better served in support of TQP grants.

Second, TQP grants could reach more institutions by raising the matching requirement and then instituting a tiered system in which schools that meet certain

benchmarks would have a lower match amount. For example, if a program is collecting and publishing long-term data on the effectiveness of teacher preparation graduates in schools, its match would be reduced by a certain number of percentage points. Under this scenario, programs like UTeach, which do not yet collect and publish this level of information, would still be eligible for a grant but not with a reduced match. This is an attractive option because it rewards high-performing programs but also establishes clear goals for other programs to pursue. Those that don't do as well can use the prospect of a lower match as an incentive to try new reforms that might otherwise be difficult to implement.

Encourage Low Performers to Improve

The United States relies heavily on existing teacher preparation programs to meet the annual demand for hundreds of thousands of new teachers. But just as every state has struggling K-12 schools, every state has under-performing teacher preparation programs. Given our ongoing need for teachers, it is unrealistic to close down all low-performing preparation programs. Instead, the country needs to increase funding to improve existing programs, with the understanding that if those programs cannot eventually improve, then they should be shut down.

A second grant program, modeled on the SIG program for K-12 schools, would target these persistently low-performing institutions, places like Union College, which have been identified as in need of improvement but have seen little change. As discussed earlier, Kentucky has named Union an at-risk or low-performing institution for six straight years. Yet the state recently approved its teacher preparation program through the spring of 2015.[29] Union is not alone. Six institutions have made their state's list five times, and five have appeared four times. In the last nine years, 119 institutions have been named at-risk or low-performing. Of those, 58 are repeat offenders, having received that designation multiple times.[30]

The current accountability structure is insufficient to deal with persistently low-performing institutions. Depending on the state, these schools might be subject to slightly more intense scrutiny, but the results of those deliberations are never made public. Prospective students and employers are not informed. Being named to the lists has little bearing on the institution's ability to operate or license teachers. Of the 119 institutions named at-risk or low-performing since 2001, 115 are still approved by their states to churn out more certified teachers-to-be every year.[31]

The SIG-style grants would strengthen the accountability around persistently low-performing institutions, while providing the financial means to help these schools improve. Every state would have the opportunity to identify its lowest-performing teacher preparation programs and would be eligible for federal funds for improvement. States would be required to identify the institutions or programs based on existing measures of performance, such as licensure exam pass rates, or they could propose alternative measures that are consistent with the new HEA Title II framework described earlier. Entire schools or departments of education would be eligible for the maximum awards, but smaller programs focusing on particular teacher certification areas—like special education or English as a second language—would also be eligible for awards, albeit smaller ones.

Data from current HEA accountability systems and other sources, including licensure exam pass rates, suggest that a number of minority-serving institutions and historically black colleges and universities may be identified as low-performing institutions. Given the under-representation of minorities in America's teaching work force and the nation's growing ethnic diversity, it is crucially important that these programs survive and thrive. But teacher candidates graduating from these programs must be well-prepared to succeed, particularly if they plan to teach in low-performing schools, with children that are especially vulnerable to the ill effects of poorly trained teachers. If low-performing minority-serving institutions are unable to improve, their teacher preparation programs should be subject to the same penalties, including closure, as any other school.

Given our ongoing need for teachers, it is unrealistic to close down all low-performing preparation programs.

Each identified institution or program would be required to take the following steps toward improvement:

- Immediately raise entrance requirements.
- Enact research-based changes to the program's design, including curriculum content and clinical experience, within one year of receiving the grant.
- Demonstrate improvements on leading indicators, such as employment, retention, and employer satisfaction rates within three years.
- Demonstrate improvement in program graduates' classroom performance as evidenced by principal evaluations and student outcomes within five years.

If programs do not meet the timeline for improvements in program design, leading indicators, and outcomes, the state must revoke approval of the program and allow program participants to transfer to other, better performing preparation programs with no loss of credit. States will also have the option from the outset of the grant to use the funds to immediately revoke approval and help existing students transfer to other, better performing programs.

Because the number of low-performing teacher preparation programs is relatively small compared to the number of low-performing K-12 schools, the program's cost would not be prohibitive. At the same time, a dedicated funding stream for consistently low-performing teacher preparation programs sends a strong message that these programs cannot remain open indefinitely. But rather than sending this message through solely punitive measures, this new funding stream would provide substantial new resources for states to break the cycle of low performance that often sends poorly prepared new teachers back into the same low-performing school systems that left them unready to learn the demanding skills of teaching in the first place.

3. Simplify and Strengthen Teacher-Focused Financial Aid Programs

In addition to programmatic reforms, there is also a role for financial incentives to improve the quality of America's teachers. The vast majority of federal financial aid for prospective teachers comes from the same grant and loan programs used by millions of other students each year.[32] The federal government provides financial aid specifically for teachers through two main programs: TEACH Grants and teacher loan forgiveness.[33] But the effectiveness of these programs in recruiting talented students to enter teaching and encouraging effective teachers to stay is questionable. Neither program requires teachers to attend high-quality preparation programs, as determined by the effectiveness of program graduates. Nor do they include incentives for preparation programs to improve their performance. And both programs reward teachers for staying in the classroom regardless of their quality, which runs against current efforts that place more emphasis on effectiveness in designing teacher retention and tenure policies. Two strategies can streamline current financial aid programs and better align those programs with existing efforts to improve the quality of the teacher work force.

Eliminate TEACH Grants

In 2007, Congress created TEACH Grants, a program for prospective teachers that provides up to $16,000 for students who agree to enter the classroom after graduation. At the time, Rep. George Miller, a California Democrat and then chair of the House Education and Labor Committee lauded the program, saying, "If we want poor and minority children to have the same chance of success in school that their peers have, then we have to commit to encouraging more talented people to enter the teaching profession and stay there. These scholarships would represent a significant down payment on that commitment."[34] But TEACH Grants have largely been a disappointment. In fact, what is presented to students as a benefit is likely to end up as just another debt. And like similar efforts to guide students into specific disciplines, TEACH Grants are underused, indifferent to quality, and financially insufficient. The money spent on TEACH Grants would be better used giving direct benefits to teachers already in the classroom.

TEACH Grants provide $4,000 annually for undergraduate and graduate students who have expressed a desire to become a teacher. Undergraduate students can receive the award for up to four years, while graduate students may receive up to $8,000 over two years. But this money is not simply a handout. Students receiving the grant must

maintain a grade point average of at least 3.25 while in school and then teach at least four years as a full-time, highly qualified teacher in a school that serves low-income children.[35] In addition, recipients must teach the majority of their classes in a high-need field, such as math, foreign languages, science, or other areas as indicated by their state or district. Those that fail to meet all the service requirements must repay their grant in full as if it were an unsubsidized Stafford Loan, including any interest that would have accrued since the grant was first awarded.[36]

The money spent on TEACH Grants would be better used giving direct benefits to teachers already in the classroom.

According to estimates by the U.S. Department of Education, 80 percent of TEACH recipients will end up repaying these "grants," meaning four out of five students taking out the "grants" will eventually repay them as loans.[37] These students will take on a new debt obligation plus thousands of dollars in accrued interest. This high rate of conversion into debt means TEACH Grants are little more than a thinly disguised $4,000 annual increase in federal student loan limits. Even worse, some of the teachers who end up repaying their "grant" will have completed some years of teaching, meaning they held up part of the bargain, but, because TEACH Grants are all-or-nothing, those teachers will have nothing to show for it but more debt.

TEACH Grants also suffer from low usage by prospective teachers or teacher preparation programs. Approximately 35 percent of teacher preparation programs are not authorized to award them.[38] And just 30,650 awards were disbursed for a total of $95.7 million in the 2009–10 academic year.[39] By contrast, colleges with state-approved teacher preparation programs award several hundred thousand bachelor's or master's degrees in teacher preparation fields every year.[40]

Low usage of TEACH Grants would be acceptable if it was due to strong quality checks, but that isn't the case. Though regulations state that an eligible institution must provide a "high-quality teacher preparation program," of the 37 colleges whose teacher training programs were identified by states as being at-risk or low-performing since the program's creation, 22 are eligible to award TEACH Grants.[41] These institutions have disbursed 790 TEACH Grants worth $2.5 million in the program through its first two years, including 87 awards over two years at Kentucky's Union College.[42]

TEACH Grants are allowed at schools with ineffective teacher preparation programs partly because eligibility for them is based on inputs and accreditation status, with no requirements for evaluating graduates once they enter the classroom. To be eligible, institutions only have to be approved by either of the main teacher accreditation agencies, or have approval from the state and incorporate at least 10 weeks of clinical experience in the curriculum. These requirements establish a very low, input-based floor for program quality and do not measure an institution's ability to prepare effective classroom teachers.

The ineffectiveness of TEACH Grants in drawing students into the classroom is not surprising—$16,000 is not enough money to compensate for a career of long hours and difficult conditions in a low-prestige profession if the student doesn't already have strong motivation to enter the classroom.

Indeed, the low take-up rates reported by the TEACH Grant program are similar to other federal efforts that leverage student financial aid to push students into high-need fields. In 2006, Congress created two programs—Academic Competitiveness Grants and Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grants—that provided extra support for students eligible for Pell Grants if they majored in math or science. But both grant programs have failed to draw large numbers of students into those fields, leading to the return of over a billion dollars worth of unused funding and making it unlikely that they will be renewed.[43] Low participation in such programs should provide a clear lesson for future policy work—we can't pay college students to go into a field that they don't already want to enter.

Expand Loan Forgiveness

Rather than continuing a failed effort to push students into becoming teachers, funding for TEACH Grants should instead support an enhanced teacher loan forgiveness program that provides benefits for individuals who have already made a commitment to the classroom and who succeed once they're there. This program would combine the best elements of loan forgiveness efforts at the state and federal levels while also addressing the major flaws in existing offerings—namely a lack of prorated benefits at the federal level and instability among state programs. A revised program would also introduce a new quality condition designed to target benefits toward the most promising teachers.

The federal Teacher Loan Forgiveness program eliminates either $5,000 or $17,500 worth of debt depending on certain conditions. To qualify for the $5,000 forgiveness, the individual must teach full time for five consecutive years as a highly qualified teacher at a school serving large numbers of low-income students. If individuals meet all of the above requirements and also teach math, science, or special education, they can have up to $17,500 worth of loans forgiven. Neither award is prorated—teachers only receive a benefit once they have fulfilled the entire five-year commitment. While the lack of an intermediate reward creates incentives to stay in the classroom longer, some annual benefit is a sensible way to recognize the tough conditions and significant commitment that teachers make each year.

It's important to ensure that loan forgiveness dollars benefit not just highly *qualified* teachers in high-need areas, but highly *effective* teachers in high-need areas.

Loan forgiveness at the federal level is an exclusive privilege for teachers. While borrowers in a number of occupations are eligible for the new Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, which cancels remaining debt balances after 10 years of payments, teachers are one of a select few professions with their own forgiveness programs, which provide benefits that are larger and given out earlier in the repayment process.[44] This commitment by the federal government represented a financial investment of more than $130 million in fiscal year 2009 alone.[45] As such, it's important to ensure that loan forgiveness dollars benefit not just highly *qualified* teachers in high-need areas, but highly *effective* teachers in high-need areas.

Many states have also recognized the importance of setting aside specific benefits for teachers. The American Federation of Teachers lists over 60 state-level forgiveness offerings that have been set up across the country to reward teachers.[46] Some, such as West Virginia's Underwood-Smith Teacher Scholarship Program, mimic TEACH Grants in that they provide benefits to students currently enrolled in higher education with the understanding that they will repay any awards plus interest if they fail to fulfill a teaching requirement.[47] The Delaware Teacher Corps, meanwhile, gives a special loan to students pursuing a teaching certification at an in-state public college.[48] The loan is partially forgiven for each year of service in the classroom. Other programs, like Montana's Quality Educator Loan Assistance Program, take a different approach, by providing funds to teachers currently in the classroom to cover some of their annual student loan repayment burden.[49]

In some ways, these state loan forgiveness programs are better than the federal offerings. They often provide annual or pro-rated benefits to students so they receive immediate assistance rather than having to wait half a decade. The programs also set requirements that are better tailored to the specific needs of the state. Thus, if the critical teacher shortage areas in Wisconsin differ from those in Texas, the programs in each state can change their eligibility requirements to reflect that need.

But state loan forgiveness programs are inferior to the federal option in one crucial area—funding consistency. A sudden drop in state budgets may cause a state to eliminate or scale back a benefit or operate it on a limited first-come, first-served basis. Georgia, for example, had to eliminate its teacher loan forgiveness program for the 2010–11 academic year

Where the Money Comes From

In an austere federal budget environment, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to find additional funding for new programs. Instead, the best way to create or expand the initiatives mentioned in this policy brief is by tapping into some of the 23 programs in the Department of Education that the U.S. Government Accountability Office has already identified as dealing with teacher preparation or professional development in some way.[1] Some of these programs, such as the Teacher Quality Partnership Grants, are wholly focused on preparing teachers. Several others—like Early Reading First or Enhancing Education Through Technology—support schools or districts and only make the list because they tangentially address teacher preparation or professional development. Targeting those programs in which teacher preparation or professional development is only a side activity is not a good idea without further evaluation, since doing so could take away money that is making a direct difference in the classroom.

The list below presents a subset of those 23 federal initiatives that have as their main purpose preparing teachers or providing professional development for them through an institution of higher education. Though some of these programs almost certainly provide important services, they represent a complex and overlapping group, each with their own eligibility requirements, oversight, goals, and funding mechanisms. Such a haphazard and piecemeal approach to reforming teacher preparation is ineffective and insufficient for achieving large-scale changes.

Instead, Congress should follow the lead of President Obama's 2011 budget and use funding from the existing programs below to support the new competitive initiatives for states and institutions of higher education outlined in this policy brief. Consolidating federal programs will be difficult. Each program has its own set of special interest groups and legislators who will strongly resist any attempts to eliminate their favorite program. But overcoming this opposition will be necessary to create a more streamlined and effective set of programs that address teacher preparation.

This does not have to be an exclusive list; other federal programs may also be a good choice for consolidation. But it is a starting point. Any serious efforts to fund new reform efforts in teacher preparation using existing monies should at least include these programs.

Improving Teacher Quality State Grants

At $2.9 billion annually, Improving Teacher Quality State Grants are the largest single source of funding for teachers. Of this money, 2.5 percent, or about $72 million in the 2010 fiscal year, is awarded specifically to institutions of higher education for their teacher preparation programs. Recipients are selected by states. Only this 2.5 percent funding subset should be repurposed. Other monies go directly to districts and should not be touched.

Teachers for a Competitive Tomorrow

Teachers for a Competitive Tomorrow is a partnership grant program between a teacher preparation program and at least one science, technology, engineering, math, or critical foreign language department from the same college and a high-need school district. All members of a partnership must work together to develop a bachelor's or master's degree that prepares students to teach in any of the fields mentioned above. The program provides $2 million each year, evenly distributed between bachelor's and master's degree programs.

Transition to Teaching

This is a $48 million program that uses competitive grants to recruit mid-career professionals and recent college graduates to the teaching ranks. Grant recipients can use funds to provide small scholarships for prospective teachers; develop induction, placement, or support activities; and create retention or credentialing programs.

Math and Science Partnerships

This $180 million program provides formula grants to states each year to build partnerships between colleges and school districts aimed at improving the quality of math and science teacher education.

Teaching of Traditional American History

This program provides $119 million annually in competitive grants to improve instruction and professional development for teachers of American history. Though funds are given directly to school districts, grant recipients must partner with an institution of higher education, a nonprofit history organization, a library, or a museum.

Notes

1 *Teacher Quality: Sustained Coordination Among Key Federal Education Programs Could Enhance State Efforts to Improve Teacher Quality,* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Accountability Office, July 2009), http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-09-593, 48.

due to budget cuts, essentially breaking a promise to students who had been counting on it.

Instead of maintaining concurrent state and federal loan forgiveness programs, these efforts should be restructured and expanded to take advantage of the best features and correct the worst. Going forward, dollars that would have been spent on federal teacher loan forgiveness, plus any funding from TEACH Grants, should go to a new matching loan forgiveness program at the state level. Each state would pick the subjects or areas of instruction that it needs the most and structure its forgiveness benefits around those areas. The federal government would then match one-to-one up to $10,000 forgiven by the state, for a total combined benefit of $20,000 per teacher. This forgiveness could be used to cancel balances owed on federal Stafford loans or on specific state loans for teachers.

To participate, states would have to fulfill a few requirements. First, they would have to meet the new HEA Title II reporting framework outlined earlier. Second, states could use the match only for the top 15 percent of students based on measures of academic performance and the quality of their preparation. States could choose to do this through college GPA; Praxis, licensure, or certification test scores; the quality of the preparation program; or a combination of these and other measures. While admittedly a crude measure, these academic qualifications are intended as the first step in providing some quality benchmarks that a teacher loan forgiveness candidate must meet. As evaluation systems become more robust, this basic requirement should be replaced with more sophisticated instruments that better predict a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. Finally, benefits must be available on a pro-rated basis, so that students get some reward each year; although they can be tiered so that greater dollar amounts are forgiven the longer a teacher stays in the classroom.

In addition, funds saved by the elimination of TEACH Grants should be put toward increasing loan forgiveness bonuses for teachers who are rated as highly effective via evaluation processes and the definitions outlined in the accountability framework described earlier. Since such quality determinations require improving preparation programs to match the values and goals of the framework, this added forgiveness bonus provides states with incentives to speed up reform efforts. It also gives those who reform the fastest a competitive advantage in recruiting new teachers.

Instead of maintaining concurrent state and federal loan forgiveness programs, these efforts should be restructured and expanded to take advantage of the best features and correct the worst.

This partnership forgiveness program, between the federal government and states, provides significant benefits for the federal government, states, and teachers. It removes a regulatory burden for the federal government, which can shift administrative oversight to the states. And the introduction of some academic qualifications begins the process of directing forgiveness benefits to students based on quality. States can offer larger benefits to entice teachers while retaining the flexibility to construct programs as they wish. Teachers will get annual benefits, rather than having to wait several years for any support, and they will have more stable benefits since states are unlikely to cut programs when there is a federal match involved.

A Measured Approach

With greater attention on the state and national level toward improving the quality of our teacher work force, there is a strong temptation to approach reform efforts through a new accountability system that talks tough, hands out penalties, and draws strict lines in the sand. But we must resist such impulses. Federal law already contains a host of threats, requirements, and fines for teacher preparation programs; none of which has led to tangible improvements. And even the most basic of these existing efforts is not always enforced. In the 1998 Higher Education Act, Congress gave the U.S. Department of Education the ability to fine each teacher preparation program $25,000

for failing to meet reporting requirements in a timely and accurate manner. In the 2008 reauthorization, Congress upped that amount to $27,500. Neither sum would dramatically affect the budgets of teacher colleges, but to date, the secretary has not imposed a single fine.[50]

Moreover, while several states are moving to collect more and better information about their preparation programs, many are only just beginning this process. Until that work has moved ahead, it's unwise to force states to judge preparation programs based on data that doesn't exist or isn't reliable—whether it's teachers' classroom outcomes in terms of "value added" scores, employer satisfaction ratings, or teacher retention rates—all under the threat of stiff penalties. Instead, the federal government needs to encourage and support state efforts to expand capacity and take on ambitious plans for teacher preparation reform.

This is not just a waiting game. It's about taking stock of state capacity and then rewarding and supporting the frontrunners in reform. At the same time, it's

Federal law already contains a host of threats, requirements, and fines for teacher preparation programs; none of which has led to tangible improvements.

equally important to address under-performing programs, providing targeted improvement grants to those striving to change and closing those that are incapable of progress. Finally, the federal government should discontinue financial aid programs that don't work and align the rest with state efforts to identify and retain the best teachers. Though this approach lacks tough talk about cracking down or imposing harsh penalties, it is a more realistic and measured approach that encourages honesty and partnership. It also may be the most promising way to get to the goal of reforming preparation programs to produce a high-quality teacher work force.

Notes

1. According to data provided to Education Sector by the U.S. Department of Education in November 2010, Kentucky writes, "An educator preparation program is classified as 'low performing' when it receives a state/NCATE accreditation rating of 'accredited with probation' or its summary Praxis II pass rate is less than 50 percent. An educator preparation program is classified as 'at risk of becoming low-performing' when it receives a state/NCATE accreditation rating of 'accredited with conditions' or its summary Praxis II pass rate is less than 80 percent." Using these criteria, Kentucky identified Union in its submission to https://title2.ed.gov/default.asp as "at-risk" in 2004, 2006, and 2007, and "low-performing" in 2005, 2008, and 2009.

2. For low, medium, and high projections of the number of new teachers we'll need, see: http://nces.ed.gov/programs/projections/projections2018/tables/table_32.asp?referrer=report.The 1,434 figure refers to colleges of education, not individual programs within them, and it comes from an Education Sector analysis of data reported to the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). The number of teacher preparation programs is substantially higher, because a given college of education may house multiple programs. While there is no agreed upon number of teacher preparation programs nationwide, an analysis of completion data submitted by colleges to IPEDS suggests that there may be as many as 8,000 different teacher preparation offerings.

   This figure is obtained by counting for each institution with state approval to certify teachers the number of different Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Codes related to teacher preparation in which a college awarded at least one credential at or above a bachelor's degree and below a doctorate in the 2008–09 academic year, the most recent set of available data. This process provides an upper-end estimate of the number of teacher programs, because it counts each instructional program as separate, when some (such as discipline-specific programs in English language arts or history) may actually be counted as a single program type (such as secondary education).

3. There is a large body of research documenting the effect of teachers on student achievement. See for example D. Aaronson, L. Barrow, and W. Sanders, "Teachers and Student Achievement in the Chicago Public High Schools," *Journal of Labor Economics* 25, no. 1 (2007): 95–135. Charles T. Clotfelter and Helen F. Ladd and Jacob L. Vigdor, "How and Why do Teacher Credentials Matter for Student Achievement?" NBER Working Papers 12828 (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc., 2007); B. Nye, S. Konstantopoulos, and L.V. Hedges, "How Large Are Teacher Effects?" *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 26 (2004): 237–257; J. Rockoff, "The Impact of Individual Teachers on Student Achievement: Evidence From Panel Data," *American Economic Review* 94, no. 2 (2004): 247–252.

4. See, for example, Edward Crowe, *Measuring What Matters: A Stronger Accountability Model for Teacher Education* (Washington, DC: Center for American Progress, July 2010).

5. Arne Duncan, "A Call to Teaching," speech given at the University of Virginia, October 9, 2009.

6. *Transforming Teaching Education Through Clinical Practice: A National Strategy to Prepare Effective Teachers* (Washington, DC: National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, November 2010).
7. HEA Title II Section 206(b).
8. Numbers on new teacher graduates are from the Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education. Approximately 240,000 teachers are prepared through traditional programs and another 45,000 are prepared through alternative preparation routes.
9. R. Ingersoll and D. Perda, *The Mathematics and Science Teacher Shortage: Fact and Myth* (Madison, WI: The Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 2009).
10. *A Call for Change, The Social and Educational Factors Contributing to the Outcomes of Black Males in Urban Schools* (Washington, DC: Council of Great City Schools, 2010).
11. Byron Auguste, Paul Kihn, and Matt Miller, *Closing the Talent Gap: Attracting and Retaining Top-Third Graduates to Careers in Teaching* (Washington, DC: McKinsey & Company, September 2010).
12. Program approval varies considerably by state. For more detail on program approval processes and standards, see National Research Council, *Preparing Teachers: Building Evidence for Sound Policy,* Committee on the Study of Teacher Preparation Programs in the United States, Center for Education, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2010).
13. Arthur Levine, *Educating School Teachers* (Washington, DC: The Education Schools Project, 2006).
14. National Research Council, 2010. Also see Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff, "Teacher Preparation and Student Achievement," NBER Working Paper No. W14314 (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc., September 2008).
15. Kate Walsh, Deborah Glaser, and Danielle Dunne Wilcox, *What Education Schools Aren't Teaching About Reading and What Elementary Teachers Aren't Learning,* (Washington, DC: National Council on Teacher Quality, May 2006). Julie Greenberg and Kate Walsh, *No Common Denominator: The Preparation of Elementary Teachers in Mathematics by America's Education Schools,* (Washington, DC: National Council on Teacher Quality, June 2008). NCTQ recently announced plans to conduct a national review of the nation's teacher preparation institutions.
16. There are exceptions. For example, the Teacher Preparation Research and Evaluation Project (T-PREP) in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University examines the impact of its teacher preparation program via student achievement scores, teacher performance observations, and attitudes of students, teachers, and their administrators.
17. Certification is synonymous with licensure, although the terms vary by state.
18. Efforts to improve the type of assessment represent one emerging approach to raising licensure standards for teaching. Twenty states, for example, have signed on to pilot a common performance assessment of teaching that would serve as a pre-service requirement for teacher licensure. The assessment was developed at Stanford's Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity and is described in more detail at http://aacte.org/index.php?/Programs/Teacher-Performance-Assessment-Consortium-TPAC/teacher-performance-assessment-consortium.html.
19. This includes the District of Columbia. Education Sector analysis of data provided by states to the U.S. Department of Education, which can be found at https://title2.ed.gov/default.asp.
20. Education Sector analysis of data found at https://title2.ed.gov/default.asp.
21. Sandra Huang, Yun Yi, and Kati Haycock, *Interpret With Caution: The First State Title II Reports on the Quality of Teacher Preparation* (Washington, DC: The Education Trust, June 2002).
22. Also see, L. Holdheide, A. Croft, L. Goe, and D. Reschly, "Considering the Special Challenges for Evaluating Special Education Teachers and English Language Learner Specialists," Teacher Quality Research & Policy Brief (Washington, DC: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, 2010).
23. Ron Matus, "More Data Linking Education Colleges to FCAT Scores," Tampabay.com http://www.tampabay.com/blogs/gradebook/content/more-data-linking-education-colleges-fcat-scores (accessed January 5, 2011).
24. Wade Malcolm, "Wesley College Loses Education Program Accreditation," *The News Journal,* January 4, 2011.
25. "High Standards for All Students: A Report From the National Assessment of Title I on Progress and Challenges Since the 1994 Reauthorization," (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2001).
26. Robert Manwaring, *Restructuring "Restructuring": Improving Interventions for Low-Performing Schools and Districts* (Washington, DC: Education Sector, April 2010); Kevin Carey, *The Pangloss Index: How States Game the No Child Left Behind Act* (Washington, DC: Education Sector, November 2007); Kevin Carey, *Hot Air: How States Inflate Their Educational Progress Under NCLB* (Washington, DC: Education Sector, May 2006); Sandra Huang, Yun Yi, and Kati Haycock, *Interpret with Caution: The First State Title II Reports on the Quality of Teacher Preparation*.
27. Preparation programs should track teachers into schools for a minimum of three years. Practically, multiple years are required to gain enough performance and retention data to be useful for evaluative purposes, and research suggests that links between teaching outcomes and preparation programs require data that extend beyond a teacher's first year of teaching.
28. In 2009 and 2010, for example, in anticipation of RTT, 28 states enacted educational reforms, more than triple the number making changes in 2007 and 2008 when no such financial or status incentives were in place. See, *State Legislation: Emerging Trends Reflected in the State Phase 1 Race to the Top Applications* (Chicago, IL: Learning Point Associates, June 2010).
29. The Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board lists its accreditation visit schedule at: http://www.kyepsb.net/teacherprep/visit.asp.

30. Education Sector analysis of data found at https://title2.ed.gov/default.asp.

31. Author's calculations from state directories of approved licensing programs.

32. Data from the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey indicate that students who declare education as their major receive Pell Grants, the primary federal grant program for low-income students, and federal student loans at about the same rate as students who declare other undergraduate majors. And approximately 40 percent of students in graduate-level programs in education receive federal loans, on par with students in other master's degree programs.

33. The Perkins Loan Program also has its own form of loan forgiveness for teachers. That program is not considered here because those loans only go to a small subset of students at the discretion of the school, and there are questions about the long-term future of the program that trump concerns about the loan forgiveness provision.

34. "Outstanding College Students Would Receive New $16,000 Scholarships to Become Teachers under Legislation Making its Way through Congress," Committee on Education and Labor, U.S. House of Representatives, Press Release, June 14, 2007, http://www.house.gov/apps/list/speech/edlabor_dem/rel061407.html (accessed January 17, 2011).

35. Students have eight years to meet the four-year teaching requirement and can get up to three, one-year suspensions so that they do not have to repay the grant for not meeting the requirements for that year.

36. This requirement does not kick in because of structural changes that are beyond a student's control—such as their school stops meeting the low-income-serving threshold or their field stops being high-need.

37. U.S. Department of Education, "Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Summary," p. 55.

38. TEACH Grants are only available at the 935 institutions that have applied to and been approved by the secretary, approximately 65 percent of all institutions that are approved by states to produce certified teachers.

39. Education Sector analysis of grant volume by institution for the fourth quarter of the 2009–10 academic year, which can be found at http://federalstudentaid.ed.gov/datacenter/library/Q40910AY.xls.

40. Education Sector analysis of completion data submitted by colleges to IPEDS.

41. College Cost Reduction and Access Act, Public Law 110-84, 110th Cong., 1st sess. (September 27, 2007), http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-110publ84/pdf/PLAW-110publ84.pdf, 4.

42. Education Sector analysis using annual state reports submitted to the Department of Education that can be found here: https://title2.ed.gov/default.asp and a list of TEACH Grant eligible institutions available at http://ifap.ed.gov/eannouncements/090310TEACHGrant.html

43. Jason Delisle, "An Uncertain Future for ACG/SMART Grants," New America Foundation: Ed Money Watch blog, May 5, 2009; U.S. Department of Education Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Summary.

44. Civil legal assistance attorneys, registered nurses, and veterinarians being the others. See Mark Kantrowitz, "Loan Forgiveness," FinAid, http://www.finaid.org/loans/forgiveness.phtml (accessed January 14, 2011).

45. Federal Education Budget Project, "Federal Programs for K-12 Teachers, New American Foundation, http://febp.newamerica.net/background-analysis/federal-programs-k-12-teachers#Federal_Stafford_Loan_Forgiveness_for_Teachers (accessed January 14, 2011).

46. "Funding Database," American Federation of Teachers, http://www.aft.org/yourwork/tools4teachers/fundingdatabase/ (accessed January 14, 2011).

47. "Underwood-Smith Teacher Scholarship Program," West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, http://wvhepcnew.wvnet.edu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=55&Itemid=0 (accessed January 14, 2011).

48. "Delaware Teacher Corps," Delaware Department of Education, http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/students_family/dheo/how_to_apply/financial_aid/FA_webpages/teacher_corps.shtml (accessed January 14, 2011).

49. "Quality Educator Loan Assistance Program," Montana Guaranteed Student Loan Program, http://www.mgslp.state.mt.us/Content/Managing_Your_Loan/Repayment_Options/Quality_Educator_Loan_Assistance_Program (accessed January 14, 2011).

50. Figures provided to Education Sector by the U.S. Department of Education, 2010.