

What's New?

Announcing the Fourth Annual What Works Conference

“Beyond Highly Qualified: The Development and Distribution of Highly Effective Teachers and Leaders”

October 28–30, 2009

The Fairmont Washington, D.C.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) call for states to direct their attention to teacher quality, teacher effectiveness, and the equitable distribution of teachers so that all students—particularly those in high-risk schools and with special needs—are academically successful. Such complex policy issues call for quick, systemic, and strategic planning and action by states and districts to address federal priorities and ensure a successful education system for the 21st century that will attract and inspire all generations of teachers and school leaders.

The fourth annual conference of the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (TQ Center) will build on its ongoing mission of providing regional comprehensive centers (RCCs) and states with up-to-date research, tools, and resources to help them create a comprehensive system of support for recruiting, supporting, and retaining high-quality, effective educators.

This conference will offer multiple opportunities for participants to engage in thorough and thoughtful reflection, discussion, and exploration of action steps to address these issues. It will include a set of plenary sessions, workshop sessions, and working sessions chosen to address the primary teacher quality issues outlined in both ARRA and the reauthorized ESEA.

Sir Michael Barber from McKinsey & Company, a key author of the report titled [*How the World's Best-Performing School Systems Come Out on Top*](#), will serve as keynote presenter. The conference also will feature several other keynote speakers and panelists who are influential in the research, policy, and practice of enhancing educator quality.

View the [conference website](#) for details and a preliminary agenda.

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- How many teachers are entering the classroom through alternative routes versus traditional routes?
- What are the best measures for determining the inequitable distribution of teachers?

New TQ Center Resources for Summer Reading

From educator effectiveness and teacher retention to making the best use of your state's ARRA funds, several new online resources are available from the TQ Center:

Two briefs build on the 2008 [*Approaches to Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness: A Research Synthesis*](#), which included a five-point definition of teacher effectiveness based on the authors' analyses of research, policy, and standards addressing teacher effectiveness and their consultations with experts in the field:

- [*Methods of Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness*](#) is intended to help RCC staff and state policymakers as they consider options for clarifying policy, developing new strategies for teacher evaluation, and identifying effective teachers. This brief also guides and supports districts in the selection and use of appropriate evaluation methods for other purposes.
- [*A Practical Guide to Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness*](#) describes in detail the many reasons for evaluating teacher effectiveness and indicates which measures are most suitable to use under different circumstances.

[*Increasing Teacher Retention to Facilitate the Equitable Distribution of Effective Teachers*](#), a Tips & Tools Key Issue, outlines the benefits of retaining qualified and effective teachers in hard-to-staff schools and offers strategies for improving retention rates.

On the ARRA front, a new interactive mapping tool, [*Using ARRA Funds to Improve Teacher Effectiveness and Equitable Distribution*](#), is now available. Modeled on a subway map, the tool is designed to guide conversations between RCC staff and state education agency (SEA) staff on the strategic use of ARRA funds appropriated in 2009 for improving teacher effectiveness and equitable distribution.

Rounding out the TQ Center's latest online resources is [*Teaching as a Clinical Practice Profession: Implications for Teacher Preparation and State Policy*](#), written by the New York Comprehensive Center in collaboration with the TQ Center. This Issue Brief describes five elements of a clinical practice profession and examines the work of teachers in relation to these elements. It provides examples of efforts such as urban teacher residency programs to ground teacher preparation in practice. In addition, it contains state policy recommendations that support the clinical education of teachers.

Approaches for Improving Teaching Quality: Recent Webcasts and Workshops

The TQ Center presented several webcasts and workshops on the topics of innovation configurations used in teacher preparation programs, evaluation of teacher effectiveness, and the inequitable distribution of highly qualified and effective teachers.

The Use of Innovation Configurations to Improve Teacher Preparation in Reading Instruction

In collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, the TQ Center hosted this webcast on December 19, 2008. The webcast was devoted to the use of innovation configurations that define critical components of reading instruction and levels of implementation in teacher preparation programs. The moderator was Lynn Holdheide of Vanderbilt University and the TQ Center. Featured experts

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were Dan Reschly, Ph.D., Vanderbilt University and the TQ Center, and Beth Harn, Ph.D., University of Oregon. Participants reviewed an innovation configuration, applied it to sample course syllabi, and discussed ways to improve programs at institutions of higher education (IHEs) so that all teachers are well prepared in evidence-based reading instruction. Problem solving related to barriers also was emphasized. View the [archived webcast materials](#) online.

The Use of Innovation Configurations to Improve Teacher Preparation in Critical Areas

Also in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs, the TQ Center hosted this webcast on January 16, 2009. The webcast presented innovation configurations related to improving teacher preparation and continuing education. It focused on the overarching goals of improving instruction and student outcomes and achieving the long-standing public policy goal of greater integration of students with disabilities in general education classroom settings. The moderator was Lynn Holdheide of Vanderbilt University and the TQ Center. Featured experts were Dan Reschly, Ph.D., Vanderbilt University and the TQ Center, and Liz Altieri, Ph.D., Radford University. View the [archived webcast materials](#) online.

Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness: The What, How, and Why of Educator Evaluation

As an introduction to the April 2009 workshop on evaluating teacher effectiveness, the TQ Center and Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest hosted a live, interactive webcast on March 30, 2009, on the same topic. Douglas Harris, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin–Madison, and Laura Goe, Ph.D., ETS and the TQ Center, provided practitioners and policymakers with an overview of existing and emerging research on teacher evaluation methods, including value-added models and observation protocols. The presentations included discussions on the quality of evidence supporting these methods and the applications that are consistent with that evidence. View the [archived webcast](#) and read the [REL Midwest reports](#) related to teacher evaluation.

Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness: A Workshop Connecting Research to Policy and Practice

The TQ Center and REL Midwest hosted the first of two technical assistance workshops in a series being offered to address key federal priorities in the improvement of educator quality. Held April 28–29, 2009, in Denver, Colorado, the workshop brought together experts and practitioners to discuss existing and emerging research on educator evaluation and its policy implications and impact on practice. Dan Goldhaber, Ph.D., of the University of Washington and the Urban Institute, gave the workshop’s breakfast keynote address on the utility of value-added measures in estimating teacher effectiveness. Other workshop presenters included Bridget Hamre, Ph.D., University of Virginia; Brad Jupp and Shayne Spalten, Denver Public Schools; Lucy Steiner, Public Impact; Kaneal G. Alexander, Tennessee State Department of Education; Carolyn McKinney, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction; and Larry Shumway, Utah State Office of Education. [Workshop materials](#), including an agenda and meeting summary, are available online.

Systems and Strategies for Addressing the Inequitable Distribution of Teachers

This webcast, held on May 21, 2009, and facilitated by Candace Crawford, senior associate at The Education Trust, served as an introduction to the same-topic workshop held June 30–July 1, 2009. The webcast brought together experts and practitioners to discuss existing research and strategies that address the inequitable distribution of teachers. Presenters included Judy Wurtzel, advisor to the secretary, U.S. Department of Education; Cortney Rowland, senior policy associate at the TQ Center; and Charles Clotfelter, Ph.D., professor of public policy, economics, and law at Duke University. The presentations included an overview of the research on inequitable distribution, information about funds that may be available through ARRA for use in

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addressing the inequitable distribution of teachers, and a discussion of relevant resources from the TQ Center. View the [archived webcast materials](#) online.

Addressing Inequities in the Distribution of Highly Qualified and Effective Teachers: A Workshop to Move Research and Policy Into Action

Experts and practitioners convened on June 30 and July 1, 2009, in Rosemont, Illinois, for the second technical assistance workshop in a series being offered by the TQ Center. The workshop addressed key federal priorities in the improvement of educator quality. Participants actively engaged in three working sessions centered on the following topics: defining equitable distribution metrics for their states, working with local education agencies to collect and analyze data, and aligning state needs with action strategies. Participants left the conference with the resources and information necessary to help them create a plan to address the equitable distribution of quality teachers in their states.

Update on the TQ Connection



The *TQ Connection*'s continuing [online discussion on response to intervention](#) has provided opportunities for educators to access content-rich resources and engage in interactive dialogue designed to support teacher preparation programs. The next topic, "Funding for Response to Intervention," will be available in September. We invite you to register to discuss this issue with colleagues, share your ideas, and have your questions answered by content experts.

Stories From the Field

New York Comprehensive Center Seminar Series: Teacher Preparation for the 21st Century

The New York Comprehensive Center, in alliance with the TQ Center, hosted a spring seminar, "Teacher Preparation: Easing the Transition From Preservice to Inservice," on March 20, 2009, in New York City. The seminar was the second in a series on teacher preparation and brought together the major stakeholders in teacher preparation in New York to share their individual experiences and expertise, engage in true reflective thinking about the profession, and collaboratively chart a course of action for improving teacher education. The seminar also emphasized the unique opportunity for innovative thinking provided by ARRA.

The seminar included two presentations from the higher education and state policy perspectives as well as a panel featuring researchers, policy analysts, and practitioners. The event concluded with participants meeting for three small-group discussions. The following list highlights some of the challenges and recommendations raised during these discussions:

Session 1: Improving Partnerships Between IHEs and K–12 Schools

Challenges:

- A lack of funding to support the establishment of deep, systematic partnerships

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- Resistance from teachers and parents who do not want student teachers in the classroom and from principals who are focused on remediating other school issues
- Disincentives for tenure-track college/university faculty members to work in schools
- Tension between schools and teacher preparation programs over the lack of equality in the partnership

Recommendations:

- Provide incentives for districts, schools, and teachers to engage in this work.
- Provide faculty members with credit toward tenure for working in schools.
- Ensure that the partnership is truly collaborative and mutually beneficial.

Session 2: Enriching the Clinical Experience Across Multiple Pathways

Strengths of the Boston Teacher Residency (BTR) Program:

- A rigorous recruitment process that assesses candidates' long-term commitment
- A full year working alongside an expert teacher, with a gradual release of responsibilities
- Aligned coursework and clinical experiences
- Significant mentor training and compensation
- An emphasis on creating a community of learning or a culture of inquiry among a cohort of teacher candidates and their mentors within a school
- Opportunities for teacher candidates to be hired directly into their schools
- The provision of a two-year induction program for BTR cohorts

Session 3: Enhancing Mentoring and Support for Preservice and Beginning Teachers

Recommendations:

- Remove traditional barriers between the preservice and inservice stages and create a more seamless career pathway supported by both IHEs and K–12 faculty.
- Reward teachers for their work, and provide them with opportunities to become teacher leaders. Also, encourage school leadership to cultivate teacher leaders.
- Provide induction into learning communities with a true inquiry orientation.
- Identify appropriate outcomes and develop tools to measure these outcomes in teacher preparation.

The third seminar in the series is tentatively scheduled for late fall 2009. To learn more about this seminar or the series, please contact Jane Coggshall at jane.coggshall@learningpt.org. For information on the first seminar, see [the July 2008 TQ Research & Policy Update](#).

Teacher Quality Questions From the Field

Each month, the TQ Center responds to questions and requests for information from the field. This quarter, the following requests for information were chosen for their general applicability:

- How many teachers are entering the classroom through alternative routes versus traditional routes?
- What are the best measures for determining the inequitable distribution of teachers?

How many teachers are entering the classroom through alternative routes versus traditional routes?

The best resource for information on alternative certification for teachers is the National Center for Alternative Certification, administered by the National Center for Education Information (NCEI). NCEI publishes a yearly report titled *Alternative Teacher Certification: A State-by-State Analysis* that contains state-by-state information on alternative certification options and related programs. The 2009 report is available for purchase through the organization's [product order webpage](#). State-by-state information on these programs also is available through a search function on the [National Center for Alternative Certification website](#).

In the 50 states and the District of Columbia, there are 130 alternative routes to teacher certification—making it difficult to summarize these programs. The most recent summary information about the percentage of teachers who have graduated from traditional versus alternative programs is available in [The Secretary's Fifth Annual Report On Teacher Quality: A Highly Qualified Teacher In Every Classroom](#), which was published in 2006. According to this report, approximately 81 percent of 2003–04 program completers reported by the states were trained in traditional programs; the report does note, however, that the percentages vary widely by state.

Because of the variation in programs—and because alternative certification programs are sometimes defined differently in the research literature—aggregate retention rates for alternatively trained teachers versus traditionally trained teachers across states are unavailable.

Other research efforts have explored alternative certification programs. In [An Evaluation of Teachers Trained Through Different Routes to Certification](#), a 2009 report published by the U.S. Department of Education, researchers compared mathematics and reading achievement scores of students assigned to teachers who used traditional routes to certification with the scores of students assigned to teachers who used alternative routes.

The Teacher Pathways Project is another effort aimed at unpacking any differences in teacher effectiveness and student outcomes based on the teacher's pathway to a teaching career. A [description of that project](#) is available on the Teacher Policy Research website.

What are the best measures for determining the inequitable distribution of teachers?

Measures for determining the inequitable distribution of teachers can be categorized in two ways:

- Indicators (e.g., free or reduced-price lunch) and thresholds (e.g., quartiles) that SEAs might use for the focus areas of equitable distribution; in other words, how SEAs define what constitutes *high poverty*, *high minority*, and/or *inexperienced* status

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- Measurements that SEAs might use to determine their overall teacher distribution (e.g., What measure does the SEA use to decide when distribution is equitable, and how is that determined?)

No single best measure or formula has been used and accepted by the policy and research communities. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction provides one example of how to study and report on equitable distribution requirements (see [Wisconsin Teacher Distribution Project Report: Executive Summary](#)); however, previous research and state reports indicate there is no consensus. The current state definitions of *inequitable distribution* tend to be data driven rather than theory driven. In other words, it may be convenient for a state to cut poverty data into deciles, as Wisconsin did, in order to examine their relationship to teacher characteristics. But those deciles are not determined by any kind of “tipping point” at which a school suddenly becomes a high-turnover building.

All measures should be theory driven, including those used to sort out teacher distribution; the problem is that theories about cut-points for the percentage of students from low-income families and the percentage of minority students are not supported by adequate research. Although poverty and minority status are highly correlated in many schools and districts, they have different impacts on teacher transfers and on a district’s ability to recruit highly qualified, experienced teachers.

A TQ Center colleague recommends that rather than setting “convenient” cut-points for percentages of minority students and students from low-income families, SEAs should use locally defined cut-points that are driven by an exploration of teacher qualifications and teacher transfers within schools in a district. With this method, districts within a state might have different cut-points. This approach makes sense, given concerns about district-level teacher distribution (i.e., there is a greater likelihood of affecting distribution by targeting districts for incentives, rather than targeting states).

Instead of using deciles of poverty and minority populations, SEAs might examine the percentage of highly qualified, experienced teachers in each of the schools within a district and do a quick survey of which schools have the highest turnover. When these schools are identified, the SEAs should look at their percentages of minority students and students from low-income families. That is what theory-driven cut-points mean: Schools with high teacher turnover are almost always schools with high percentages of minority students and students from low-income families. Teacher characteristics and teacher transfer patterns in those schools should be the determining factor in setting cut-points.

Watch for the Next Issue

The next issue of *TQ Research & Policy Update* will be published in September 2009.

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