

## What's New?

### What Works Conference

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (TQ Center) will host its third annual What Works Conference November 10–12, 2008, at The Fairmont Washington, D.C. This year's conference, titled "Building Capacity for a Systems Approach to Improving Educator Quality," will focus on how states can align teacher quality and school leadership policies across the educator career continuum to generate effective practices likely to improve student achievement.

The conference aims to enhance participants' understanding of the interrelationships between the different components of teacher quality and leadership policymaking and to support the creation of actionable strategies to effectively improve the human capital system and the equitable distribution of effective teachers and leaders.

For more information, please contact Gretchen Weber at [gretchen.weber@learningpt.org](mailto:gretchen.weber@learningpt.org) or 630-649-6511.

### Update on the TQ Connection

After summer vacation, discussion on the TQ Connection forum resumed with a conversation the week of September 7, 2008, regarding response to intervention (RTI) at the secondary level. Dr. Mark Shinn, professor of school psychology at National-Louis University, facilitated the discussion. All materials from the September 2008 discussion, as well as the previous five months, are available at [www.tqsource.org/forum](http://www.tqsource.org/forum). We hope you take advantage of the chance to have your questions answered and interact with experts and colleagues by joining in our next discussion, RTI: Learning Strategies, starting on December 3. If you have any questions or ideas for discussion topics, please contact Amy Potemski at [amy.potemski@learningpt.org](mailto:amy.potemski@learningpt.org) or 202-778-4589.



### New TQ Center Resources

The latest TQ Research & Policy Brief, [Paving the Path to the Urban School Principalship](#), explains the increasing difficulty of finding talented and experienced individuals aspiring to become urban school leaders and offers promising strategies to meet this important challenge. The brief is based on a review of the literature and data from four focus groups of 74 prospective principals and details the steps of the path to the principalship and the necessary supports along the way.

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- *How are states addressing bilingual and ESL teachers with regard to HQT?*

Another recent TQ Center publication is an issue paper posted on TQ Connection titled [Teacher Preparation to Deliver Inclusive Services to Students With Disabilities](#). The paper presents a brief review of the legal and policy foundations and best professional practices for inclusive services. It also provides a discussion of key components of inclusive services that should be incorporated in teacher preparation at the preservice and inservice levels. In addition, it offers an Inclusive Services Innovation Configuration, which can be used to evaluate general and special education teacher preparation and professional development programs.

## Center for Educator Compensation Reform Launches Revised Website

The Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR), the exclusive provider of information and outreach on the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) and national efforts in compensation reform, launched a major revision to its website (<http://cecr.ed.gov>) this summer. CECR's website provides resources and information for TIF grantees, policymakers, state officials, and district professionals to assist with program implementation and raising national awareness of alternative compensation programs.

New features of the site include an interactive map that highlights compensation reform plans from around the country, a searchable database of TIF grantees, and the *Guide to Implementation: Resources for Applied Practice*, a series of modules addressing the major components of compensation reform. The *Guide to Implementation* provides grantees and other interested stakeholders with a thoughtful discussion on the key principles of developing and implementing a pay-for-performance system.

“These modules share experiences from the states and districts that have tried pay-for-performance, and highlight some lessons learned,” said CECR project director Babette Gutmann. “The modules go another step and apply research and current thinking of good practice to provide recommendations and strategies for the education groups that are currently implementing or considering these programs.”

Contributors to the series are technical assistance providers for CECR from Vanderbilt University and the University of Wisconsin–Madison. The *Guide to Implementation* includes an implementation checklist and modules on stakeholder engagement and communication, classroom observations of teacher performance, data quality, information technology considerations, principal compensation, and financing and sustaining performance-pay programs. Future modules will discuss value-added measurement, designing a performance-pay program, and program evaluation.

Visitors to the website also can sign up to receive the CECR monthly newsletter and access conference materials from the TIF Annual Grantee Meetings. Presentations from the June 5–6, 2008, meeting are shared in the Recent Events section of the website. Materials are posted from sessions on measuring the performance of teachers in nontested subjects and nontested grades; measuring performance for teachers of English language learners and students with disabilities; effective teacher observations, communicating value-added models and results; and program sustainability.

For more information on CECR and TIF and to sign up to receive the monthly newsletter, visit <http://cecr.ed.gov>.

## Stories From the Field

The TQ Center and regional comprehensive centers highlight an exciting project this quarter in this *TQ Research & Policy Update*. Through collaboration with the Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center (NWRCC), the TQ Center worked to provide information to Montana on how states address the highly qualified teacher (HQT) data collection requirements for special education teachers—in response to recent U.S. Department of Education monitoring.

In response to the request for information, the TQ Center participated in several teleconferences, gathered information about how seven states addressed this requirement, prepared a final report, and shared the results with the state and NWRCC. The TQ Center consulted with the U.S. Department of Education for clarification regarding NCLB parent notification requirements. The TQ Center staff continues to work with NWRCC and the Montana Office of Public Instruction to address specific state questions. The final report is available on the TQ Center website at <http://www.tqsource.org/topics/HQTRequirementsForSpecEdTeachers.pdf>.

After consultation with the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, the TQ Center initially selected four states based on their data systems: Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, and New Hampshire. The TQ Center decided to include Colorado as well because it recently developed a new data system to track HQT requirements for special education teachers. In addition, Washington and Wyoming were selected because they are examples of how states in the Northwest approach this issue. In order to gather the most accurate information, TQ Center staff conducted telephone interviews with state education agency (SEA) staff in all seven states and performed a review of state policy documents from the states.

Two themes emerged from the discussions with SEA staff about HQT efforts:

- States emphasized the importance of working collaboratively across departments (i.e., special education, licensure, information systems, and federal grant programs) to track HQT requirements for special education teachers. This allows the SEA to identify existing sources of HQT data and jointly develop a plan for producing a comprehensive system of data collection to meet reporting needs.
- SEA staff also noted the importance of ensuring that the appropriate local education agency staff member(s) participate in the training and assistance. This provides an avenue for sharing consistent information and recognizes the interrelationship among HQT requirements, data collection mandates, and implementation efforts.

For more information, or if you have any questions, please contact Lynn Holdheide at [lynn.holdheide@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:lynn.holdheide@vanderbilt.edu) or 202-510-2560.

## Teacher Quality Questions From the Field

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

As states continue to go through the U.S. Department of Education HQT monitoring process, questions have arisen about Section 2141 of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. In order to provide the most accurate information, staff members at the TQ Center consulted with the U.S. Department of Education to provide the following responses.

### **Do schools need to be at 100 percent HQT, or can we define progress such as 1 percent, 2 percent, 3 percent, 4 percent, or 5 percent growth annually?**

The goal is still for schools to be at 100 percent HQT. The legislative language is somewhat unclear about the meaning of the term *progress*, but the TQ Center has confirmed that meeting 100 percent of core classes taught by HQTs continues to be the goal toward which states should work.

### **What federal funds are to be included in the agreement under 2141(c): Only NCLB Title II? Title I and II? Others?**

Title I funds are specifically referenced in 2141(c)(2)(c): “the state educational agency ... shall prohibit the use of funds received under Part A of Title I to fund any paraprofessional hired after the date such determination is made” and 2141(c)(b): “the state educational agency ... shall allow the use of such funds to fund a paraprofessional hired after that date if the local educational agency can demonstrate that the hiring is to fill a vacancy created by the departure of another paraprofessional funded under Title I and such new paraprofessional satisfies the requirements of Section 1119(c).” In other words, as part of the agreement, Title I funds should not be used to hire a paraprofessional unless the district can show that the paraprofessional meets the NCLB requirements for paraprofessionals and that he or she is filling a vacancy created by another Title I paraprofessional who has left. Otherwise, specific types of funds are not referenced in the 2141 agreement.

### **Section 2141 refers to an LEA not meeting the HQT AMOs and not making AYP for three consecutive years. In our state, we calculate HQT/NHQT down to the school level, along with the LEA, but AYP is only measured at the school level. Does this mean that the SEA enters into an agreement with the LEA in the names of all of its schools that did not meet HQT AMOs and did not make AYP? What about charter schools? Where do they fit into the mix—are they named in the LEA agreement along with other schools?**

The U.S. Department of Education was not able to provide much information in response to this question other than that the agreements are to be between the SEA and districts. Section 2141 (c) states that “the local educational agency has failed to make progress toward meeting the annual measurable objectives described in Section 1119(a)(2), and has failed to make adequate yearly progress as described under Section 1111(b)(2)(B).” This seems to indicate that the legislation is pointing to how AYP should be considered in this provision. In addition, Section 1111(b)(2)(B) states, “...and in accordance with this paragraph, what constitutes adequate yearly progress of the state, and of all public elementary schools, secondary schools, and local educational

agencies in the state, toward enabling all public elementary school and secondary school students to meet the state’s student academic achievement standards...” In other words, at some time, each SEA should have defined what constitutes AYP for that state, at both the school level and the district level, which is the definition that should be used for the 2141 provisions.

Another issue is whether or not there are “model” responses that states have submitted as a result of their monitoring visit. State responses to monitoring visits are not posted on the U.S. Department of Education’s website along with the monitoring reports, and unfortunately, there are not yet any “model” responses to share at this point. The responses vary significantly across the states. The [monitoring reports](#) that the U.S. Department of Education released to some of the states confirming that their responses adequately addressed the issues brought up during the monitoring visit may be helpful. In general, the U.S. Department of Education is looking for a plan and timeline addressing each of the findings from the monitoring visit.

For more information, view the TQ Center document titled [Ten Early Lessons Learned From Highly Qualified Teacher Monitoring Reports](#).

## Reference

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425 (2002). Retrieved October 20, 2008, from <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/107-110.pdf>

## **How are other states addressing bilingual and ESL teachers at the elementary and secondary levels, in public and charter schools with regard to HQT? Which states require general education teachers to obtain ESL endorsement, and what do their policies/regulations require?**

With regard to the first question, federal guidelines require that teachers of core academic subjects demonstrate their content knowledge for each of the content areas they are teaching. This means, for example, that if a teacher is teaching mathematics as the teacher of record to limited-English-proficient (LEP) students, the HQT provisions require only that the teacher be highly qualified to teach mathematics, not that the teacher be bilingual/ESOL/ESL/ELL certified (hereafter ESL). Therefore, few states address teachers of English language learners (ELLs) directly in their official highly qualified teacher definitions and policy requirements. These definitions and requirements can be easily located and retrieved using the [NCLB Highly Qualified Teacher and Paraprofessional Database](#).

These regulations apply to all *public* school teachers. The state certification requirement is waived for *charter* school teachers (in most states, depending on public charter school law); however, all charter school teachers, including ESL teachers, must still demonstrate competence in the core academic areas in which they teach.

The second question is more difficult to answer. Although no state seems to require all general education teachers to obtain ESL endorsement, many do require coursework in teaching ELLs. Coursework requirements for all states for their approved preparation programs are accessible through our [State Policy Database on Teacher Preparation](#). For further information, see [An Overview of the Preparation and Certification of Teachers Working With Limited English Proficient \(LEP\) Students](#).

Many states do require ESL licensure or endorsement for teachers who are teaching self-contained English language development classes or ESL classes. (These are not considered core academic subjects under NCLB.)

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

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2007), for example, lists the following types of teaching situations that require ESL licensure/endorsement:

- Teach as the teacher of record in a self-contained classroom in which only LEP students are enrolled, focusing on English language acquisition.
- Teach English language skills to small groups of LEP students in pullout settings or in self-contained ESL classrooms.
- Coteach with the licensed teacher of a general classroom in which both LEP and English-proficient students are enrolled.

Requirements for obtaining a license in ESL for middle and secondary schools in Massachusetts include the following (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2007):

- Possession of a bachelor's degree
- Completion of a Massachusetts ESL Grades 5–12 approved program
- A passing score on the Communication and Literacy Skills test (a Massachusetts-specific exam)
- A passing score on either the ELL subject matter test or the ESL subject matter test (Massachusetts exams developed by National Evaluation Systems)

For further information, see the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition listing of the [states that offer ESL or bilingual certification](#).

## References

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2007). *Regulations for educator licensure and preparation program approval*. Malden, MA: Author. Retrieved October 20, 2008, from <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html?section=06>

Menken, K., & Antunez, B. (with Dilworth, M. E., & Yasin, S.). (2001). *An overview of the preparation and certification of teachers working with limited English proficient (LEP) students*. Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.