

The TQ Center Enters Its Fifth Year With a Sharp Focus on Teacher Effectiveness and Equitable Distribution

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (TQ Center) strives to provide information and technical assistance to build the capacity of regional comprehensive centers (RCCs) in their efforts to assist regions and states as they work to strengthen the quality of teaching—especially in high-poverty, low-performing, and hard-to-staff schools—and as they seek guidance to address specific needs, thereby ensuring that highly qualified teachers are serving students with special needs.

The new federal administration has focused on increasing teacher effectiveness and the equitable distribution of effective teachers as one of the core reform efforts identified in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. This shift allows the TQ Center to focus and expand on its work in these areas as reflected in its work plan’s overarching themes:

- Examining Teacher Effectiveness and the Preparation, Support, and Development of Effective Teachers
- Addressing the Equitable Distribution of Teachers and the Role of Leadership in These Efforts

These foci are evident in TQ Center tools and resources, opportunities to learn from and network with experts and colleagues provided by the TQ Center, and the TQ Center’s on-demand technical assistance services.

TQ Center Tools and Resources

TQ Center Website

The appearance and functionality of the [TQ Center website](#) have recently been modified to make the site more user-friendly. Resources are now categorized according to TQ topics, which can be found in the drop-down menu located in the gray box in the upper right corner of the home page. Users also can search for resources by type (e.g., webcast, research, policy brief) by clicking on “TQ Center Resources” in the left column on the home page, which leads to a “Filter by Keyword” function.

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TQ Center Technical Assistance Toolbox

The Technical Assistance Toolbox is a new feature on the TQ Center website. Organized by topic area, the Technical Assistance Toolbox contains examples of how the TQ Center can assist RCCs and states in their efforts to improve teacher quality and effectiveness for all students. The Technical Assistance Toolbox also includes examples of technical assistance that the TQ Center has provided, along with supporting documents and tools from that technical assistance and access to a vast array of content-rich resources. Finally, the Technical Assistance Toolbox has a list of frequently asked questions and responses that RCC and state staff can access quickly as needed.

If you have questions or comments about the website, or if you have suggestions for enhancing its usability, please contact Kathleen Hayes at 312-283-2302 or kathleen.hayes@learningpt.org.

New Publications

Recruitment Resources

[Teacher Recruitment: Strategies for Widening the Pool in a Shrinking Economy](#)

This Policy-to-Practice Brief provides examples of how district and state leaders can take advantage of a renewed interest in teaching during these challenging economic times. Particular attention is given to promotion of the teaching profession as a way of improving the recruitment of highly effective teachers to high-need schools and subject areas.

[Recruiting Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics \(STEM\) Teachers](#)

This TQ Tips & Tools Key Issue focuses on strategies for recruiting STEM teachers, especially in the critical shortage areas of mathematics and science.

[Recruiting Teachers for Urban and Rural Schools](#)

This TQ Tips & Tools Key Issue focuses on teacher recruitment strategies that will help hard-to-staff urban and rural districts and schools recruit the highest quality, best-prepared teachers.

Policy Resources

[Understanding and Implementing Section 2141\(c\) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act](#)

This Policy-to-Practice Brief provides an overview of the Section 2141(a) and Section 2141(c) provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and leads state education agencies through a series of steps to consider for meeting the requirements. The brief also provides examples of steps that states have taken in meeting the requirements.

English Language Learner Resources

[Teaching English Language Learners: A Complex System](#)

This Policy-to-Practice brief provides an overview of the different components necessary for supporting English language instruction. The brief considers the impact of these components on the preparation and recruitment of teachers of English language learners (ELLs).

[Preparing Teachers of English Language Learners](#)

This TQ Connection Issue Paper addresses the challenges of preparing general education and ELL teachers for classroom contexts that include a diverse array of languages and cultures. The paper also includes an innovation configuration for evaluating preparation programs and professional development in this area.

[Certification and Licensure for Teachers of English Language Learners](#)

This state policy database provides an overview of state-level policies related to ELL teacher certification and licensure currently in place across the country.

TQ Center Events

Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness

A webcast ([Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness: The What, How, and Why of Educator Evaluation](#)) and a workshop ([Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness: A Workshop Connecting Research to Policy and Practice](#)) were convened by the TQ Center and Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest to provide research-based information and an opportunity to learn from colleagues and experts in the field. All resources and presentations from these events are available online.

Equitable Distribution of Teachers

A webcast ([Systems and Strategies for Addressing the Inequitable Distribution of Teachers](#)) and a workshop ([Addressing Inequities in the Distribution of Highly Qualified and Effective Teachers: A Workshop to Move Research and Policy Into Action](#)) were convened by the TQ Center to provide opportunities to explore research and practice regarding this topic and learn about action-based planning and strategies. All resources and presentations from these events are available online.

TQ Center 2009 What Works Conference

The TQ Center's fourth annual What Works Conference, "Beyond Highly Qualified: The Development and Distribution of Highly Effective Teachers and Leaders," will be held October 28–30, 2009, in Washington, D.C. Registration is now closed, but summaries and resources from the conference will be posted on the TQ Center website in November 2009.

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.

TQ Connection

The TQ Center’s next TQ Connection online discussion, “Teacher Preparation and Response to Intervention in Middle and High Schools,” is happening this week through October 2, 2009. Dan Reschly, Ph.D., of Vanderbilt University will serve as the week’s expert and will facilitate discussion about the unique challenges of implementing RTI at the middle and high school levels—including specific examples of scientifically based interventions within all tiers and a review of tools and resources designed to evaluate current teacher preparation and professional development practices. [Register](#) to join this online discussion.

TQ Center On-Demand Technical Assistance

Racing to the Top

The Race to the Top competitive funding opportunity is expected to open in late 2009, with a second phase opening in spring 2010. Although the final RFP has not been released, the proposed priorities include a clear focus on systemic education reform—a large part of which is systemic, strategic action toward teacher effectiveness and equitable distribution. Among the priorities and performance measures are the following:

- Ability to differentiate teacher effectiveness using multiple rating categories, including student academic growth
- Provision of targeted professional development for teachers
- Use of teacher effectiveness information for compensation and tenure decisions
- Assurance that teachers who are effective, not just highly qualified, are equitably distributed

TQ Center resources can help RCCs in their work with states to encourage systemic and strategic planning related to defining and assessing teacher effectiveness and ensuring the equitable distribution of teachers. Examples include the following:

- Publications that contain quick reference guides and templates that states can use in strategic planning such as the [Communication Framework for Measuring Teacher Quality and Effectiveness: Bringing Coherence to the Conversation](#) and [A Practical Guide to Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness](#)
- Online resources and presentations from webcasts and workshops on teacher effectiveness and equitable teacher distribution available at www.tqsource.org/eventswebcasts.php
- Collections of research and strategies that can inform state and district efforts in the TQ Tips & Tools Key Issues series, including [Using Value-Added Models to Identify and Support Highly Effective Teachers](#) and [Using Performance-Based Assessment to Identify and Support High-Quality Teachers](#)
- [Using ARRA Funds to Improve Teacher Effectiveness and Equitable Distribution: An Interactive Mapping Tool](#), which can help guide conversations between RCCs and states about the strategic use of these funds to improve teacher effectiveness and equitable distribution

Stories From the Field

Equitable Teacher Distribution in Kansas

At the June 2009 TQ Center technical assistance workshop, [“Addressing Inequities in the Distribution of Highly Qualified and Effective Teachers: A Workshop to Move Research and Policy Into Action.”](#) TQ Center staff presented a new way of looking at the commonly discussed issue of teacher distribution: a map. This presentation highlighted how a teacher distribution map could be used to visually overlay the presence of highly qualified or experienced teachers on top of schools and districts of varying levels of poverty. After thinking about how such a map could be useful in guiding conversations and decisions in Kansas, officials from the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) and the Mid-Continent Comprehensive Center requested assistance from the TQ Center in developing a series of equitable distribution maps using map-making software.

The maps would focus primarily on the seven Kansas school districts in corrective action. With more than 60 percent of the population considered visual learners, it was deemed that this visual tool will help stakeholders to better understand the extent and nature of inequitable distribution in Kansas. For each of the seven corrective action districts, the TQ Center agreed to map the following teacher quality indicators: highly qualified (i.e., teachers who have attained highly qualified teacher status) and experience level (i.e., teachers with three years of experience or fewer).

For each teacher quality indicator, one map will be created for high schools and one for elementary/middle schools. Districts will be color-coded on the map according to their poverty level. The schools within the districts will each be represented as a circle, with the size of the circle indicating the percentage of students in the school who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Within the circle, a teacher quality indicator will be presented, the color of which will display the proportion of teachers who meet the quality indicator. Although the focus will be to depict the distribution of teachers *within* the district to give some indication of inequitable distribution *between* districts, neighboring districts also will be presented in the maps.

The map will be used to highlight positive improvements in teacher quality that have been made but also to draw attention to the persistent equitable teacher distribution problems that exist in certain districts. By allowing stakeholders to see these problems so clearly on a map, it is hoped that the KSDE can gain the political leverage to effectively “sell” the idea of improving teacher distribution to other relevant stakeholder groups. Then, KSDE can work with districts to identify causes for the inequitable distribution of teachers and develop effective policies to achieve a more ideal distribution. The maps may be used to guide conversations about what this ideal distribution would look like in the future.

Alongside the development of these equitable distribution maps, the TQ Center will work with KSDE officials and Mid-Continent Comprehensive Center to create teacher and administrator survey and interview protocols. These protocols will allow state and district officials to work collaboratively to more fully understand the causes behind inequities in teacher distribution. These protocols can be part of a larger initiative to create both targeted policies for improving teacher distribution and more general improvements to the profession that will improve teacher quality for all students. By combining the creation of teacher distribution maps with these data-collection protocols, Kansas and Mid-Continent Comprehensive Center will be able to more meaningfully discuss this problem, develop targeted solutions to it, and work with other stakeholders to see those solutions through.

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