

A Summary of the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality Workshop “Addressing Inequities in the Distribution of Highly Qualified and Effective Teachers”

June 30–July 1, 2009
InterContinental Hotel Chicago O’Hare

Welcome and Keynote Address

Sabrina Laine, Ph.D., director of the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (TQ Center) began the workshop by reviewing the history of equitable distribution, from the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and its highly qualified teacher provisions, to equitable distribution’s role as one of the four assurances of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)—an opportunity for states to renew their focus on equitable distribution.

Dr. Laine reminded participants about the workshop’s connection to the TQ Center’s May webcast on the same topic. She explained that the workshop would allow participants to extend what they know about the research base on equitable distribution by using the TQ Center’s action-planning workbook, *Thinking Systemically: Steps for States to Improve Equity in the Distribution of Teachers*, to create some concrete action steps for their own states’ equitable distribution plans, specifically by participating in the following discussions and activities:

- Conducting a gap analysis of current policies and practices in their state equity plans versus those currently being implemented in their states
- Defining variables their states can use to measure equity and the distribution of teachers
- Discussing the collection and analysis of data to determine areas of need
- Identifying and developing targeted strategies to address areas of need that are systemic in nature and consider the entire continuum of the educator’s career

Dr. Laine directed participants to the TQ Center’s ARRA Interactive Mapping Tool (www.tqsource.org/arra), which helps states think strategically about how to access ARRA funds to address the many components across the educator career continuum.

Dr. Laine then introduced keynote speaker **Jennifer Imazeki**, Ph.D., associate professor of economics, San Diego University. Dr. Imazeki and **Laura Goe**, Ph.D., principal investigator for research and dissemination at the TQ Center and a research scientist at ETS, were the coauthors of *The Distribution of Highly Qualified, Experienced Teachers: Challenges and Opportunities*, which was distributed to participants.

Dr. Imazeki explained that the research on the distribution of highly qualified, experienced teachers is sparse, particularly research that might suggest whether current efforts toward equity are effective. She pointed out that distribution issues arise across schools, not just across districts or regions, citing Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2002:

http://www.teacherpolicyresearch.org/portals/1/pdfs/Teacher_Sorting_and_Urban_Schools_EEP_A.pdf), whose research has consistently found that the variance in equitable distribution between schools within the same district generally explains more of the total variance than does the variance between districts or regions. She said this suggests that states should be thinking about how to target their efforts at the school level.

Dr. Imazeki said that although it is well documented that no matter what measure of teacher quality is used, the least equitable distribution is seen in poor, minority schools, the reasons for this inequity are not as widely understood. She then outlined the main factors that explain these inequities:

- Teacher preferences—Mobility is often blamed for distribution problems, for example, teachers use high-poverty schools as training grounds and then move on to more affluent districts. But before this can be accurately pegged as the source of the problem, one thing must be determined: whether teachers are moving from high-need to low-need schools. The research base exploring this question is thin.
- Novices are replacing teachers who leave high-need schools. Imazeki says that research confirms this.
- Geographic preferences of teachers—Most teachers like to work close to home, which disadvantages high-need urban and rural schools in recruiting.
- District hiring/assignment practices—Late hiring or union rules that prevent a particular school from hiring a particular teacher both contribute to inequities.

Dr. Imazeki said that current policy responses to these issues—such as incentives, bonuses, induction programs, and workshops—are designed to attract and retain teachers in high-need schools, but Dr. Imazeki says very little evidence shows conclusively whether these policies are effective. Most states do not evaluate the impact of policies; rather, they look at whether appropriated dollars were spent and stop there. Dr. Imazeki’s work with states to determine the effectiveness of their current equity policies suggests that the cost effectiveness of salary increases is small, but the effectiveness of induction programs is much larger.

Dr. Imazeki concluded her presentation with the following recommendations to participants:

- Develop data systems that allow the tracking of teacher movement within and across districts, as well as their exits from the profession, and compare characteristics of schools that teachers leave or go to.
- Investigate the reasons for inequities within districts so that appropriate strategies can be employed.
- Analyze the specifics of bargaining agreements, particularly hiring and assignment policies, to identify areas where alterations may improve equitable distribution.

- Involve stakeholders (teachers, board members, union representatives, parents, community members) in creating and implementing strategies and policies.
- Collect and analyze detailed information about strategies and policies already implemented.
- Maintain comprehensive data on teachers and their participation in programs designed to address teacher distribution.
- For the most cost-effective use of resources, use key indicators to identify schools most in need of assistance, rather than targeting all schools that fall into the top quartile of high-poverty or high-minority schools.
- Weigh the relative cost-effectiveness of short- and long-term policies to ensure the maximum benefit to targeted schools.

Session I: Defining Equitable Distribution Metrics

Laura Goe, Ph.D., principal investigator for research and dissemination at the TQ Center and research scientist at ETS, told workshop participants that because the federal government would likely be introducing equitable distribution metrics in the coming months, she would refrain from offering any specific definitions so as not to contradict its recommendations. She did remind participants that metric validity is essential for allowing states to differentiate individual teachers or schools.

Just as important, Dr. Goe said, are well-defined goals, the most important of which should not be equitable distribution of teachers—rather, it should be improving student learning and educational opportunities for the students who need them most. Equitable distribution, she said, is just a means to that end—something that often gets lost in policy conversations.

Dr. Goe emphasized the need to sort and rank schools on more than just their highly qualified teacher (HQT) status and teacher experience, which should be a starting point for districts to determine needs and decide where to direct specific funds, resources, and strategies. Not all schools with an imbalance are equally in need of help: Student achievement levels, rates of teacher turnover, and leadership effectiveness are other factors to consider.

Often, states measure equitable distribution in quartiles, which Dr. Goe said is problematic because one state’s top quartile of poor, high-minority schools might actually consist of highly affluent schools. She recommended that states consider how their demographics compare to the larger national distribution and set targets accordingly.

Session II: Getting the Data and Using It

Introduced by **Lynn Holdheide** of the TQ Center and Vanderbilt University and facilitated by **Megan Dolan**, Ed.D., of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Comprehensive Center, this panel discussion focused on using HQT data to address equitable distribution issues. **Jackson Alley** of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GPSC) presented several data-collection and analysis systems that GPSC uses:

- HiQ, an online educator inventory system that helps school systems determine whether individual teachers or a school’s entire faculty meet the federal definition of “highly qualified” according to the teacher’s assigned duties. Once a teacher’s HiQ rating is established, the state and district have the information they need to address inequities in teacher distribution.
- Equity technical assistance website (www.gapsc.org), which schools can use to compare their student and teacher populations to those of other schools or that of their state as a whole. An example of information available on the website is the student demographics for individual classrooms.
- Project EQ, a collaborative library of equity plans and strategies for addressing distribution issues that any state’s department of education can join to provide open access to its equity plans (<http://eq.gapsc.org>). The site includes a message board that allows participants to join discussions about the equity plans posted.

Jane Coggshall, Ph.D., research and policy analyst at the TQ Center, discussed a tool developed in collaboration with the Mid-Atlantic Regional Educational Laboratory, the Delaware Department of Education, and the TQ Center. The tool consists of protocols that help states and districts determine the reasons behind their teacher distribution inequities.

Dr. Coggshall explained that the protocol development emerged as part of Delaware’s process for revising its state HQT plan. The state department of education developed three research questions as a starting point for its work:

- What are some of the reasons out-of-field teaching occurs in middle and high schools? How are teachers assigned to classes?
- What are some of the school conditions that contribute to recruitment and retention of HQTs, for example, leadership, school climate, and teacher pay?
- What are some SEA and LEA policies (perceived and real) that support and impede equitable distribution, for example, bargaining agreements, hiring dates, and pay differentials?

Using approximately \$32,000 of its Title II funding, the department picked 10 high-equity and 10 low-equity schools and created four interview protocols to ascertain the district-level, school-level, and classroom-level perspectives on its research questions. The protocols, administered by three external data collectors, included questions about what policies or practices help or hinder placement of HQTs in each school in a district and what types of pay or benefit incentives are offered to teachers at a particular school.

Dr. Coggshall said that one of the department’s main challenges as it conducted its work was gaining access to some schools. As a result, she said, a strong advocate is needed within any SEA that attempts a similar undertaking, as well as a formal invitation process to schools prior to data collection.

Dr. Coggshall encouraged states interested in using these protocols—which are adaptable to focus groups and monitoring visits—to contact her (jane.coggshall@learningpt.org) or Dr. Laura

Goe (lgoe@ets.org) and to read the TQ Center's second biennial report, which will be available mid-October 2009, for more information.

Ellen Behrstock, policy associate at the TQ Center, rounded out the session by presenting a fresh new method of pinpointing the problem of inequitable distribution that the TQ Center can provide to states and regions: a map that provides a visual illustration of inequitable distribution of teachers in terms of their qualifications and experience. (The Maryland Department of Education officials graciously shared their data with us as an example to demonstrate the tool, for which we thank them.) The map can specifically home in on areas of inequitable distribution, such as Prince George's County and Baltimore City.

The TQ Center used the following information provided by Maryland to develop the map: an Excel spreadsheet with National Center for Education Statistics data for each of the state's 1,427 schools; the proportion of inexperienced teachers in the state; the proportion of core classes taught by HQTs; and the proportion of teachers in each school who are not fully certified.

Session III: Working With Districts and Aligning Strategies With Identified Areas of Need

Donna Carr, an ESEA and Title I specialist with the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center, facilitated this session, the focus of which was twofold: how to work collaboratively with school districts to address teacher distribution issues and how to intentionally align strategies and programs with identified areas of need.

Michael B. Allen, Ph.D., the principal at Allen Education, LLC, began the session with a focus on the connection between federal stimulus funding and educator equity. Dr. Allen's presentation centered on a draft form of the TQ Center policy brief *Moving Forward With Stimulus Funding to Enhance Equity in Educator Quality*, which was distributed to participants. He explained that the brief is based on five steps that states should take toward equity:

- Organize a statewide equity management and oversight infrastructure. Dr. Allen said Ohio seems to be farthest ahead on this task; that state has a dedicated office of educator equity, which he said has benefited the state in several ways. First, it enables Ohio to look at all programs that touch on teacher equity in a very coordinated way. It also allows Ohio to see where programs overlap or work at cross-purposes, as well as determine cost-effectiveness, coordination, and alignment of programs.
- Determine appropriate metrics for such concepts as equitable distribution, experienced, effective, and qualified.
- Generate and report thorough and reliable data, including teacher data. (He said that although states generate lots of student data, they need to generate more information about teachers.)
- Provide guidance to districts to help them address the equity issue locally, specifically to ensure that standard metrics are applied statewide for equity assessment and programming outcomes; that data are compatible statewide; and that local policies are complementary, not competitive or contradictory.

- Identify and develop effective policies and programs that specifically address identified areas of need. Dr. Allen said it is difficult to do so; issues range from unintended consequences to policy effects that are difficult to measure. Therefore, he said, states should aim for intentional, not incidental, impact; measure success in terms of increase in both equity and teacher quality (for example, you might be increasing inequity by lowering the bar for teachers); consider possible unintended negative consequences; read all the relevant research and evaluation studies about a program or policy you are considering; and learn from the experience of similar programs implemented elsewhere.

Tiffany Miller, Ph.D., education programs consultant in the Title II Leadership Unit at the California Department of Education, discussed her department’s efforts to evaluate progress on equitable distribution, particularly of effective educators. California has defined *effective* by adding several criteria to the federal/state criteria for “highly qualified”:

- Full state certification
- At least a bachelor’s degree
- Demonstration of subject-matter competency in each of the academic subjects taught
- More than five years of teaching experience
- A belief that every student can learn
- Academic ability as demonstrated by subject-matter exam scores, GPA, IQ, tests of verbal ability, or selectivity of the college attended

Miller said California’s plan for equity focuses on guiding districts to hire, train, and retain HQTs via effective human resources and administrative practices and by providing teachers with resources. Yet because California has too much data, a dearth of the “right” data, and not enough individuals who know how to analyze data or use it to create effective policies, Miller said, there is a challenge in getting this equity plan off the ground.

To meet this challenge, the state’s department of education is employing several strategies:

1. A toolkit for a district to assess its own equitable distribution of HQTs, effective administrative practices, and effective hiring practices (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/nclb/sr/tq/documents/toolkit.doc>)
2. A requirement for districts to collect data in three areas: the distribution of HQTs, teacher retention rates, and administrator experience rates (Data are sorted by poverty rate of schools to highlight potential discrepancies in the equitable distribution of teachers.)

Miller acknowledged that this is a great deal of information to ask districts to track and report, but she said they have been up to the task and have reported that these steps have helped them tackle equity issues.

Julie McCargar, Ed.D., the executive director of federal programs at the Tennessee Department of Education, concluded this session’s presentations by discussing her department’s work with districts on equitable distribution issues. Dr. McCargar said one of the major challenges facing states and districts as they address equitable distribution is determining a way to measure each

teacher's effect on student achievement and how that links to equitable distribution. She gave participants copies of a policy brief of National Association of State Title I Directors (2009: <http://tqcenter.learningpt.org/~tqCD/Workshop%2006-30-09/Tennessee%20Materials/NASTIDPolicyPape013099.pdf>), to anchor her discussion of this challenge.

Dr. McCargar said that Tennessee began approaching its equity issues by analyzing teacher effect data—an essential data set because teacher experience and education do not always predict an educator's impact in the classroom. Tennessee's analysis yielded a clear conclusion: Tennessee's poorest and minority schools have the least effective teachers. But, she added, the analysis allowed Tennessee to dig beneath this initial finding: The average teachers serving the state's poor and minority students are even less effective than the least effective teachers in low-poverty, low-minority schools. And the most effective teachers in the poor and minority schools? Also less effective than affluent schools' least effective teachers. Dr. McCargar said that Tennessee now links teacher effect scores back to individual teacher preparation programs, which will help the state determine where improvements need to be made within these programs.

Dr. McCargar said that the department's analysis helped Tennessee identify six districts with the highest inequities. The department then brought together a broad range of stakeholders, from Title I and Title II directors to human resources directors from each district, so they could all be in the same room and talk. She emphasized that this step is crucial and to a state's advantage because some of these stakeholders bring a stronger set of resources to the table than what the state might have access to.

Special session: *The Schools Teachers Leave: Teacher Mobility in Chicago Public Schools*

Christopher Mazzeo, Ph.D., associate director for policy and research at the Consortium for Chicago School Research, discussed the consortium's brand-new report on teacher mobility (http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/content/publications.php?pub_id=134)—an issue that factors into the inequitable distribution of teachers. Dr. Mazzeo, one of the report's coauthors, outlined the research questions the report sought to answer: Why do teachers stay at or leave the schools they begin their careers in? What are the school and contextual factors?

Dr. Mazzeo and his coauthors examined Chicago Public School personnel records from 2002–03 through 2006–07 (excluding charter schools) and looked for relationships between the proportions of teachers who stayed at the studied schools from one year to the next and the differences in the conditions at those schools.

The report examines a broad array of working conditions, including relationships among teachers, with parents, and with students. Some of the findings were that about 80 percent of Chicago Public School teachers remain in their school each year and fewer than half remain four years later. The researchers also discovered the following facts:

- Stability is related to the size of schools; teachers leave small schools more than large schools.

- Teacher stability is strongly related to the composition of the student body in the school; teachers are least likely to stay in schools that have both high populations of African American students and low levels of student achievement.
- Teachers are more likely to stay in schools they view as good environments for doing their jobs, specifically those with a high degree of teacher–principal collaboration and teacher–parent collaboration, and where students feel safe and engage in appropriate academic behaviors.

Questions That Emerged During the Workshop

The workshop generated many questions—some arising from a presentation and others prompted during working sessions. Some of those questions we have listed below with responses. We will post other questions and responses at our website: <http://www.tqsource.org/tqResources.php> in the coming weeks. The site will also provide an opportunity to submit questions you might have about equitable distribution.

Q: Since leadership effectiveness is such a key component or factor contributing to turnover, it obviously needs to be evaluated. Is there any standardized, valid measure of leadership effectiveness?

A: **Sabrina Laine** fielded this question, saying that a number of leadership evaluation systems are being developed with funding from foundations—The Wallace Foundation in particular. **Dr. Goe** said that Ohio has developed a set of statewide leadership standards that are mentioned in the brief she wrote with **Dr. Imazeki**, *The Distribution of Highly Qualified, Experienced Teachers: Challenges and Opportunities* in the section on Ohio. The Council of Chief State School Officers also has standards on this issue.

Q: What are some good resources for helping us collect and analyze data?

A: **Cortney Rowland** pointed out that the TQ Center offers two resources that address data collection and analysis in detail: *Revising the Equitable Distribution Component in Your State’s Plan for Highly Qualified Teachers* (<http://www.tqsource.org/TeacherDistributionPlanningTool.pdf>) and *Revising State Highly Qualified Teacher Plans: Answers to Commonly Asked Questions* (<http://www.tqsource.org/webcasts/hqtPlans/hqtFAQ.pdf>).

Q: Is there a difference between pedagogy and content when determining teacher effectiveness?

A: **Dr. Goe** said yes; a teacher can have much subject-area knowledge but lack the pedagogical skills for teaching it effectively.

These other workshop questions and responses will be posted at our website, <http://www.tqsource.org/tqResources.php>, by August 10, 2009—check the website for more information in the coming weeks.

Q: How do states distinguish and track high-poverty and high-minority schools? Are they muddled together because of a high correlation between the two?

- Q:** How do other states handle “experienced” teachers who switch to teaching a new subject area (e.g., a seventh-year, highly qualified history teacher is now teaching English)? Do they count that teacher as experienced even if this is his/her first year teaching that subject matter?
- Q:** Other than student achievement, what is likely to factor into “highly effective?”
- Q:** How can we make university-based teacher preparation programs more accountable for producing highly qualified teachers?

Dinner and Keynote Address: An Interactive Session

The dinner keynote address was initiated by **Robin Chait**, associate director for teacher quality at the Center for American Progress. **Chait** began by discussing the Center for American Progress interest in the issue of teacher quality and effectiveness, specifically its work in developing policies for recruiting and retaining high-quality, effective teachers in high-poverty schools. Chait summarized strategies specific to these efforts that are in her report, *Ensuring Effective Teachers for All Students: Six State Strategies for Attracting and Retaining Effective Teachers in High-Poverty and High-Minority Schools* (http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/05/effective_teachers.html).

Chait then introduced keynote speaker **Brad Jupp**, senior program adviser on teacher effectiveness and quality at the U.S. Department of Education (ED), whose address took the form of an interactive session. Jupp noted that equitable distribution is a federal priority, most visible in the details of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. He said that the work of teachers can be divided into three categories, which may be helpful when crafting teacher quality policies:

- Inputs (what teachers bring to the job, e.g., qualifications)
- Processes (practice)
- Outcomes (student performance)

Jupp said that when determining the difference between quality and effectiveness, it is helpful to think about quality in terms of inputs, and to evaluate teacher effectiveness in terms of processes, such as lesson plans, pedagogy, how a lesson is carried out. He added that effectiveness is defined in part by student outcomes.

Jupp told participants that ED is in the midst of a lengthy and systematic process of seeking input on its policy direction even as it fleshes out that direction. He noted that Secretary Arne Duncan has been on a listening tour and has made four policy framing speeches: one to governors on new standards; another to the research community on data; a third to charter school authorizers on turning around underperforming schools; and a final speech to the National Education Association on teacher effectiveness (<http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2009/07/07022009.html>). Jupp then asked participants to tell him what ED should do on the issue of inequitable distribution of teachers. Specifically, he asked state teams to answer the following questions:

- What aspects of our direction are you most prepared to enact?

Responses:

- We have strong mentoring and induction and feel we are well positioned on retention.
 - We work with teacher preparation institutions.
 - We already have teacher effect scores from matching teachers with their students' achievement scores; our next step is to move to the “process” part of this work.
 - We are prepared to implement job-embedded professional development, specifically, professional learning communities.
- What aspects are you least prepared to enact?

Responses:

- We need to put together a data system that links professional development to other resources we have devoted to teacher development so that we can measure the impact.
 - It is difficult to get to every step of the teacher training continuum, from induction to effectiveness.
 - We are not prepared to move from teacher quality to teacher effectiveness.
 - Alignment between the governor and the SEA can be challenging.
 - Fidelity of implementation at the school level is the greatest concern. Jupp suggested states examine how they can ensure that schools are equipped to take more responsibility for reviewing the quality of their own implementation.
 - Frequently these conversations emphasize doing things rapidly, but we need adequate time to evaluate whether our work is effective.
 - Preparing students for 21st century workplace skills; professional development is not preparing teachers to teach these skills.
 - Our teacher evaluation system was recently implemented. But we do not have the funds to do the kinds of evaluation and research to measure the outcomes. If we do not qualify as a Race to the Top state, where do we get the funds to prove that what we are doing works?
- What are your assets as you prepare for the future?

Responses:

- We already have a transformative education agenda. ARRA funds have come at the right time.
 - We have only 24 districts in our state and a great history of collaboration.
 - The content provided by the TQ Center and the other comprehensive centers helps.
- What obstacles are in your way?

Responses:

- We need to know how to bridge the gap between teacher quality and teacher effectiveness. Jupp suggested that perhaps this is not only a state-level concern and posited that it may be something for LEAs to determine.
- We need funding and resources so we can provide technical assistance and do evaluations.
- Political gridlock: For example, Race to the Top funds are directed at governors and districts, so what is an SEA to do when its work is not aligned with the governor's office's agenda and thus it does not get the needed funds from the governor?
- The definition of high-need schools and LEAs in opportunities such as Teacher Quality Partnership Grants. The definitions preclude some places from participating that could really benefit from the opportunity. There is hope that this same definition is not used for the Teacher Incentive Fund.
- Not enough monitoring or oversight of teacher preparation programs; these programs need to prove they are effectively preparing teachers.
- Large universities win more competitive grants than small colleges.
- IHE grants are not designed to foster partnerships.
- Fragmentation: ARRA's four assurances cover a lot of territory.
- What would you like ED to learn?

Responses:

- Put the focus back on intellectual engagement when it comes to professional development. There is too much focus on procedural learning.
- I wish there was an ED representative at every meeting.
- The more ED can do to use the comprehensive centers to support states in meeting the assurances, the better.
- Help rural schools as well as urban schools.
- Look at best practices for teacher preparation, recruitment, and professional development in countries with top-performing schools and learn from them.
- Do not forget the top 5 percent of students; they have room to grow and improve, too.
- Help us make collaboration between states more feasible.

TQ Center Resources and Technical Assistance Opportunities

The TQ Center website has been reorganized by topic area, one of which is equitable distribution of teachers (www.tqsource.org). Visit the new TA Toolbox page (<http://www.tqsource.org/toolbox.php>) to find equitable distribution resources and to find out how the TQ Center can provide technical assistance on this issue—including examples of assistance we have provided to other regional comprehensive centers and states.