



# Straight A's

Public Education Policy And Progress



## **ALLIANCE RELEASES TEACHER PAPER: *Tapping the Potential: Retaining and Developing High-Quality New Teachers***

American schools spend more than \$2.6 billion annually replacing teachers who have dropped out of the teaching profession. At a Capitol Hill briefing last week, the Alliance for Excellent Education released a new report that cites comprehensive induction, especially in a teacher's first two years on the job, as the single most effective strategy to stem the rapidly increasing teacher attrition rate.

The report, *Tapping the Potential: Retaining and Developing High-Quality New Teachers*, includes federal policy recommendations, in-depth analysis of new teacher induction practices, and four case studies of successful teacher induction programs that are already in place:

**Connecticut BEST, the Santa Cruz Teacher Project (California), Tangipahoa FIRST (Louisiana), and the Toledo Plan (Ohio).**

Representatives from the Alliance for Excellent Education were joined at the briefing by **U.S. Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI), Tom Carroll, president of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future**, and nationally recognized **University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education researcher and professor Richard Ingersoll**.

“Placing new teachers in the most challenging classrooms without comprehensive induction and expecting them to perform like experienced teachers is like putting newly licensed drivers in a NASCAR race,” said **Susan Frost, president of the Alliance for Excellent Education**. “If we are to achieve our national goal of providing an equitable education to children across this nation, it is critical that efforts be concentrated on developing and retaining high-quality teachers in every community and at every grade level.”

According to the report, one out of every two new teachers will quit within five years. About 207,000 teachers—nearly 6 percent of the teaching workforce—will not return to teaching next fall. Research shows that comprehensive induction cuts attrition rates in half and develops new teachers more rapidly into highly skilled, experienced professionals. Induction has been shown to create a payoff of \$1.37 for every \$1 invested; however, only 1 percent of beginning teachers currently receive the ongoing training and support that constitutes comprehensive induction when they enter the teaching profession.

The complete report is available at <http://www.all4ed.org/publications/reports/TappingThePotential.pdf>.



## **A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME?: A Closer Look at Comprehensive Induction**

Attrition is the result of a much larger problem faced by new teachers. In America, teachers are expected to be experts ready to tackle the biggest challenges on their first teaching day.

Beginning teachers are routinely assigned the most difficult classrooms, full of low-performing students at risk of falling behind or dropping out. Often these teachers are given little, if any, professional support, feedback, or demonstration of what it takes to help their students achieve.

Doctors serve internships and residencies. Military recruits go through basic training. American teachers, too, need formal on-the-job training and evaluation. Comprehensive induction integrates beginners into the profession by guiding their work, further developing their skills, and evaluating their performance during the first few years of teaching.

Comprehensive induction programs have been proven to make a huge difference in retaining new teachers and improving their teaching ability. However, while some schools claim to have a comprehensive induction plan in place, closer examination reveals that most programs are anything but comprehensive. As William Shakespeare wrote, “That which we call a rose / By any other name would smell as sweet.” However, when examining a comprehensive induction program, a more appropriate adage might be, “Don’t judge a book by its cover.”

Comprehensive induction is not a crash course in teaching. Teachers need to be prepared with content knowledge and teaching skills before they enter the classroom. But just as induction is not a substitute for quality preparation, neither is preparation a substitute for quality induction. Induction is also not an orientation session. “Here’s the copier, here’s the teacher’s lounge, here’s your classroom. Go teach,” is not an example of a comprehensive induction program. Neither should stand-alone mentoring programs or a string of disconnected one-day workshops be considered proper induction.

The bottom line is that comprehensive induction programs must consist of a combination of high-quality mentoring, professional development and support, and formal assessments for new teachers during their first two years of teaching. With these elements in place, a comprehensive induction program can keep more quality teachers in the profession, weed out poor teachers, teach beginning teachers clinical, practical skills, build a community of teachers who are also learners, help teachers adjust to their individual school, and orient teachers in the efficacy and worth of their profession.

### **The Next Logical Step: Why the Federal Government Should Take a Role in Comprehensive Induction**

Historically, the federal government has worked to ensure that every child has equal access to a quality education, no matter where they live or how wealthy their school may be. Recently, this attention to equity has expanded to include efforts to improve teacher quality. The next logical step in the federal government’s teacher-quality role is to call for the provision of high-quality induction for every teacher and to fund this provision in high-need schools.

There is no question that the implementation of effective, comprehensive induction can make a critical difference in our schools’ ability to attract and retain high-quality teachers. But many

districts, facing increasingly tight budgets, find it difficult to allocate the necessary resources to develop, implement, and maintain comprehensive induction programs.

In *Tapping the Potential*, the Alliance recommends that states and school districts use funds from Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (now the No Child Left Behind Act) to provide comprehensive induction to beginning teachers during at least their first two years of teaching. For fiscal 2004, Title II of NCLB is funded at \$2.9 billion. In his budget for fiscal 2005, President Bush asked for no increase in funding for the program.

Another way to provide support for comprehensive induction programs would be through a change in Title II of the Higher Education Act (HEA), which is in the process of being reauthorized by Congress. Currently, Title II provides Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants to partnerships of postsecondary institutions and high-need school districts for improving the recruitment and preparation of K–12 teachers. All future partnership grants could require recipients to provide comprehensive induction that includes the quality criteria outlined in the report.

Finally, Congress should provide additional funding to ensure that every new teacher in our nation’s high-need schools receives comprehensive induction. These teachers are most at risk of leaving the profession, with a rate of attrition almost 50 percent higher than teachers in wealthier schools. As a result of this high teacher attrition and inadequate induction in high-need schools, poor, urban, and minority children are taught by less experienced, less qualified teachers who often do not stay long enough to become the expert, high-quality teachers their students desperately need.



### **NEW PROGRAM TO PLACE “LEAD TEACHERS” INTO NEW YORK CITY SCHOOLS: Master Teachers Will Teach, but Also Serve as Mentors**

As part of a yearlong pilot program starting this September, “lead teachers” in New York City will receive \$10,000 in addition to their regular salary to teach and mentor other teachers in low-performing schools. The program, a joint collaboration between the **United Federation of Teachers (UFT)**, the **U.S. Department of Education**, and a community group, will hire as many as three dozen teachers to work in nine elementary schools and one middle school in the Bronx. If successful, the program could serve as a possible model for the rest of New York City schools.

The lead teacher program was initiated by the **Community Collaborative**, a Bronx-based organization that represents local community organizations. Program officials are confident that the lead teacher approach will help to improve struggling schools and student achievement. They believe the career advancement opportunities and innovative pay incentives will attract and retain master teachers in the profession.

“My son’s teacher wasn’t bad,” said **Denise Moncrief, one of the two parent leaders of the Community Collaborative**. “She was just fresh out of school. There are outstanding teachers, but even they can need guidance, someone to bounce ideas off or say she’s having trouble, because you can’t go to a supervisor for that. That dynamic won’t work.”

## New Program to Place “Lead Teachers” into New York City Schools

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Lead teachers must have at least five years of teaching experience. They will be vetted by a committee of administrators, parents, and teachers, and individual school principals will have veto power over the committee’s choice. Two lead teachers will be assigned to each participating elementary and middle school. They will spend half of their time sharing a classroom with another lead teacher and the other half providing professional support to other teachers at the school. Lead teachers assigned to the middle school will teach three regular classes a day and provide support and assistance to other teachers for the three remaining periods.

The U.S. Department of Education provided \$1.6 million to the school district to help pay for the program. The Community Collaborative will contribute at least \$200,000, with private foundations expected to provide the remaining money needed to pay the program’s estimated \$2 million price tag.

Read the press release from the UFT at <http://www.uft.org/?fid=197&tf=1138&nart=1494>.

### Comprehensive Induction in Practice: A Closer Look into the Trenches

Comprehensive induction can be delivered in a variety of forms. *Tapping the Potential* features four case studies of effective induction programs:

**Connecticut BEST:** New teachers in this program are inducted over two or, if needed, three years, when they present portfolios documenting their teaching as a basis for the award of a provisional license to continue teaching. Teachers are supported with well-trained mentors, content-specific seminars, and, in some districts, “senior advisors” who are released from their normal teaching duties to work intensely with three to five new teachers.

**Santa Cruz New Teacher Project (SCNTP) at the University of California at Santa Cruz:** The New Teacher Center provides induction services to every beginning teacher in the Santa Cruz school district through the University of California at Santa Cruz. The program has expanded to include other districts across the nation. SCNTP rigorously selects and trains mentors to support new teachers as undergraduates in education programs, as fifth-year “residents” during their certification year after receiving a bachelor’s degree, and as beginning teachers for their first two years in the Santa Cruz school district. Mentors also administer assessments to new teachers to evaluate their work.

**Tangipahoa FIRST:** Every new teacher in Louisiana is assigned a mentor who guides them through their first years of teaching and prepares them to be assessed by the state. This program is called LaTAAP (Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program). A separate induction program, Louisiana FIRST (Framework for Inducting, Retaining, and Supporting Teachers), provides a variety of supports to new teachers in school districts who apply for and receive state grant money. The case study in *Tapping the Potential* looks at Tangipahoa Parish, a rural district in Louisiana, to see how induction works in remote areas through both LaTAAP and LaFIRST.

**The Toledo Plan:** The Toledo (Ohio) Plan is a cooperative project between the Toledo school district and the Toledo Federation of Teachers. New teachers are considered interns, and are supported by mentors and reviewed as to their effectiveness at the end of their first year. At the end of the year, a Board of Review, composed of administrators and teacher leaders, examines the progress of each teacher and decides whether or not to renew their contracts. The Toledo Plan also identifies poorly performing teachers and provides them mentored support.

A more complete look at these four case studies, as well as additional examples of successful comprehensive induction programs, is available in the complete report at <http://www.all4ed.org/publications/reports/TappingThePotential.html>.



## **A MATTER OF DEGREES: New Ed Trust Report Finds Low College Graduation Rates for All Students, Particularly for Low-Income and Minority Students**

While postsecondary enrollments have grown dramatically since 1975, barely six out of ten (63 percent) of first-time full-time degree-seeking college freshmen graduate in six years or less, according to a new report from the Education Trust. The report, *A Matter of Degrees: Improving Graduation Rates in Four-Year Colleges and Universities*, also found that among low-income and minority students, graduation rates were much lower. Only 54 percent of low-income students graduated within six years, and African-American and Latino students' graduation rates were even worse, at 46 percent and 47 percent, respectively.

“Our higher education system is a world-class system and is a great asset to the general welfare and quality of our society,” said **Kevin Carey, senior policy analyst at the Education Trust and author of the report**. “But it is failing to graduate the numbers of students needed if we are to continue to compete in a global economy. And a disproportionate amount of these students are low-income and minority students. For both moral and economic reasons, we must change the way we do business in higher education in this country.”

The report found that the United States, in failing to improve its graduation rate, is almost unique among industrialized countries. Additionally, the United States is one of the only countries where twenty-five- to thirty-five-year-olds are essentially no more likely to have a college degree than forty-five- to fifty-four-year-olds.

According to the report, graduation rates vary widely—from 10 percent to almost 100 percent—from institution to institution. Nearly 20 percent of all four-year institutions graduate *fewer than one-third* of their first-time, full-time degree-seeking freshmen in six years or less. When broken down along ethnic background, the results at some colleges and universities are appalling. For example, of the 772 U.S. colleges and universities in which at least 5 percent of the full-time undergraduates are African-American:

- 299 have a graduation rate for African-American students under 30 percent;
- 164 have a graduation rate for African-American students under 20 percent; and
- 68 have a graduation rate for African-American students under 10 percent.

The numbers are similar for Hispanic students: 25 percent of all institutions with 5 percent Latino students have a Latino graduation rate of less than 30 percent.

In a bit of good news, the report does highlight a few high-performing institutions that have significantly higher graduation rates than their peer institutions, have worked to close racial and socioeconomic gaps in graduation numbers, or have made significant improvement in graduation rates over time. Some highlighted institutions include **Elizabeth City State University** in North Carolina, the **University of Northern Iowa**, **Binghamton University** in New York, and the **University of Florida**.

*A Matter of Degrees* (Continued from p. 5)

The report also makes recommendations to help improve outcomes in postsecondary institutions:

- **focus on “real accountability in higher education”**—the report asks state policymakers and higher education leaders to concentrate on closing gaps for low-income and minority students and to collectively commit to making comprehensive and significant improvements in higher education graduation rates for all students;
- **improve alignment between K–12 and higher education**, which includes states and districts working together to increase rigorous academic course taking in high school;
- **continue to improve access and affordability**;
- **continue to increase the quality of learning**;
- **change the way public institutions are funded**—the report argues that states should base funding on student progression through school and graduation rates rather than the number of students enrolled; and
- **invest in more and better information.**

The data in *A Matter of Degrees* were collected by the **U.S. Department of Education’s Graduation Rate Survey (GRS)** and made available to the public disaggregated by race for the first time this year. With the report, the Education Trust marked the launch of its work in higher education. Its new initiative will focus on the policies and practices needed to improve higher education outcomes, particularly for low-income and minority students, who have been traditionally underrepresented in American colleges and universities.

The complete report is available at

<http://www2.edtrust.org/EdTrust/Product+Catalog/special+reports.htm#highered>.

**On the Bookshelf: *Double the Numbers: Increasing Postsecondary Credentials for Underrepresented Youth***

As high school students around the country are graduating this year, a new book from Jobs for the Future (JFF) cautions that the high school diploma—as elusive as it still remains for too many high school students—is no longer an adequate educational endpoint for any of the country’s youth. *Double the Numbers: Increasing Postsecondary Credentials for Underrepresented Youth* urges the United States to “double the numbers” of low-income and minority youth who go on to college or some other form of postsecondary training or education.

“This is not just a personal tragedy for young people who get sold short on their futures,” said **Hilary Pennington, CEO of Jobs for the Future**. “It constitutes a crisis for the entire country—because our collective future rests on the future employment and civic engagement of *all* our young people.”

The contributing authors of *Double the Numbers* focus on state policy and examine how to help motivate older adolescents in school settings, overcome the rigidities of high school schedules and routines, and prepare students for smooth transitions to postsecondary learning and success. According to JFF, the focus on state policy is necessary because doubling the numbers will “require aggressive innovation by the states.”

An upcoming publication from the Economic Policy Institute, *The State of Working America*, underscores JFF’s argument that a high school diploma, by itself, is insufficient in the economy of the twenty-first century. It finds that from 1979 to 2003, the inflation-adjusted hourly wages earned by recent high school graduates fell by 17.4 percent among men and 4.9 percent among women.

More information on *Double the Numbers*, including ordering information, is available at [http://www.jff.org/jff/newsroom/PR/2004/PR\\_6\\_2\\_2004.html](http://www.jff.org/jff/newsroom/PR/2004/PR_6_2_2004.html).



## **D.C. VOUCHER PROGRAM UNABLE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF AREA SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

This fall, about 1,200 low-income Washington, D.C., students will receive grants of up to \$7,500 toward tuition at private schools. However, not all applicants received awards. In fact, only 296 slots were available for the 540 public school students who applied from grades six through twelve. For grades in which applicants exceed available spaces, voucher recipients were selected through a lottery.

High school students who received vouchers through the program can use their award at one of the following high schools: Academy for Ideal Education, Archbishop Carroll High School, Dupont Park Adventist School, Georgetown Visitation School, Gonzaga College High School, Sidwell Friends School, St. Anselm's Abbey School, and St. John's College High School. Because these were the only schools that had available space and were willing to accept randomly assigned students with vouchers, only ninety-five high school students received vouchers through the program. While tuition and fees at many of the participating private high schools are higher than the \$7,500 grant, students can work with the Washington Scholarship Fund, the nonprofit organization running the program, to try to obtain the additional funds they will need through individual, foundation, and corporate sources.

When the voucher legislation was passed last fall, Congress provided enough money for at least 1,600 students to receive scholarships in the first year of the program. The program received 1,721 applicants, but 521 students were already enrolled in private schools. While students in private schools are eligible for the vouchers, they must meet certain guidelines to receive them. In the end, the Washington Scholarship Fund decided to award only 200 scholarships to students in private schools.

According to **Sally J. Sachar, president and chief executive of the Washington Scholarship Fund**, no more than two-thirds of the available voucher money will be distributed this year. The remaining funds will be rolled over to next year and will provide an estimated 500 to 900 additional vouchers next fall.

### **Related D.C. School News**

Congress has placed a temporary hold on \$10.6 million that was pledged to D.C. Public Schools to “complement the new federally funded school voucher program, saying a proposed school spending plan is unacceptable,” according to the *Washington Post*. According to a letter signed by four key members of Congress, the money will be released to the next superintendent as part of a “reserve fund,” with no strings attached.

Earlier this month, the District school board voted unanimously to begin negotiations with Carl A. Cohn to become the city’s next superintendent. However, late last week, Cohn, who served as superintendent of schools in Long Beach, California, for a decade, abruptly withdrew from consideration and left city officials without a viable contender for superintendent.

**Straight A’s: Public Education Policy and Progress** is a biweekly newsletter that focuses on education news and events both in Washington, D.C., and around the country. The format makes information on federal education policy accessible to everyone from elected officials and policymakers to parents and community leaders. The Alliance for Excellent Education is a nonprofit organization working to make it possible for America’s secondary school students to achieve high standards and graduate prepared for college and success in life.



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