

# STRENGTHENING THE TEACHING PROFESSION IN KENTUCKY

A Report of the Prichard Committee  
Team on Teacher Effectiveness

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nothing that happens in school matters more than quality teaching in determining whether a student has a successful or mediocre educational experience. But no single policy or practice will ensure Kentucky achieves its goal of giving every child an effective teacher every year. Instead, progress can be assured only from initiatives that recognize and support the interrelated nature of the elements involved in recruiting, preparing, supporting and retaining high-quality teachers.

The Prichard Committee Team on Teacher Effectiveness conducted a 14-month review of the array of issues that affect the state's efforts to expand its workforce of high-quality teachers. Specifically, the Team reviewed the following areas:

- Recruitment/Preparation
- Hiring/Induction/Internship
- Professional Development/Leadership
- Retention/Working Conditions
- Compensation
- Tenure
- Evaluation/Student Achievement

The Team's work culminated in the development of recommendations for improvements in policies and practices to help Kentucky build and sustain a high-quality teacher workforce. Some of the recommendations would require legislative action while others suggest regulatory or programmatic changes. In many instances, financing would be a key factor – raising an issue of particular concern for the Team as well as for educators and advocates statewide: school funding.

School funding levels have dropped consistently in Kentucky over the past several years, resulting in cuts in such vital areas as school staffing, professional development, textbooks and technology as well as in teachers' economic benefits. The declining investment in our future threatens to reverse the progress the state has made in student learning and national rankings.

This situation cannot be allowed to continue if we are to create a strong and prosperous future for our state and its citizens.

### Recommendations of the Team on Teacher Effectiveness

To recruit more high-performing candidates to teacher preparation programs, the Team recommends:

- ◆ **A public-private informational campaign to raise awareness of the need for high-quality teaching in all areas and of the benefits of entering the profession and to build greater respect for teaching and teachers**

To upgrade the preparation of teachers, the Team recommends:

- ◆ **Providing earlier clinical and field experiences for teacher education candidates to provide more hands-on opportunities and ensuring the quality of those experiences**
- ◆ **Requiring deeper content knowledge for elementary, middle, secondary and special education teacher candidates**
- ◆ **Encouraging/requiring universities to give arts and sciences faculty members more tenure and service credit to work in local school districts to assist new teachers with subject-matter content delivery**

To better support new teachers, the Team recommends:

- ◆ **The Education Professional Standards Board establish clearer methods to continuously evaluate and streamline the documentation requirements for Kentucky Teacher Internship Program**
- ◆ **The EPSB and school districts ensure that every teacher has a qualified mentor and that the mentoring relationship continue for a teacher's first three years on the job**
- ◆ **New teachers be given more opportunities to work with master teachers during the initial years of their career**
- ◆ **District leaders address new teachers' need for additional support as identified in the TELL (Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning) Kentucky survey**

- ◆ **Districts and schools be discouraged from assigning new teachers to the schools and/or classes with the most challenging teaching situations, which may include the lowest-performing students**

To improve professional learning opportunities for teachers, the Team recommends:

- ◆ **Supporting school districts and councils in their implementation of the recommendations of the Kentucky Department of Education addressing a comprehensive professional learning system for educators <http://education.ky.gov/curriculum/lit/Documents/Comprehensive%20System%20Final%2010-25-12.pdf>**

To providing meaningful educator evaluation, the Team recommends:

- ◆ **Supporting the Kentucky Department of Education and school districts' implementation of the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System for teachers and principals**
- ◆ **Encouraging the creation of a program to raise awareness of the new system**
- ◆ **Conducting a cost-benefit analysis to determine district costs of the new system**

To assess and address issues related to educator working conditions, the Team recommends:

- ◆ **Continued encouragement of teachers to participate in the TELL survey to produce the most complete information about school working conditions**
- ◆ **Scheduling the survey to conclude by the end of March before school personnel decisions are made**
- ◆ **Continued and expanded dissemination of the TELL survey results, with guidance to schools and districts in using the data to further improve working conditions for educators and learning conditions for students**
- ◆ **A review/expansion of the time provided teachers for review and study, individually and in teams, to improve instruction**

To professionalize the teacher compensation system, the Team recommends:

- ◆ **Developing career pathways to professionalize teacher pay levels and encouraging the adoption of differentiated pay scales to reflect teacher expertise and activities and the status of teaching as a true profession**

The Team reached no conclusion on whether tenure should be retained or eliminated but recommends:

- ◆ **Conducting a complete review of teacher tenure in Kentucky to determine what, if any, changes are needed that would benefit the teaching profession and student learning**

## The Vanguard Initiative

The Team initially considered proposing a demonstration project to incorporate various elements of its recommendations for elevating the teaching profession. As its work continued, the Team became aware of the proposed Vanguard initiative and concluded that its provisions offer an important opportunity to move Kentucky forward in the critical area of quality teaching.

The Team endorses the Vanguard project and will work on behalf of its implementation. Elements of the project range from a redesign of teacher training programs to regulatory structures that support career pathways for teachers to subject-matter specialization for elementary teachers to enhanced professional development and numerous others. A more detailed overview of the project is included in this report.

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Without question, Kentucky has made significant, measurable progress in improving education on multiple fronts. While we celebrate that progress, we remain vigilant in tackling the many challenges that remain. It is critical that steps to elevate the teaching profession be taken as soon as possible, whether through the Vanguard project or other initiatives. Finally, as noted earlier, the Team encourages Kentucky's leaders to restore education funding and once again make investing in our schools Kentucky's top public policy priority to ensure the state reaches its goals for excellence.

## PREFACE

Nothing that happens in school matters more than quality teaching in determining whether a Kentucky student has a successful or mediocre educational experience. If Kentucky reaches its goal of delivering educational excellence to every student in every classroom it will be the result of having well prepared and supported teachers working in those classrooms.

As it has in the past, Kentucky is taking a leadership role in embracing new initiatives and tougher academic standards designed to improve students' preparation for college and career. The effort is tantamount to the groundbreaking changes effected through the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990. Teachers have held the keys to the significant progress Kentucky has made since then, and their importance to Kentucky's continued improvement cannot be overstated.

Kentucky is fortunate to have many high-performing teachers in its classrooms, and there are innovative programs planned or underway to support and expand their quality work. But the state needs to attract, prepare and support many more individuals who will perform at these high levels and provide pathways to excellence for those already in the profession who need to improve their instructional practice. The purpose of this report – and of the work of the Prichard Committee Team on Teacher Effectiveness – is to provide a framework for Kentucky's elected leaders and other policymakers to use to achieve those goals.

Some of the recommendations included here would require legislative action while others suggest regulatory or programmatic changes. In many instances, financing the recommendations would be a key factor, a reality that raises an issue of particular concern for the Team on Teacher Effectiveness as well as for educators and advocates statewide: school funding.

Kentucky's school children and the teachers they count on have been supported with fewer and fewer state dollars over the past several years. Funding levels have dropped consistently, resulting in cuts in such vital areas as school staffing, professional development for teachers, textbooks and technology as well as in teachers' economic benefits. This declining investment in our

future threatens to reverse the progress the state has made in student learning and national rankings. Evidence of that was clear in the respected *Education Week's* latest rating. Kentucky schools were ranked 10th in the nation in the 2013 Quality Counts based on the state's grades in such categories as achievement and alignment. In school spending, however, Kentucky earned an F.

That failing grade – reflecting an insufficient investment in our schools – will make it difficult if not impossible to achieve the goals set out in this report and in such forward-looking legislative directives as Senate Bill 1 enacted in 2009. That legislation set Kentucky on the path to adopting more rigorous academic standards that are now in place in our classrooms.

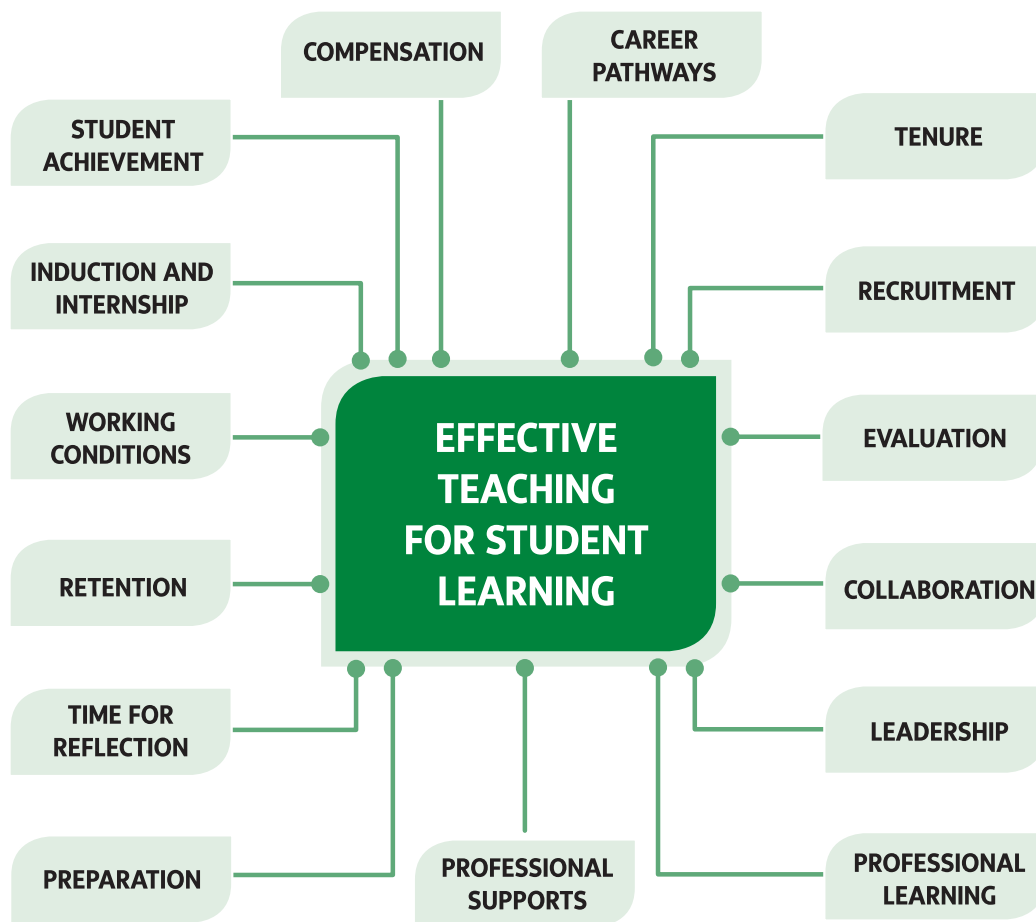
This situation cannot be allowed to continue if we are to build on the hard-earned progress our schools have made to create a strong and prosperous future for our state and its citizens.

## INTRODUCTION

No change, reform, redirection or improvement in any single policy or practice – no matter how well designed or well intended – will ensure Kentucky achieves its goal of giving every child an effective teacher every year. Instead, progress can be assured only from initiatives that recognize and support the interrelated nature of the elements involved in recruiting, preparing, supporting and retaining high-quality teachers. Significant and sustainable change must address the whole – not tinker around the edges.

That reality became clear during the 14-month review undertaken by the Prichard Committee Team on Teacher Effectiveness of the array of issues that affect the state's efforts to expand its workforce of high-quality teachers.

The team's review was designed to be comprehensive but also realistic, addressing key areas without engaging at the level of detail that would have made it impossible to ever conclude the process. That process revealed numerous opportunities for meaningful change, but the changes present significant challenges – particularly in recognition of their systemic nature.



Kentucky, however, has established itself as a pioneer in educational innovation and, as such, has a strong foundation on which to create new approaches to elevating the teaching profession. Some elements of that new approach are already underway. It is the Team’s hope that this report will accelerate Kentucky’s efforts to attract even more top-performing individuals to the state’s classrooms and keep them there as they build successful careers improving the academic achievement of students statewide.

The Team on Teacher Effectiveness reviewed studies, heard presentations from national experts and gathered information on best practices in the following areas related to building and sustaining a high-quality teacher workforce:

- Recruitment/Preparation
- Hiring/Induction/Internship
- Professional Development/Leadership

- Retention/Working Conditions
- Compensation
- Tenure
- Evaluation/Student Achievement

The Team developed two issue briefs addressing developments in specific areas: “Supporting New Teachers: The Importance of the First Year in Ensuring Success and Retention” and “Evaluating Teachers: Kentucky’s Approach to Creating a Successful System.” Elements of both briefs have been incorporated into this report.

As the work progressed, it became clear that teachers themselves can and do offer strong leadership – both for their colleagues in the classroom and for the development of policies that enhance and strengthen their profession. The continued evolution of leadership roles for teachers is an important part of any formula for progress.

The purpose of this final report is to set out the Team’s findings and recommendations on the development or redesign of programs and policies to create and sustain excellence in the teaching profession statewide.\* Although for purposes of this report the recommendations are presented in specific categories, the Team emphasizes that its focus is on systemic – not piecemeal – change. Toward that end, the Team finds great promise in the Vanguard project proposed by the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), the Kentucky Department of Education and the Education Professional Standards Board. The Team supports this collaborative effort, discussed in more detail later in this report, to address the “effectiveness, stature, professionalism and compensation of teachers and school principals,” as noted by CPE President Robert L. King.

## RECRUITING AND PREPARING TEACHERS

Identifying candidates with the potential to become outstanding teachers must begin early in their education – ideally long before they enroll in college. Barriers to effective recruiting include a lack of outreach to middle or high school students to provide information about teaching careers; a perceived lack of respect for the profession; a lack of competitive pay for teachers, especially for math and science majors who could earn more in the private sector; a lack of understanding of the non-financial benefits of being a teacher; and other challenges.

Efforts to attract more high-achieving students to teaching are underway in Kentucky. Presentations to the Team focused on the work of the Future Educators Association ([www.futureeducators.org](http://www.futureeducators.org)), through which practicing classroom teachers play an important leadership role in identifying students who are strong candidates for the profession. Teach for America ([www.teachforamerica.org](http://www.teachforamerica.org)) offers students a certification process that differs from that of traditional teachers. Teach Kentucky ([www.teachkentucky.com](http://www.teachkentucky.com)), whose mission is to recruit and retain highly motivated young people to teach in

the state’s public schools, incorporates an alternative certification pathway into its core program model.

The Team also learned about SKyTeach, Western Kentucky University’s program modeled after UTeach at the University of Texas, Austin, that works to attract STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) majors into education. The program’s co-directors are from the college of education and the arts and sciences faculty. Freshmen are offered a free course that exposes them to real elementary/secondary classrooms in their first year to see if education is a possibility for them. Once admitted to the college of education, they receive extensive support, coaching and advising along with scholarship assistance and graduate with two STEM majors and completion of the teacher preparation program. This program has attracted 42 students into the teaching profession who had not previously considered entering the field.

### The state also has several alternative certification options that include:

- Troops to Teachers, a national program that provides training and certification to candidates while they are in the military
- Exceptional work experience that may be used as the basis for certification
- On the job training partnerships between school districts and colleges and universities
- Certification of college or university faculty as high school teachers
- Alternative university programs that enroll students in postgraduate teacher preparation classes concurrently with their employment as teachers in a local district

The Team recognizes that policy changes to enhance the profession will increase its appeal to potential candidates. However, Team members also believe there is an immediate need for efforts to recruit more high-performing candidates to teacher preparation programs.

\*NOTE: Some team members represent advocacy or membership organizations that may have specific positions on some of the issues addressed in this report. The report is not meant to imply that those organizations support every team recommendation.



**To accomplish this, the Team recommends:**

- ◆ A public-private informational campaign to:
  - Attract more high-performing individuals to the profession by raising awareness of the need for high-quality teaching in all areas, but particularly in such areas as science and mathematics, and the benefits of entering the profession
  - ▲ Governor’s Scholars participants/alumni and other top-performing students should be particularly targeted
  - Build greater respect for the profession

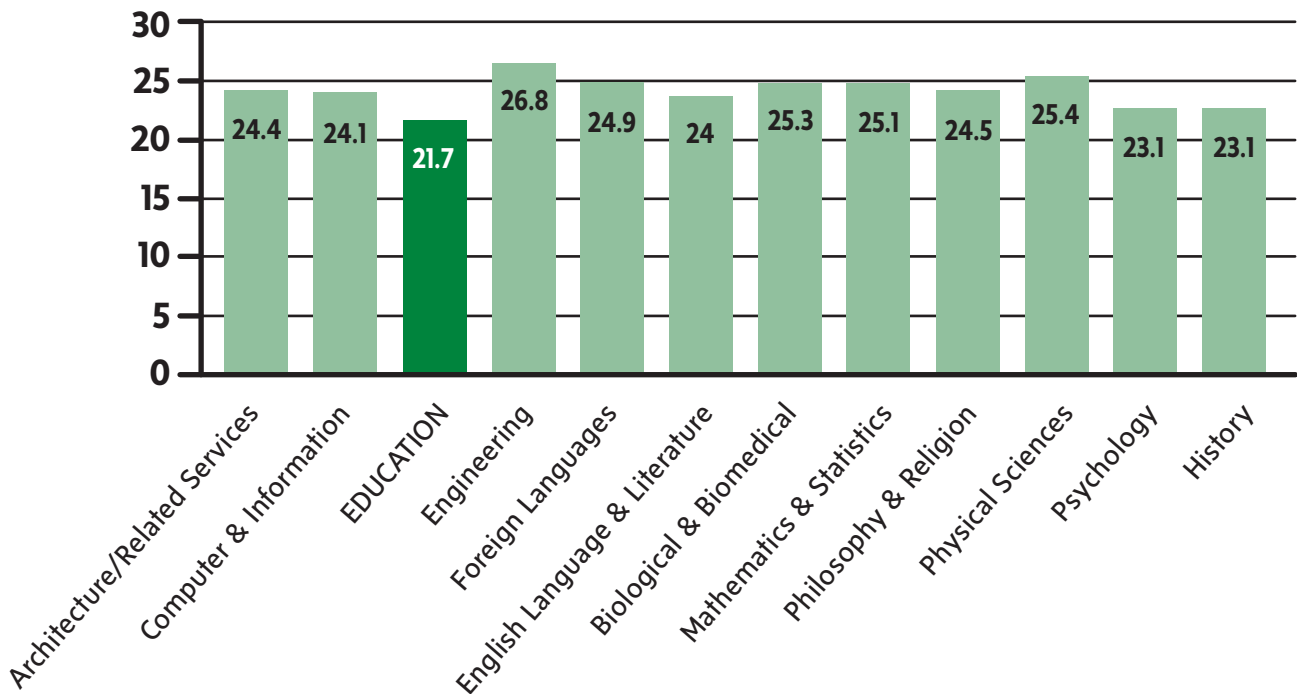
Such a campaign could be conducted through a partnership among nonprofit groups and providers of educator preparation programs. Efforts should be made to secure funding from such private-sector entities as foundations or grantmakers.

Ensuring the highest-performing students become classroom teachers is another key challenge. Research shows that, in countries with the highest-performing students, teachers usually come from the top 25 percentile of students. In the United States, teachers tend to be in the lowest third, and that is especially the case for elementary teachers.

According to a presentation by CPE President Robert L. King, education majors have among the lowest ACT scores of college students, and they are the least prepared for college work at the time of their enrollment.

**ACT SCORES BY MAJOR**

Fall 2011 Juniors & Seniors at KY 4-Year Public Institutions



It should be noted that not all teachers are identified as education majors, according to the Education Professional Standards Board. Content-area majors, as identified in the graph above, also become certified teachers.

Source: Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education Comprehensive Database System

## Current Requirements for Admission to Educator Preparation Programs

State law (KRS 161.028 and 161.030) defines the requirements for the preparation and certification of all teachers and other personnel for Kentucky's public schools. To meet those responsibilities, the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) created the Committee to Review Admissions and Clinical Experiences (CRACE) for pre-service programs in 2010 to explore best practices in two areas:

1. the selection of high-quality candidates for the teaching profession
2. the provision of high-quality clinical experiences for both traditional candidates and those seeking certification through an alternate route

The committee recommendations were included in the final report of the governor's Transforming Education in Kentucky task force and used as the basis for EPSB regulatory amendments that set higher standards for admission to all Kentucky teacher preparation programs. In addition to raising the minimum grade point average candidates must receive, the regulation requires that candidates demonstrate essential knowledge of mathematics, reading and writing prior to admission.

### Specifically, the regulation (16 KAR 5:020) requires:

- A cumulative grade point average of 2.75 on a 4.0 scale; or
- A grade point average of 3.00 on a 4.0 scale on the last 30 hours of credit completed; and
- Successful completion of the following basic knowledge tests administered by the Educational Testing Service:

*"Teacher quality matters. In fact, it is the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement."*

*Economic Policy Institute*

- Pre-Professional Skills Test: Mathematics or the Computerized Pre-Professional Skills Test: Mathematics
- Pre-Professional Skills Test: Reading or the Computerized Pre-Professional Skills Test: Reading
- Pre-Professional Skills Test: Writing or the Computerized Pre-Professional Skills Test: Writing

All teacher candidates also must complete at least 200 hours of field experiences prior to student teaching. A new online system, the Kentucky Field Experience Tracking System, provides a real-time, portable record of the teacher candidates' completion of field experiences.

Further information about teacher preparation requirements is available online from the Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board (<http://www.epsb.ky.gov/teacherprep/index.asp>).

An additional area addressed by the regulation is a requirement that candidates demonstrate a disposition essential to being an effective teacher in the areas of critical thinking, communication, creativity and collaboration. The impact of characteristics that complement academic knowledge has been studied by Teach for America to identify the traits of teachers whose students have made the most progress. That work has found that the distinguishing characteristics of such teachers are:

- A deep belief in the potential of all kids and a commitment to do whatever it takes to expand opportunities for students
- Demonstrated leadership ability and superior interpersonal skills to motivate others
- Strong achievement in academic, professional, extracurricular and/or volunteer settings
- Perseverance in the face of challenges, ability to adapt to changing environments and a strong desire to do whatever it takes to improve and develop
- Excellent critical thinking skills, including the ability to accurately link cause and effect and to generate relevant solutions to problems

- Superior organizational ability, including planning well and managing responsibilities effectively
- Respect for individuals' diverse experiences and the ability to work effectively with people from a variety of backgrounds

To elevate teaching quality at the “front end” of the preparation process, the Team recommends:

- **More stringent requirements, including candidate disposition factors, for admission to teacher education programs to result in a smaller and more highly qualified teacher candidate pool**
- **More stringent requirements for the successful completion of teacher preparation programs**

*“Great teachers aren’t born. They’re taught.”*

*Deborah Ball*

Dr. Deborah Ball, dean of the School of Education at the University of Michigan, was among the state and national educators who addressed the Team on recruiting and preparing teachers. ([www.teachingworks.org](http://www.teachingworks.org)) She encouraged the Team to embrace a different strategy to make sure there is a high-performing teacher in every classroom. Ball defines the problem – a national one – as having four elements:

1. Evidence of teaching effects has spurred increased interest in the importance of teaching.
2. Broad skepticism exists about the efficacy of teacher education and professional development.
3. Education professionals are often not effective advocates for teacher education.
4. The result: A predominant focus on recruitment, outcomes and sorting – instead of training. This does not augur well for redressing educational inequity and uneven quality.

The best training, or preparation, clearly specifies the skills, capabilities and performance quality that are required (much like the training in other professions such as airline pilots and hairdressers); provides detailed

developmental clinical training; and assesses an individual’s competence before allowing her or him to begin working.

Innovative teacher preparation programs are underway in Kentucky, including those at the University of Louisville and Asbury University.

University of Louisville representatives shared information about the university’s collaboration with J.B. Atkinson Elementary School to give UofL teacher-preparation students front-line experiences in a school classroom long before their student teaching begins. The partnership ranges from joint professional development sessions to programs focused on building and sustaining student and faculty capacity to mentoring teacher candidates by Atkinson teachers who are nationally board certified.

Asbury University also emphasizes putting students into public classrooms as early in their education as possible. Research-based and data-driven, the university’s clinical model focuses on giving students a seamless experience beginning at the freshman/sophomore level and continuing through their student teaching – always in a public school classroom. Students credit the approach with helping them be better prepared for student teaching and also – of particular significance – figuring out early whether teaching is the profession they want to pursue.

**To upgrade the preparation of teachers, the Team recommends:**

- ◆ **Providing earlier clinical and field experiences for teacher education candidates to provide more hands-on opportunities and ensuring the quality of those experiences**
- ◆ **Requiring deeper content knowledge for elementary, middle, secondary and special education teacher candidates**
- ◆ **Encouraging/requiring universities to give arts and sciences faculty members more tenure and service credit to work in local school districts to assist new teachers with subject-matter content delivery**

## SUPPORTING NEW TEACHERS

Teachers begin their careers in Kentucky under the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program (KTIP), which they must complete successfully before being eligible for certification. The program requirements are established by the Education Professional Standards Board ([www.lrc.state.ky.us/kar/016/007/010.htm](http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/kar/016/007/010.htm)) and align with the 12 teaching tasks of the Kentucky Teacher Standards ([www.epsb.ky.gov/teacherprep/standards.asp](http://www.epsb.ky.gov/teacherprep/standards.asp)).

**The tasks are organized into three categories:**

### 1. Classroom Teaching

- Teaching and Learning Context
- Lesson Plan
- Classroom Observation
- Lesson Analysis and Reflection

### 2. Professional Responsibilities

- Collaborate to Address Special Learning Needs
- Assess and Manage Professional Growth
- Leadership

### 3. Instructional Unit

- Designing the Instructional Unit
- The Assessment Plan
- Designing Instructional Strategies and Activities
- Organizing and Analyzing the Results/Reflecting on the Impact of Instruction
- Communication and Follow-up

*“Teaching is not a lost art, but the regard for it is a lost tradition.”*

*Jacques Barzun*

Through KTIP each new teacher is assigned a beginning-teacher committee composed of the school principal, a resource teacher (generally with the same certification as the intern) and a teacher educator from a state-approved institution. The committee, based on evaluation and observations conducted over the year, decides whether a teacher should be recommended for state certification.

The beginning-teacher committee also is tasked with helping the new teacher become an effective educator. The EPSB notes that KTIP “is designed to provide assistance to new teachers and support them in experiencing a successful first year in the classroom. The program strives to strengthen effective teaching skills and assist the intern teacher in recognizing behaviors that are ineffective or counterproductive to student learning.”

The resource teacher, who is required to spend at least 70 hours working with a new teacher, can play a particularly important leadership role as mentor and guide. The Kentucky TELL survey results, noted on page 12, indicate that not all new teachers are receiving the same level of support.

Determining that teachers have the skills needed to succeed in the classroom and helping them acclimate to the profession are challenging tasks under the KTIP statutory timeline of one school year. Through a federal grant obtained by EPSB, a pilot program in 2003-2006 extended the program to two years. Evaluations indicated that teachers appreciated the additional time. Kentucky has not been able to sustain the two-year program, however, due to budget constraints.

## Documentation Requirements – A Balancing Act

The internship program requires interns to document completion of the 12 teaching-standard tasks. The EPSB provides teacher interns a handbook and templates to guide the process. The requirements are a method of external validation, in part because of the high-stakes nature of the program linked to the recommendation for or against certification. Although the requirements serve a legitimate and important programmatic role, many teachers in KTIP view them as overly burdensome.

Teacher presenters to the Team referenced “five-inch notebooks” and noted the requirements resulted in diverting time and attention from tasks that would more directly improve classroom practice.

The EPSB points out that unnecessary paperwork is not a requirement of KTIP, and its staff has been working to communicate that in training sessions and with regional coordinators. EPSB conducts an ongoing review process in an effort to respond to teacher concerns. A new teacher survey is administered every two years, and findings are shared with the board and the Kentucky Advisory Council for Internships. The EPSB was quick to respond to the concerns raised by teachers and worked to revise required tasks and task templates. Members of the Prichard Committee were part of the group that led focus groups to review these updated task templates.

## Effective Support

Presentations made to the Team and results from the TELL (Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning) Kentucky survey ([www.tellkentucky.org](http://www.tellkentucky.org)) underscore the importance of effective teacher support. Support for all teachers – beginning and experienced – is critical to their ability to succeed and influences their decisions to remain in the profession. The survey results indicate that beginning teachers are helped by more-targeted support that fosters interaction and direct learning opportunities with other teachers and school professionals, such as new teacher orientation, a formal mentor/new teacher relationship, interaction with school and teacher leaders and common planning time with other teachers.

One key support system new teachers can receive is a high-quality mentor. An effective mentor can play a valuable role in a teacher’s early career experiences and success. As previously noted, the KTIP program is designed to give new teachers this mentor-like support through the teacher committee.

Although many beginning teachers participating in the TELL survey indicate that some supports are in place, the preliminary 2013 survey report notes that some teachers do not receive critical first-year support:

- Nineteen percent were not assigned a mentor; two out of 10 did not attend any orientation and one-quarter did not have access to professional learning communities.
- Of new teachers assigned to a mentor, the following percentages never worked with their mentor on:
  - Fourteen percent – analyzing student work
  - Thirteen percent – reviewing results of student assessments
  - Twelve percent – developing lesson plans or aligned lessons with state and local curriculum

It is important to note that the TELL survey defines “beginning teachers” as those who have been working from one to three years. The New Teacher Center, which conducted the survey, provided additional information for a Kentucky Board of Education retreat separating the responses of first-year teachers from the rest of the “beginning teacher” participants. The charts on page 13, from a New Teacher Center presentation on August 7, 2013, reflect the differences.

Clearly, strong support for new teachers is critical to ensuring their success and that of their students as well as their decision to remain in the profession. As one Team member, a teacher, wrote: “If we truly believe that teaching is something that requires expertise, why do we assume that teachers right out of college are fully prepared to take on a classroom?”

The mentoring elements of KTIP are valuable, but they must be available to all new teachers and continue beyond the one-year life of the program.

*“It is increasingly implausible that we could improve the performance of schools ... without promoting leadership in teaching by teachers.”*

*Judith Warren Little*

### Frequency of Mentoring Activities Reported by New Teachers Percent of respondents

Mentoring Activity	Never	Sometimes	At Least Once Per Week
Observing my mentor's teaching	35	58	8
Analyzing student work	14	55	30
Reviewing results of student assessments	13	57	29
Aligning my lesson planning with the state curriculum and local curriculum	12	51	37
Developing lesson plans	11	53	37
Addressing student or classroom behavioral issues	7	54	29
Reflecting on effectiveness of my teaching together	6	55	39
Being observed teaching by my mentor	7	81	11

TELL Kentucky 2013 Survey

The 2013 TELL survey also found that beginning teachers cited a need for additional professional learning in several areas:

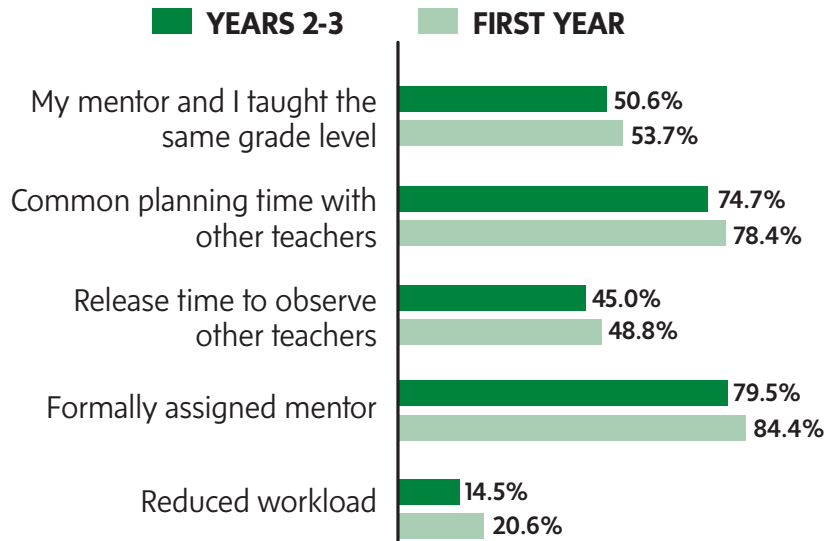
Professional Development Area	% Indicating a Need
Differentiating Instruction	72.4
Special education (disabilities)	65.5
Closing the achievement gap	69.6
Special education (gifted/talented)	62.6
Reading strategies	54.6
Methods of teaching	49.8
Student assessment	52.1
Classroom management techniques	51.3
Integrating technology into instruction	50.8
Your content area	40.4
English language learners	43.6

TELL Kentucky 2013 Survey

### The Team recommends:

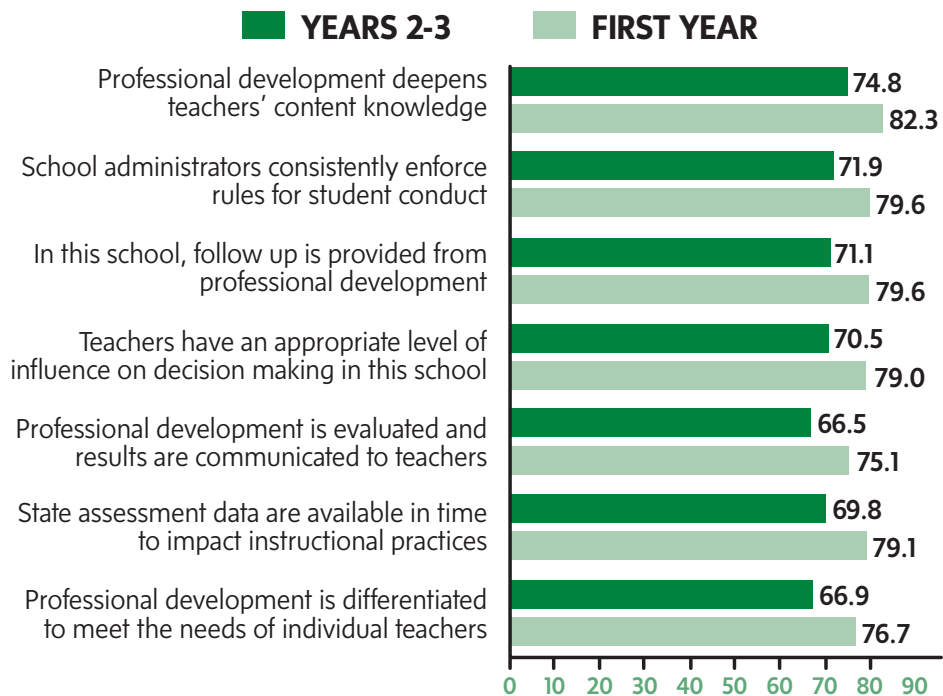
- ◆ The EPSB establish clearer methods to continuously evaluate and streamline the documentation requirements for KTIP
- ◆ The EPSB and school districts ensure that every teacher has a qualified mentor and that the mentoring relationship continue for a teacher's first three years on the job
- ◆ New teachers be given more opportunities to work with master teachers during the initial years of their career
- ◆ District leaders address new teachers' need for additional support as identified in the TELL survey
- ◆ Districts and schools be discouraged from assigning new teachers to the schools and/or classes with the most challenging teaching situations, which may include the lowest-performing students
  - Provide incentives for teachers to take on challenging assignments
  - Create disincentives for school councils and principals that persist in giving new teachers the most challenging assignments

## TYPE OF SUPPORT - GREATEST DISPARITY BETWEEN YEAR 1 AND YEARS 2, 3



TELL Kentucky 2013 Survey

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT % AGREEMENT



TELL Kentucky 2013 Survey

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

As a teacher's career progresses, one need remains fundamental through the years: quality professional learning. Often called professional development – and sometimes overlooked as an area with great impact on teaching – professional learning has been the source of frustration for many teachers who believe they do not learn ways to improve their teaching practices in the programs they are required to attend to earn the mandated number of professional learning hours.

Franklin County teacher Lauren Hill, a Team member, said being asked to be a teacher in circumstances that are different from her usual role provided some of the best professional development she has had.

Alison Crowley Wright, a Fayette County teacher and Team member, said her best professional development experience by far was going through the process to achieve National Board Certification.

And yet, its importance cannot be overstated. In its 2007 study, "How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top," McKinsey & Company identified professional development as an area where high-performing schools consistently do well. As one policymaker in a rapidly improving system told the researchers: "The three pillars of the reform were professional development, professional development, professional development. ...We aligned everything – resources, organization, people – with professional development."

Stephanie Hirsh, executive director of Learning Forward, provided the following definition of effective professional learning in a presentation to the Team:

- Aligned with rigorous state academic standards
- Based on student data and teacher needs
- Conducted at the school among teams of teachers
- Occurs during the work day
- Follows a continuous cycle of improvement

Kentucky, a partner state with the Dallas, Texas-based Learning Forward, is working to redefine professional development, engaging stakeholders in a task force effort that has resulted in recommendations to adopt new standards, improve alignment with those standards and make other changes.

According to the state Department of Education: "Professional learning is not an isolated event or a set of events; rather it is ongoing, relevant, job-embedded learning for educators at all stages of career development. Professional learning supports educators in meeting and exceeding standards of performance, implementing new initiatives, and refining professional practice to increase student achievement."

### The Team recommends:

- ◆ **Supporting school districts and councils in their implementation of the recommendations of the Kentucky Department of Education addressing a comprehensive professional learning system for educators**  
<http://education.ky.gov/curriculum/docs/Documents/KY%20PD%20Report%2042012%20Final%20edited.pdf>

*"Teaching creates all other professions."*

*Attributed to David Haselkorn*



## EDUCATOR EVALUATION

When Kentucky education officials drafted the state's first application for federal Race to the Top funding, they included plans to develop a system for evaluating teacher performance. Kentucky did not receive a Race to the Top award during that initial phase, but officials decided to move ahead with the evaluation system as part of the state's overall program of improvement that included more rigorous academic standards, revamped assessments, better data collection and other initiatives. In addition, many teachers have acknowledged that the current teacher evaluation system does not help them improve their practice, and they want more support and higher quality discussions about their performance.

As part of its review of issues related to effective teaching in Kentucky, the Team on Teacher Effectiveness took a close look at the development of the state's teacher evaluation system, known as the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System, or PGES.

Evaluation is a key element of ensuring educator effectiveness, but it is important to reiterate that it is one part of a framework that includes additional areas of focus. These include teacher preparation, recruitment, professional standards, compensation, working conditions, professional learning and others.

According to the Kentucky Department of Education: "The PGES is designed to measure teacher and leader effectiveness and serve as a catalyst for professional growth and continuous improvement. ..." It is a requirement of the state's flexibility waiver under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which is also known in its most recent reauthorization as the No Child Left Behind waiver.

The development of PGES in Kentucky has been informed by insights from the Measures of Effective Teaching project, known as MET, which involves more than 3,000 teachers in seven urban districts nationwide. During a presentation to the Team, Andy Baxter, vice president for educator effectiveness of the Southern Regional Education Board, explained MET's systematic study of varied ways to measure teachers' impact on student learning, including:

- Student surveys focused on specifics of their classroom experience
- Teacher observation using a variety of respected rubrics and new 360-degree video cameras to allow multiple observers to see the same instruction
- Student academic growth data based on randomized classroom assignments, using both common standardized tests and assessments of higher-order thinking

Reports from the MET research indicate that each of these approaches has strengths and limitations, leading to calls for future evaluation systems to combine multiple measures of observation and evaluation. Specific lessons learned from the three-year MET project included:

- Student perception surveys and classroom observations can provide meaningful feedback to teachers.
- Implementing specific procedures in evaluation systems can increase trust in the data and the results. These include rigorous training and certification of observers, and in the case of student surveys, the assurance of student confidentiality.
- Each measure adds something of value.
- A balanced approach is most sensible when assigning weights to form a composite measure.
- There is great potential in using video for teacher feedback and for the training and assessment of observers.

PGES emphasizes several of these lessons, including the use of multiple measures, noting that "teaching is too complex for any single measure of performance to capture it accurately."

## The Kentucky system includes:

- **Observation** – A principal is trained and certified to objectively identify effective teaching and document a teacher’s professional practice on multiple occasions, both formally and informally, to provide high-quality feedback that can be used to improve practice.
- **Peer Observation** – A trained colleague observes and documents another teacher’s professional practice to increase observation reliability and provide supportive and constructive feedback that can be used to improve practice.
- **Reflection** – A teacher performs critical self-examination of practice on a regular basis to deepen knowledge, expand a repertoire of skills and incorporate findings to improve practice.
- **Professional Growth** – A teacher engages in professional growth planning specific to individual needs based on feedback and data from multiple sources and self-reflection.
- **Student Growth** – The impact a teacher has on a student or set of students as measured by multiple sources of data over time.
- **Student Voice** – Student perception surveys provide a reliable indicator of the learning environment and give voice to the intended beneficiaries of instruction.

The department notes that “a common language and understanding of effective teaching” is the foundation of the PGES. To ensure this commonality, the state adopted the 2011 Framework for Teaching based on the work of Charlotte Danielson. The indicators address four domains of practice: (1) planning and preparation, (2) classroom environment, (3) instructional duties and (4) professional responsibilities; student growth is added as another indicator for state use.

## Stakeholder Participation

As the design of the system began, the state department proactively sought the participation and input of stakeholders through steering committees for teachers and principals. The committees provided guidance on the development and recommendations for deployment of the PGES.

Members included the Kentucky Association of School Administrators, Kentucky School Boards Association, Kentucky Education Association, Jefferson County Teachers Association, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, Education Professional Standards Board, Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, Kentucky Association of School Superintendents, Kentucky PTA, Kentucky Association of School Councils and colleges and universities.

The result was more than two dozen draft recommendations, ranging from training and certification for observers to the need for teachers to establish student growth goals.

## Timeline

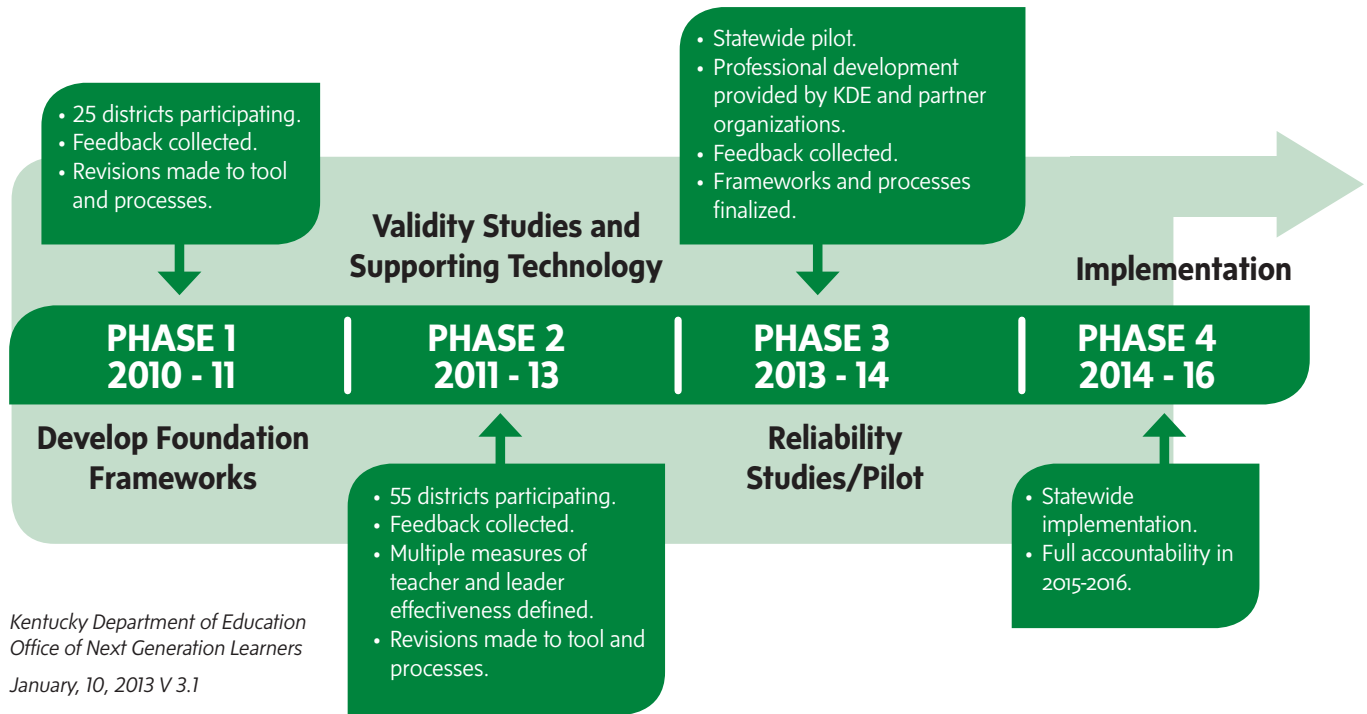
The schedule for full implementation of the evaluation system has been intentionally deliberate, allowing time for multiple field tests, a statewide pilot, educator feedback and evaluation.

Field tests of the system were conducted in 54 districts during the 2012-13 school year; the state department used a web-based data collection system to gather information from participating teachers and administrators.

The system is being piloted statewide during 2013-14 with at least 10 percent of the schools in each district implementing PGES. The system will be fully implemented statewide in 2014-15 and included in the accountability system in 2015-2016. At that time, districts will report their percent of teachers at each performance level.

More detail on the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System is available in the Team on Teacher Effectiveness Issue Brief: <http://www.prichardcommittee.org/media-center/ced-report-released-kentucky-evaluating-teachers-and-supporting-new-teachers>.

## Timeline for Deployment of the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System



Meanwhile, the 2013 Kentucky General Assembly enacted legislation clearing the way for the evaluation system to be used for all certified personnel in the 2014-15 school year, with a limited option for districts to use alternative models if they can show that their designs have equal or greater rigor.

### The Team recommends:

- ◆ Supporting the Kentucky Department of Education and school districts' implementation of the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System for teachers and principals
- ◆ Encouraging the creation of a program to raise awareness of the new system
- ◆ Conducting a cost-benefit analysis to determine district costs of the new system

## WORKING CONDITIONS

The TELL Kentucky survey provides a wealth of data on teachers' views of their schools and working conditions. First conducted in 2011 and again in 2013, the survey has had a high rate of participation, with more than 90 percent of the state's schools exceeding 50 percent participation. More than 43,700 educators participated in 2013.

The national New Teacher Center conducted the surveys and noted several areas where the rates of agreement increased between 2011 and 2013, meaning more educators agreed or strongly agreed with statements related to particular areas of their work. These areas of increased agreement included:

- Items related to instructional practices and supports, such as teacher autonomy to make decisions about delivering instruction, class assignments that maximize teachers' likelihood of success and curriculum alignment with the Kentucky Core Academic Standards.
- Items related to school leadership, such as being comfortable to raise issues and concerns and leadership support for teachers.
- Items related to teacher leadership, such as effective processes for group decision-making, mutual problem-solving and trust in teachers to make sound professional decisions about instruction.

As in 2011, the 2013 survey found that issues related to time continue to be of greatest concern to teachers. However, the increase in the agreement rates in this area was the greatest of the survey. Specifically, according to 2013 TELL Kentucky Survey Research Brief:

- More than two-thirds of educators in 2013 (67 percent) report that the non-instructional time provided for teachers in their school is sufficient; that compares to 61 percent in 2011.
- Seventy-three percent indicate that teachers have time available to collaborate with colleagues, an increase of seven percentage points from 2011.
- Nearly seven out of 10 (69 percent) agree that teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students; that compares to 63 percent in 2011.

([www.tellkentucky.org/uploads/File/KY13\\_brief\\_prelim\\_findings.pdf](http://www.tellkentucky.org/uploads/File/KY13_brief_prelim_findings.pdf))

The research brief also points out, since the release of the 2011 results, the Kentucky Department of Education and others have engaged in extensive outreach to emphasize the importance of the data and guide schools and districts in using it to improve planning. Partners including the Kentucky Association of School Administrators, Kentucky School Boards Association, Kentucky Association of School Councils and Kentucky Education Association have developed their own guides using the survey data and incorporating the information into professional

development programs. The state Board of Education also has implemented policies to address the needs identified in the survey and has issued new standards that help school districts improve their working conditions for teachers.

#### The Team recommends:

- ◆ Continued encouragement of teachers to participate in the TELL survey to produce the most complete information about school working conditions
- ◆ Scheduling the survey to conclude by the end of March before school personnel decisions are made
- ◆ Continued and expanded dissemination of the TELL survey results, with guidance to schools and districts in using the data to further improve working conditions for educators and learning conditions for students
- ◆ A review/expansion of the time provided teachers for review and study, individually and in teams, to improve instruction

## CAREER PATHWAYS AND COMPENSATION

*"Modern cynics and skeptics ... see no harm in paying those to whom they entrust the minds of their children a smaller wage than is paid to those to whom they entrust the care of their plumbing."*

*John F. Kennedy*

Professionalizing Kentucky's system of teacher compensation has been a public policy discussion topic for many years. Career ladders, differentiated compensation, pay for performance and other descriptions have been used to advocate a new approach. Underlying many of these suggestions is a recognition of the fact that teacher pay in this state and nation has not risen, in most cases, to a level commensurate with the value of the profession.

Limited public resources make it difficult to provide across-the-board pay raises for educators, and the focus is increasingly on compensation programs that recognize and reward the differing levels of teachers' expertise and work along their career pathways. Meanwhile, teachers' take-home pay has declined. In a legislative presentation, the Kentucky Education Action Team stated that in some districts teacher's take-home pay is up to \$5,600 less a year now than at its highest point while health insurance costs are increasing.

In 2007, the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence brought together a working group to look at Kentucky's teacher compensation system. The result was a report, "Using Teacher Compensation to Support Differentiated Teacher Roles and Responsibilities." The recommendations in that report continue to resonate today and merit renewed attention.

#### **Overall, the Team recommends:**

- ◆ **Developing career pathways to professionalize teacher pay levels and encouraging the adoption of differentiated pay scales to reflect teacher expertise and activities and the status of teaching as a true profession**

## **TEACHER TENURE**

Ensuring that every child has a high-performing teacher every year means it sometimes becomes necessary to remove a teacher from his/her position. A brief prepared for the Prichard Committee on "The State of Teacher Tenure Throughout the Country" notes that tenure is the common term for employment protection practices extended to teachers. Originating at the university level, tenure for K-12 teachers began in the late 19th century and became commonplace by the 1920s. The intent was to protect good teachers from arbitrary discrimination and to give them security to be innovative and independent without jeopardizing their jobs.

School districts cannot statutorily grant or deny tenure, which attaches to a teacher's status when he or she meets the statutory requirements. However, districts' hiring practices have the practical effect of controlling whether a teacher achieves tenure because they determine whether a teacher is hired for the required number of years.

#### **To receive tenure in Kentucky a teacher:**

- Must be certified by the Education Professional Standards Board
- Must work at least 140 days (of at least six hours in length) a year in certified duties in a single district for the year to count toward tenure
- Must have worked four consecutive years or four of the previous six years in a single school district
- Must be offered a certified position for the fifth year while currently employed, accept the offer and work at least one day of the fifth year

#### **Tenure can be terminated under the following circumstances:**

- A teacher is terminated for cause under the provisions of state law. A district notifies the teacher of the intended dismissal and the teacher can request a tribunal hearing to make the final decision.
- A tenured teacher is laid off in a district workforce reduction under the provisions of state law. Local school board policies usually include information on the rights and benefits of tenured and non-tenured staff if they return to the district after being laid off.

*Source: Amy Peabody, Assistant General Counsel, Kentucky Department of Education, June 10, 2013, Prichard Committee presentation*

## **The Debate**

Criticism of tenure has become more common over the past two decades, with its opponents contending that it protects poor teachers and makes it too difficult to remove them. Proponents of tenure counter that teachers would be subject to political interference and unable to do their jobs effectively without its protections.

The Team heard a debate on the topic between Bill Raabe, director of the Center for Great Public Schools of the National Education Association, and Andy Smarick, a partner at Bellwether Education Partners.

Raabe's key assertion focused on the importance of looking at the entire system of teacher recruitment, preparation, performance and professional development

to determine what is “the most important lever” to pay attention to. Tenure was established to protect teachers from discrimination and to guard their academic freedom, he said. Some level of due process is still needed to ensure teachers’ freedom to experiment in finding the best way to teach students without fear that making a mistake would lead to their dismissal.

Smarick asserted that tenure laws serve to hamstring administrators from making personnel decisions in a way that best serves students. He maintained that anti-discrimination laws and workplace rules have addressed the problems teachers encountered in the past. “Tenure laws were a reaction to their time, which was very different from today” and they were put in place before data was available on high- and low-performing teachers. The laws, in Smarick’s view, protect lowest-performing teachers.

### **Their advice for Kentucky on the tenure issue:**

#### **Smarick –**

- If a tenure law is retained, a teacher’s acquisition and maintenance of that status should be based on student performance.
- A law should have “real teeth” in the consequences it provides.
- As tenure rules are reformed, other elements such as teacher preparation and retention should be considered.

#### **Raabe –**

- Review the current law to see if goals can be accomplished under its provisions.
- Closely monitor a teacher’s first four years on the job, before he or she becomes tenure-eligible, to gauge performance and provide needed supports.
- Ensure that a quality teacher evaluation system is in place to assess teachers’ performance after they have completed probation.

◆ **The Team has reached no conclusion on whether tenure should be retained or eliminated but does recommend a complete review to determine what, if any, changes are needed that would benefit the teaching profession and student learning.**

## **Vanguard: A Promising Project**

The Team initially considered proposing a demonstration project to incorporate various elements of its recommendations for elevating the teaching profession. As its work continued, the Team became aware of the proposed Vanguard initiative and concluded that its provisions offer an important opportunity to move Kentucky forward in the critical area of quality teaching.

The Team endorses the Vanguard project and will work on behalf of its implementation.

According to a presentation by CPE President Robert L. King, this systemic approach is to include the following elements.

### **For those in higher education:**

- Develop an aggressive marketing campaign to recruit high-performing students into teaching. Elevate selectivity.
- Redesign teacher training:
  - Elementary teachers need to at least minor in the subjects they will be teaching.
  - Middle and high school educators need content-specific pedagogy.
  - Align curriculum to address the TELL survey and the models of instruction used by the schools served by postsecondary institutions.
- Engage the whole university, not just the schools of education.
- Increase clinical experiences.
- Add a full year of residency at a “teaching hospital” school (earning a Master’s degree).

### **For those granting licensure and administering regulations (EPSB):**

- Develop more rigorous license exams.
- Create regulatory structures that support statewide career pathways.

- Establish new, more rigorous criteria to approve teacher and principal training programs based on performance criteria and global best practices.
- Rethink the criteria for permanent licensure (tenure).

#### **For those structuring Kentucky’s public schools:**

- Create career pathways for teachers.
- Develop mastery-based advancement for students.
- Deploy teachers in new ways through master teacher-led teams.
- Provide enhanced compensation opportunities tied to steps on the career pathway.
- Require elementary school teachers to specialize in either English and social studies or math and science.
- Rethink courses and operations by developing Districts of Innovation as permitted under state law.
- The Team also would encourage collaborative efforts to determine the best way to support new teachers at the local level.

#### **For those providing professional development:**

- Improve professional development for school leaders to emphasize academic leadership.
- Involve Kentucky colleges and universities in the design and provision of research-proven, high-quality, effective professional development.
- Encourage growth of the Kentucky Partnership Academies and Regional Content Leadership Networks currently housed at three universities.

## **CONCLUSION**

Without question, Kentucky has made significant, measurable progress in improving education on multiple fronts. Kentuckians who travel for education-related meetings frequently hear comments from educators in other states about Kentucky’s reputation as a national leader. It is important not to lose sight of that as we continue tackling the challenges that stand in the way of achieving our goals of excellence. But it also is important to be vigilant in tackling those challenges – and that is the purpose of this report.

As noted above, the Team endorses the Vanguard Project and will work for its implementation. However, it is critical that steps to elevate the teaching profession be taken as soon as possible, whether the Vanguard project moves forward or not. In addition, whether via Vanguard or other efforts, the Team plans to conduct an annual review of the state’s progress on quality teaching efforts and to share the results of that review with policymakers and the public.

Finally, as noted in the beginning of this report, the Team also encourages the state’s leaders to restore education funding that has been lost to budget cuts and to once again make investing in education Kentucky’s top public policy priority to ensure the state reaches its goals for excellence.

## Sources:

- Building Highly Skilled Teachers and Education Leaders, Presentation by Robert L. King, September 6, 2013
- TELL Kentucky 2013, Presentation by Ann Maddock, New Teacher Center, August 7, 2013
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- Evaluating Teachers: Kentucky's Approach to Creating a Successful System, Prichard Committee Team on Teacher Effectiveness, June 2013
- Ensuring Fair and Reliable Measures of Effective Teaching: Culminating Findings from the MET Project's Three-Year Study, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, January 2013
- Learning Forward: Transforming Professional Learning, Kentucky Department of Education, October 2012
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- Focusing Teachers' Professional Training on the Development of Skillful Practice, Presentation by Deborah Loewenberg Ball to Prichard Committee Team on Teacher Effectiveness, January 2013
- Teacher Preparation-Future Challenge, Presentation by Phillip Rogers to Prichard Committee Team on Teacher Effectiveness, September 2012
- Supporting New Teachers: The Importance of the First Year in Ensuring Success and Retention, Prichard Committee Team on Teacher Effectiveness, May 2013
- Kentucky Education Action Team, Legislative Presentation, October 24, 2013



The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence is a statewide citizens organization working in its third decade on behalf of improving education for all Kentuckians. Throughout its history, the Committee has served as a convener of policy leaders, advocates and experts to review Kentucky's education policies and programs and make recommendations for improvement.

The Team on Teacher Effectiveness is reflective of the Committee's ongoing commitment to ensuring the highest-quality education is provided for every child in every Kentucky community. The Team met nine times between July 2012 and November 2013 to review the elements involved in the preparation and professional experiences of teachers, identify any gaps between current practices and those that could enhance effective teaching and make policy recommendations.

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## Afterword

As the Team for Effective Teaching was concluding its work, Kentucky was named as one of seven states to participate in a two-year pilot program on teacher training. The Network for Transforming Educator Preparation is an initiative of the Council of Chief State School Officers to help states improve the preparation of new teachers. The states will work over the next two years with educators, training programs, colleges and universities and school districts to improve the preparation of the teacher workforce. This program offers great promise for Kentucky's teacher preparation programs and will be included in the Team's annual review of progress in this key area.

## Acknowledgements

The Team on Teacher Effectiveness expresses its appreciation to the Committee for Economic Development for its financial support of the Team's work; to Phillips Wyatt Knowlton, Inc., for meeting evaluations that strengthened the process; to teachers Robin Reid of Fayette County and Buffy Sexton and Pat Thurman of Jefferson County, who provided resource information and insights; to Prichard Committee consultants Sandy Deaton, who served as project director for the Team; and Diana Taylor, the author of this report, and to members of the Committee staff for their professional support of this and all of the Committee's projects.

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