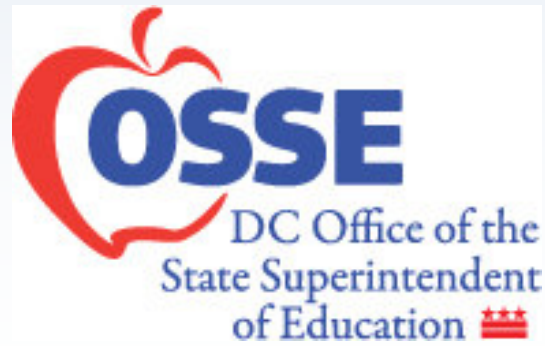


The Key to Improving Student Achievement: Ensuring Educator Quality

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Current challenge

The OSSE's current teacher and administrator certification systems are not necessarily leading to improved educator quality – nor to improved student outcomes.

Teacher Effectiveness

Meta-analysis shows that certain attributes are tied to teacher effectiveness, but other “popular” attributes are not.

Tied to Effectiveness:

- Subject area knowledge
- Teachers’ level of literacy
- Selectivity of college

Not Tied to Effectiveness:

- Master’s degrees
- Experience
- Education courses
- Traditional certification

Teacher Effectiveness

- Even attributes that are correlated have a weak connection. Currently, we do not have a strong way to predict teacher effectiveness in the US.
- However, the gap between effective and ineffective teachers is evident by the second year of teaching.

Gordon, Kane, and Staiger, "Identifying Effective Teachers Based on Performance on the Job." The Brookings Institution

What does research tell us?

“The greatest potential for school districts to improve student achievement seems to rest not in regulating minimum qualifications for new teachers but in selectively retaining those teachers who are most effective during their first years of teaching.”

Kane, “Photo Finish,” Education Next, Winter, 2007

Where are we heading?

To revise our Highly Qualified definition so that it is fully aligned with the NCLB definition, and reads as follows:

- 1) Must have Bachelor's degree, **AND**
- 2) Must have full state certification that has not been waived on a temporary basis, **AND**
- 3) **Elementary teachers:**
 - pass an elementary content test, **OR**
 - Veteran teachers have the option to achieve HQ status via a HOUSSE process

Secondary teachers:

- pass the appropriate content area test, **OR**
- have a major or its equivalent in the content area, **OR**
- have an advanced degree in the content area, **OR**
- have National Board Certification in the content area, **OR**

achieve HQ status via the HOUSSE process

Where are we heading?

- To build a **teacher quality system** that accomplishes the following:
 - ensures that candidates have subject area knowledge, strong academic backgrounds, and relevant pedagogical training
 - strongly encourages or requires mentoring for all new and struggling teachers
 - provides our LEAs (DCPS and charter schools) maximum flexibility in selecting and placing candidates, once competency is demonstrated

Examples from other states

- In Arizona, alternative candidates must have a Bachelors Degree with a minimum 3.0 GPA and must receive a passing score on the relevant subject knowledge test.
- At least 12 states set a minimum GPA above 2.5 for alternative candidates.
(NCTQ recommends a minimum 2.75 GPA for candidates with Bachelors degrees, with some flexibility for mid-career changers)

Examples from other states

- Sixteen states currently permit candidates to substitute a passing score on a subject matter test for a major in the intended subject area (permitting an engineering student to teach math, for example).

Examples from other states

- Connecticut mandates 13 credit hours for its alternatively-certificated teachers, plus mandatory mentoring in teachers' first year.
- Maryland mandates 12 (secondary teachers) to 18 (elementary teachers) credit hours of pedagogical coursework for teachers on a Resident Teacher Certificate.

Where are we heading?

- To build a **teacher quality system** that accomplishes the following:
 - sets policy and oversees certification from early childhood to adult education
 - in 3-5 years, moves from measuring teacher qualities (inputs) to measuring teachers' ability to improve student performance
 - connects teacher performance to their preparation programs

Examples from other states

- Seven states are implementing some form of performance models, typically factoring in criteria including student performance and teacher evaluations (with additional states developing the infrastructure to implement these models).

Examples from other states

- The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) recommends that alternate route program providers be evaluated against a number of measures, including average raw scores on licensing tests; teacher retention rates; and evaluation results for program graduates.

Examples from other states

- A growing number of states, including Maryland, are permitting program providers beyond traditional university settings to offer coursework. These program providers include The New Teacher Project and Teach for America, among others.

Where are we heading?

- To build an **administrator certification system** that accomplishes the following:
 - ensures the highest level of candidate competence
 - in 3-5 years, moves from measuring administrator qualities (inputs) to measuring administrators' ability to improve student performance

Examples from other states

- Maryland offers a Resident Principal Certificate to candidates who have a minimum of a master's degree; a scope and level of leadership experience comparable to the responsibilities of the principal; and a consistent record of satisfactory performance in previous employment. Maryland also mandates ongoing mentoring for its resident principals.

Where are we heading?

- To build an **accountability model** that accomplishes the following:
 - Provides unique student and teacher identification numbers
 - Utilizes a value-added model that links student performance to teachers
 - Ensures LEAs use a comprehensive assessment system to effectively monitor teacher performance

Examples from other states

- Forty-six states assign a unique identification number to each teacher; twelve link teacher and student records by course/subject and state assessment results.
- Louisiana is refining its Value Added Teacher Preparation Program Assessment model that examines the learning growth of students taught by new teachers.

Sources cited

Full Education Week report at <http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2008/01/10/index.html>

National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) reports at www.nctq.org

Gordon, Kane, Staiger's "Identifying Effective Teachers Using Performance on the Job"
at http://www.brookings.edu/views/papers/200604hamilton_1.pdf

"Photo Finish" article at www.educationnext.org