

## FACT SHEET: Taking Action to Improve Teacher Preparation

Providing all children in America with the opportunity to get a world-class education is critical for their success and the success of our nation, and there is no more important factor in successful schools than having a great teacher in every classroom. President Obama believes that we need to give schools the resources to keep good teachers on the job and reward the best ones, and give teachers the flexibility to teach with creativity and passion. But far too many teachers report they are unprepared when they first enter the classroom after completing their teacher preparation program. Today – continuing to use the power of his phone and his pen to make 2014 a year of action – President Obama is directing the Department of Education to move forward on a plan to strengthen America’s teacher preparation programs.

Recruiting, preparing, developing and supporting great teachers has a direct impact on the learning and success of America’s students. Research confirms that the most important factor in a student’s success in school is a strong teacher, and excellent teachers are especially important for our neediest students.<sup>[1]</sup> School districts, principals, parents and children depend on great teachers to provide a world-class education.

However, the vast majority of new teachers – almost two-thirds – report that their teacher preparation program left them unprepared for the realities of the classroom. Moreover, for decades, institutions that prepare teachers have had lacked the feedback needed to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and had little information on where program graduates go to teach, how long they stay, and how they perform in the classroom. Existing federal regulations on teacher preparation focus on information that is not sufficiently meaningful to preparation programs, potential teachers or potential employers.

Today, President Obama directed the U.S. Department of Education to lay out a plan to strengthen America’s teacher preparation programs for public discussion by this summer, and to move forward on schedule to publish a final rule within the next year. The Administration will encourage and support states in developing systems that recognize excellence and provide all programs with information to help them improve, while holding them accountable for how well they prepare teachers to succeed in today’s classrooms and throughout their careers.

The Obama Administration will put forth a proposal this summer to support the pipeline of future teachers by strengthening teacher preparation programs, and will seek additional input on this plan through a public comment process. The Administration’s plans will:

- Build on state systems and efforts and the progress in the field to encourage all states to develop their own meaningful systems to identify high- and low-performing teacher preparation programs across all kinds of programs, not just those based in colleges and universities.
- Ask states to move away from current input-focused reporting requirements, streamline the current data requirements, incorporate more meaningful outcomes, and improve the availability of relevant information on teacher preparation.
- Rely on state-developed program ratings of preparation programs – in part – to determine program eligibility for TEACH grants, which are available to students who are planning to become teachers in a high-need field in a low-income school, to ensure that these limited federal dollars support high-quality teacher education and preparation.

These critical changes will help to increase recognition for high-performing teacher preparation programs, and create a much-needed feedback loop to provide information to prospective teachers, schools and districts, and the general public, and drive improvement across programs. They will help to improve systems-level accountability for supporting the high-quality instruction all students deserve. Moreover, strengthened preparation and support will help to make teaching an increasingly desirable and rewarding career.

Educators and leaders across the country are exploring new and innovative efforts to make teacher preparation more hands-on, relevant, and effective, including examples such as:

- The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), which has produced a commitment across hundreds of providers to establish bold new standards for accrediting teacher preparation programs that will encourage higher entry and exit requirements for candidates, and will make use of data about new teachers’ employment, retention and student learning outcomes.

- Five states, Tennessee, Ohio, North Carolina, Louisiana and Florida, currently report information about teacher preparation programs and their graduates back to the programs as well as to potential teachers and the public. Several more states have announced plans to create their own versions of these reports.
- Arizona State University and Urban Teacher Residencies are enriching the clinical experiences they provide, so their teacher candidates can learn in real schools with the help of master teachers. Additionally, these programs use the same teaching standards in preparation that teachers will use on the job later. There are signs this real-world experience helps teacher stay in the classroom – 85% of Urban Teacher Residencies graduates remain in the classroom after three years, compared to the 50 percent national average.
- UTeach at the University of Texas at Austin are drawing more undergraduates with STEM majors into teaching. Ninety 90% of UTeach graduates enter teaching and of those, roughly 80 percent are retained after 5 years, and about half of UTeach graduates are in high-need schools. Recent replications of the UTeach model have meant that the annual number of UTeach candidates has grown from 519 in 2008 to nearly 7,000 in 2014, expanding the supply of teachers prepared to teach STEM subjects.
- Relay Graduate School of Education, founded by three charter management organizations, measures and holds itself accountable for both program graduate and employer satisfaction, and requires that teachers meet high goals for student learning growth before they can complete their degrees. There is promise that this approach translates into classroom results as K-12 students of Relay teachers grew 1.3 years in reading performance in one year.
- Fayetteville State University in North Carolina incorporates the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction competencies and standards as well as the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards into its curriculum for master's degree students in their School of Education. Of their recent graduates, 87 percent of new teachers met or exceeded expectations for student learning growth, compared to the 75 percent state average.

**Building on Success:** This initiative around teacher preparation is the newest component of the Administration's work to ensure that teachers and leaders have the support they need from preparation and through their careers, and that all students have access to great teachers and leaders.

- The Administration's proposed [ConnectEDucators](#) program in the President's FY15 budget request supports teachers' efforts to learn how to make the best use of technology and digital learning materials in their classrooms.
- The Administration's [RESPECT proposal](#) seeks to elevate the education profession through improved preparation and early career support, teacher leadership and development opportunities, and improved work environments. Recently, the Department of Education announced [Teach to Lead](#), a new initiative to ensure that teachers have the opportunity to play a critical role in the decisions that impact their classrooms and their students without leaving the classroom.
- Through programs like Teacher Incentive Fund, Investing in Innovation (i3), and the Race to the Top, the Department of Education is assisting states and school districts across the country to find innovative new ways to develop, support, and retain the educators they need for the future.

Accessed 4/25/14: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/04/25/fact-sheet-taking-action-improve-teacher-preparation>