

**Commission on Access to Sound Basic Education
Teacher Work Group
Draft Priorities**

Draft priority areas regarding *Leandro's* mandate to staff every classroom “with a competent, certified, well-trained teacher who is teaching the standard course of study by implementing effective educational methods that provide differentiated, individualized instruction, assessment and remediation to the students in the classroom.”

Note: Excellent principal leadership; social, emotional health support for students; and a reasonable, lower pressure assessment system are all necessary to improve teacher retention and are being addressed by other working groups.

Recruitment

1. Expand the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program
 - a. Over the next four years, increase the NC Teaching Fellows Program funding annually from the current 200 slots per year to 1,000 per year. If there are more applicants than available slots, priority should be given to students who agree to teach in content areas with the most severe shortages and students who agree to teach in low wealth schools for the four-year payback period.
 - b. Provide scholarships to significantly more prospective teachers but keep the program prestigious.
 - c. Ensure that no Teaching Fellow has a payback period of more than 1 year for each year he/she receives the scholarship.
 - d. Expand the program beyond the current focus on science, mathematics, and special education to all areas of certification.
 - e. Expand the program beyond the five current institutions of higher education (IHEs), particularly to minority serving institutions and additional regions of the state. Maintain the program's focus on the most effective, high quality teacher education programs in the state that, at a minimum, should be fully accredited programs based at IHEs.
 - f. Provide multi-year state planning and implementation grants to enable IHEs to improve their preparation programs. Interested IHEs would submit applications and improvement plans to the Teaching Fellows Commission.
 - g. Provide resources for a statewide network to provide supplemental programming for Teaching Fellows at all IHEs.
2. Create and fund a statewide entity to coordinate and enhance efforts to recruit, place, and retain teacher candidates and beginning teachers among IHEs and school districts.
 - a. Establish as a separate entity, as in South Carolina, or house it within an existing entity selected through a Request for Proposal (RFP).
 - b. Major tasks could include:

- i. developing and implementing a plan to recruit competent college students and graduates into effective, high-quality, accredited teacher certification programs; and develop and place more teachers of color, teachers committed to rural areas of the state, and teachers committed to teaching in low wealth, and low performing schools;
 - ii. implementing evidence-based, credit-awarding programs that encourage high school students to prepare for careers in teaching; and
 - iii. operating, maintaining, and expanding the TEACH website being developed by BEST NC.
3. Provide multi-year innovation grants to IHEs or IHE-school district partnerships to experiment with ways to get non-education majors and students majoring in high-need academic areas to become education majors or add teacher certification to their current major. Provide funds to these evaluate experiments and disseminate lessons learned.

Preparation

1. Adopt and follow a strategic, long-term plan for preparing highly qualified teachers that relies on available empirical evidence. The plan should prioritize direct investments in teacher education programs at IHEs across the state that are fully accredited, or to institutions that are partnering with those IHEs, and should hold those IHEs accountable for preparing teachers that are ready to teach a broad array of students. The state should move away from short-term, “put warm bodies in schools at any costs” approach. The State should:
 - a. Increase the percentage of the teaching workforce produced by North Carolina IHEs to 50 percent within X years;
 - b. Provide adequate funding to IHEs to increase the number of NC prepared teachers committed to teaching in NC;
 - c. Work with IHEs to right-size their teacher education faculty to accommodate increased enrollments in teacher education programs following a decade of severe declines in enrollments; and
 - d. Define the necessary characteristics and support for high quality programming delivered in cooperation with community colleges.
2. State-funded or approved preparation programs should prepare all their teacher-graduates to be able to deliver differentiated, culturally relevant instruction within their certification areas to all students. Coordinate an effort to develop common guidelines for preparing teachers, especially at the elementary level, to be able to teach reading and mathematics effectively to a broad array of students.
3. Develop, fund, and evaluate a pilot program that provides teachers with education degrees a high-quality post-BA residency in low wealth schools or districts. Teachers would receive a stipend, additional support, and complete their master’s degree in exchange for 3 additional years of service in a low wealth school or school district.

Placement

1. Provide annual bonuses, totaling \$10,000, to certified teachers who commit to teach in a low wealth school district or Title 1 school for four years. At district's election, bonuses may be paid in even increments (\$1,250 per semester) or in graduated amounts after the teacher successfully completes each semester (ex. \$500 after each semester in year one, \$1,000 after each semester in year two, \$1,500 after each semester in year three, and \$2,000 after each semester in year four). The State should fund these bonuses on a sliding scale depending on the resources of the school district, with the State paying between 50 percent and 100 percent of the cost
2. Issue an RFP and provide funding to support up to four long-term, strategic Grow-Your-Own-Teacher partnerships. The RFP would be competitive, and proposals would be evaluated on merit, as well as the geographic area served. Partnerships could include school district(s)/local communities and community colleges and/or IHEs. Each proposal would integrate best practice for the recruitment, preparation, induction, professional development, and retention of their teachers; as well as explicitly target increasing the diversity of the teaching workforce. Partnerships would be funded for 5 years and funding would include annual formative assessments and formal evaluations at appropriate intervals conducted by external evaluators.

Induction

1. Expand the North Carolina New Teacher Support Program (NC NTSP). Provide full NC NTSP services to all beginning teachers in low wealth school districts and in all Title 1 schools, for their first three years, on a sliding scale depending on the resources of the school district, with the state paying between 50 percent and 100 percent of the cost.

Teacher Compensation

1. Eliminate the "teaching penalty" across NC over the next five years. Commission a NC-specific wage comparability study to determine comparable pay for teachers in comparison to other professions with require similar education, credentials, responsibilities, skills, etc. Given the results of similar studies, it is highly likely the study will find a significant gap in earnings of K-12 teachers in NC compared to workers with similar education and work experiences, who work in comparable careers.
2. Pending the recommended study, the state should move teacher pay (including teachers who are paid by district funds) to the level of other college graduates in NC.
3. Provide increased compensation for advanced credentials that are correlated with more effective teaching (e.g. National Board Certification, content-based master's degrees).
4. Provide differentiated pay for teachers in hard to staff schools and with certification areas in which there are severe shortages.

Teacher Support and Retention

1. Respect teachers as professionals by engaging them in shared decision-making and leadership at the school- and district-levels and empowering them at the classroom-level to meet the needs of their students.
 - a. Train and develop administrators so they can create positive teaching conditions and student learning conditions.
2. Develop and fund a state loan repayment program, which prospective education students can be accepted into as sophomores, that repays 20 percent of a student's loans each year for up to five years for certified teachers who teach in a low wealth school or district. First generation college students should be prioritized.
3. Provide funds to school districts for relevant, integrated teacher professional development and enough paid teacher work days in the calendar for school districts to provide collaborative teacher and principal professional development without using instructional time.

Career Pathways

1. Expand grant funding for school districts to develop, implement, and scale career pathways plans. The following actions should be taken to enable the successful development of career pathways programs:
 - a. Provide class size waivers and other flexibility as necessary for school districts to implement career pathways experiments or plans.
 - b. Continue to provide/expand funding for formative assessment and evaluation of career pathways programs and the dissemination of lessons learned.
 - c. Provide ongoing funding to low wealth school districts for salary supplements or the support personnel necessary to sustain implementation of successful career pathways plans.
 - d. Provide the resources for school districts that are experimenting with career pathways to collaborate with each other.
 - e. Provide grant funding for LEAs that have successfully implemented career pathways programs to partner with smaller LEAs that do not have the resources to develop these programs.
 - f. Provide funding for teacher and principal leadership development to increase the pool of teachers and principals who can successfully implement their roles in career pathways plans.