

Higher Education Task Force on Teacher Preparation

Principles for Evaluating Teacher Preparation Programs *What We Stand For*

Colleges and universities share the keen interest of policy makers to strengthen educator preparation and develop sound accountability measures. During the past several years, there has been significant revamping of teacher preparation programs across the country. Typical improvements include strengthening clinical preparation, integrating technology to enhance instruction, developing a valid and reliable performance assessments to determine readiness to teach, integrating arts and sciences with teacher preparation to ensure strong content knowledge, strengthening entry and exit requirements, ensuring instructional capacity to teach diverse learners including English learners and students with disabilities, and grounding preparation in research-based knowledge. Programs are allocating significant resources toward strengthening partnerships with their local school districts and P-12 schools to better respond to the staffing and professional development needs of these partners.

Despite these strides, some low-performing programs continue to operate. Colleges and universities, which produce over 90% of all teachers entering the classroom, are eager to work with stakeholders to ensure that all teacher preparation programs are high quality. The higher education community recommends the following principles to policy makers as they deliberate on appropriate and meaningful measures of accountability for teacher preparation programs.

Teacher preparation accountability measures should be based on research that is valid and reliable.

Ignoring this principle will result in faulty evaluations, with some good programs failing, while some bad programs continue.

States should evaluate teacher preparation programs using multiple measures.

These measures might include valid and reliable teacher performance assessments, teacher evaluations, evidence of impact on P-12 student learning, job placement, success measures of graduates such as awards and outstanding accomplishments, and other productivity measures. Evaluating programs on only one measure will inevitably result in limited and unreliable understanding of program effectiveness.

Evaluation models should not be attached to high-stakes consequences (such as effectiveness labels, eligibility for federal/state funding, etc.) until the models have been tested for validity and reliability.

States, and others evaluating preparation programs, should ensure the soundness of evaluation models before linking evaluations to consequences.

States that currently gather assessment data should share available data with teacher preparation programs in their state and use the data to advance their teacher preparation programs.

While many states are in the process of developing statewide data systems that capture student learning measures and workforce data, few share such data with their preparation programs.

States should evaluate the degree to which a program is responsive to the workforce needs of the communities and state(s) it serves.

Programs should prepare teachers for high-need schools and high-need subject areas, such as STEM, ELL, and special education.

States should evaluate all providers using the same standards and close programs that are failing.

For purposes of program approval and accountability, the various preparation programs in each state should be held to the same standards. If programs are ineffective, they should be given appropriate time and assistance to improve, but should be closed if improvement is not made.

The state is the most experienced and appropriate level of government to assess teacher preparation program effectiveness and thus should retain the bulk of responsibility for developing and implementing meaningful evaluation measures.

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June 2012

