



# Emerging Strategies to Improve Teacher Quality in At-Risk and Hard-to-Staff Schools and Subject Areas

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# What We Know

- Inequitable Distribution of High-Quality Teachers and Principals
  - Low-income and minority students in at-risk and hard-to-staff schools consistently have teachers with little experience or marginal qualifications.
  - Data show that good principals move away from high-poverty schools.
  - Subject areas of mathematics, science, and special education suffer from consistent teacher shortages and high teacher turnover.

# What Can We Do?

- By studying emerging strategies and practices related to the availability, recruitment, and retention of quality teachers in a variety of district and state contexts, policymakers and administrators with similar needs can learn from the experiences of others.

# First and Foremost

## ➤ Know Your Data; Know Your Needs

- To develop and implement strategies that will increase the pool of available teachers as well as recruit and retain teachers for specific geographic and subject areas of need, states and districts must take stock of available teacher data across departments, think about how these data sources can be used to create a picture of teacher supply and demand over time, and make plans to continually reevaluate the data.

# Teacher Availability

- In developing strategies to address issues of inequitable teacher distribution, one fundamental question to ask is:  
“Are there enough good teachers available to make any solutions successful?”

# Teacher Availability

## ➤ State-Level Strategies

- **Significantly increase the number of teachers that state universities prepare in subjects for which there are general teacher shortages.**
  - Texas A&M University
- **Create teacher preparation programs specifically designed for rural districts.**
  - Mississippi and Colorado

# Teacher Availability

## ➤ District-Level Strategies

- **Encourage and support paraprofessionals to become full-time teachers.**
- **Create teacher preparation programs that prepare teachers for specific assignments in hard-to-staff schools.**
  - New York City Teaching Fellows
  - Boston Teacher Residency
  - Houston's Alternative Certification

# Teacher Recruitment and Retention

- Recruit and retain available teachers into specific schools for particular subject areas. Many current state and district efforts aim to address the inequitable distribution of teachers by recruiting and retaining teachers for specific schools and subject areas without compromising teacher quality.



# Teacher Recruitment and Retention

## ➤ State-Level Strategies

- **Develop and implement a coordinated state recruitment and retention effort.**
  - Tennessee's Become a Special Educator in Tennessee Teaching Program (BASE-TN)
  - Virginia
- **Support new teachers through induction and mentoring.**
  - California, Connecticut, and Louisiana

# Teacher Recruitment and Retention

## ➤ District-Level Strategies

- **Provide incentives and policies to redistribute the teacher workforce.**
  - Virginia can hire qualified mathematics teachers from the Middle School Mathematics Teacher Corps
- **Build the capacity of school leaders to support teachers.**
  - Miami-Dade County Public Schools' program, the Superintendent's Urban Principal Initiative

# Conclusion

- Many of the problems surrounding teacher availability, recruitment, and retention are functions of the local teacher labor market—teachers most often want to teach in schools that offer a combination of good working conditions and good pay. Policies must be developed to address these tendencies and help make at-risk schools easier to staff by offering competitive pay tied to teacher retention, safe surroundings, and genuine communities of learning where teachers can make a real difference.

# Select Resources

- TQ Source Tips and Tools  
resource on the *TQ Source* website  
<http://www.tqsource.org/strategies/index.asp>
- Data Quality Campaign  
<http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org>
- National Center for Special Education  
Personnel and Related Service Providers  
<http://www.personnelcenter.org>



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