The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act: Opportunities and Strategies to Advance Teacher Effectiveness

The ability to educate all students, regardless of race/ethnicity, geographic location, poverty status, or ability level, is the key to our future internationally and domestically, and it is the promise of the American education system. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 provides the potential for funding for teacher-quality-related efforts. Specifically, the funds are focused on achieving equity in teacher distribution and improving the effectiveness of teachers.

Many of the funding opportunities available through ARRA must be allocated and distributed quickly on programs and initiatives that have demonstrated merit and the potential for effectiveness. Many states already have programs and efforts underway and, therefore, can quickly and substantively benefit from this increased funding. This special edition of the TQ Research and Policy Update provides the following:

- A brief overview of the amounts, distribution system, and goals of the funding

- Strategies and efforts states should consider when pursuing and allocating these funds

The suggestions contained within this special edition are based on current research and promising practice as explored through the work and experience of the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (TQ Center) in collaboration with the regional comprehensive centers it serves.

Given the short timeline in which the funding must be requested and disseminated, states and districts will have much less time for planning and implementation in terms of using these funds. Therefore, they should not hesitate to asses their own strategic plans and the status of ongoing initiatives to determine how they could bid for and utilize these additional monies. It is important, however, for states to maintain fidelity to their long-term, comprehensive, and systemic strategic vision for teacher quality. All short-term strategies can and should be conceptualized as steps in this strategic vision. This paper is designed to assist states in that effort by presenting strategies and an action planning guide for use by states.

NATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE CENTER FOR TEACHER QUALITY   877-322-8700 | WWW.TQSOURCE.ORG   1100 17th Street NW, Suite 500 Washington, DC 20036-4632

1

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Education Funding Opportunities

Multiple funding areas exist in ARRA, several of which are focused specifically on education. This paper will focus on only those that can be accessed for efforts that can support or improve teacher effectiveness and equitable distribution. Specifications about funding allocations, requirements for accessing these funds, and guidance for appropriate use of funds are still pending from the U.S. Department of Education. For the most up-to-date information on the Act, please visit the Learning Point Associates Education Recovery and Reinvestment Center at www.learningpt.org/recovery. An overview of teacher-quality support opportunities available under this Act is provided below:

Funds for Existing Programs

Education for the Disadvantaged (Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA] Title I)

- $13 billion[1]
- Funds may be used to support professional development for teachers

School Improvement Programs (educational technology state grants [ESEA Title II (D)(1)])

- $650 million
  - $32.5 million that states can reserve for state activities
  - $308,750,000 to be distributed by formula
  - $308,750,000 to be distributed via competitive grants
- The primary goal of this program is to improve student achievement through the use of technology in elementary and secondary school. Local activities include the support of continuing, sustained professional development programs, and public-private partnerships.

Teacher Incentive Fund (ESEA [V][D][1])

- $200 million
  - $2 million reserved by the Education Department (ED) for management and oversight
  - An unspecific amount for use by the Institute of Education Sciences for a national evaluation
  - The remaining amount distributed to the states
  - 5 percent of the distributed funds for competitive grants will be available for technical assistance, training, peer review of applications, program outreach, and evaluation
- The funds will be available in Fall 2009 as competitive grants to local educational agencies (LEAs), including charter schools that are LEAs, states, or state-local partnerships, to develop and implement performance-based teacher and principal compensation systems in high-need schools

---

[1] Note: These amounts represent funding in addition to the funds routinely allocated for these activities through the normal appropriations process.

Institute of Education Sciences, Statewide Data Systems

- $250 million
    - $245 million for competitive grants
    - $50 million to improve data coordination
- Grants awarded on a competitive basis to state educational agencies to design, develop, and implement statewide, longitudinal data systems to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, disaggregate, and use individual student data

Higher Education Teacher Quality Enhancement Act of Title II of the Higher Education Act of 1965

- $100 million
- Competitive grants to states and partnerships of institutions of higher education and LEAs for teacher training and recruitment available in Fall 2009

New Funds Distributed Through the State Stabilization Fund

State Incentive Grants

- $4.3 billion for state incentive grants to be distributed by the Secretary through competitive grants in fiscal year 2010 for efforts that include the following:
    - Equitable teacher distribution
    - Establishing a longitudinal data system
    - Supporting struggling schools identified as needing improvement under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

Innovation Fund

- $650 million[2] to recognize eligible entities that have done the following:
    - Closed achievement gaps significantly
    - Exceeded the state's annual measurable objectives (Adequate Yearly Progress) for two or more years
    - Made significant improvements in graduation rates or increased recruitment and placement of high-quality teachers and school leaders
    - Established partnerships with the private sector or philanthropic organizations that will provide matching funds to help bring results to scale

State Fiscal Stabilization Fund

- $39.5 billion to be used for activities authorized under NCLB, the Individuals with Disabilities Act, or the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, including the following:

---

[2] Set aside from the $5 billion allocated for state incentive grants.

- Equitable distribution of teachers
- Improving the collection and use of data

Recruiting and Retaining Teachers Where They Are Needed

Ensuring that children in high-minority and high-poverty schools are not more likely to be taught by teachers with less experience or who are not highly qualified is a high-priority need in many states—meeting this challenge is a national imperative. As mentioned above, states must provide assurance that they are working toward this goal in order to receive one or more of the above-mentioned funding streams. The issue of teacher shortages in at-risk or hard-to-staff schools and districts is largely one of teacher retention. However, an inability to keep teachers in certain schools means more teachers must be recruited to staff the classrooms. Therefore, addressing this issue requires attention to both increasing the number of teachers applying and available for hire by these schools and establishing a culture of support and development in schools that encourages quality teachers to remain. Research-based strategies related to these twin challenges of pipeline and retention are reviewed below.

Improving the Pipeline: Increasing the Pool of Available Teachers and Streamlining Ways to Hire Them

Create High-Quality Alternate Routes for Teacher Preparation and Certification

Both private and university-based alternate routes to preparation and certification now exist. States should make sure these alternate routes are focused on addressing the challenges in the states, such as content- or geographic-area shortages. A starting point for states that do not yet have alternate routes established in their states is to create partnerships with higher education systems and institutions to provide programs focused on shortage areas. Examples of such partnerships include the following:

- Urban impact: Consisting of the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga and Knoxville campuses; the high-needs inner city school systems of Hamilton and Knox Counties; the Tennessee Department of Education; and business leaders (http://oneweb.utc.edu/~impact/about/mission.html)

- Urban Education Collaborative: Temple University College of Education, the School District of Philadelphia, and other districts and schools in the Philadelphia region (http://ed.temple.edu/UEC/index.html)

States also should fully utilize their community college systems in teacher preparation. Several states have implemented teacher degrees in their community colleges to help fill the need for teachers. This is often an effective strategy to fill shortage areas geographically as community colleges are more likely located in areas where universities are not, thereby extending the reach of teacher-preparation programs to individuals already living in, and therefore committed to, shortage areas. Examples include the following:

- Great Basin College, Nevada (www.gbcnv.edu)

- St. Petersburg College, Florida (www.spcollege.edu/bachelors/coe.php?program=coe)

Another option is grow-your-own programs. These programs target people living in areas of need. These individuals are offered scholarships or forgivable loans in exchange for a commitment to teach a certain number of years in a designated high-need area. Examples include the following:

- Illinois: www.growyourownteachers.org

- North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program: www.teachingfellows.org

TQ Center resources:

- TQ Source on teacher preparation: State policy databases, an interactive data tool, and a publications database on teacher preparation are available at www2.tqsource.org/topics/preparation.asp

- *Lessons Learned: New Teachers Talk About Their Jobs, Challenges and Long-Range Plans. Issue No. 2—Working Without a Net: How New Teachers From Three Prominent Alternate Route Programs Describe Their First Year on the Job* (2007) (www.tqsource.org/publications/lessonslearned2.pdf)

Identify and Retrain Current Teachers for Teaching Assignments in Mathematics and Science

Current federal policy focuses both on recruiting students for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) professions and on recruiting students to teach in STEM areas. However, for a variety of factors, students who major in STEM disciplines are more likely to choose careers in STEM fields rather than in teaching those subjects. Although many of these students may turn to teaching later in their careers, it remains very likely that the large-scale recruitment of STEM subject-area majors into teaching is unlikely.

Another strategy for recruiting and supporting STEM teachers lies within the current teaching force. In many disciplines, such as elementary teaching or secondary social studies, there are surpluses of teachers. Although most of these teachers will not have received extensive undergraduate training in STEM subjects, a substantial number of them nevertheless may have a deep interest and aptitude in STEM subjects, which, coupled with their pedagogical knowledge and extant teaching skills, may qualify them for retraining as STEM teachers. And if this redeployment of selected teachers from surplus areas into STEM subjects is incentivized, for example, by offering higher pay for teachers in shortage areas who are willing to teach in high-need schools, it may be very feasible to create a new cadre of highly qualified STEM teachers from within the current ranks of teachers of other subjects.

TQ Center resources:

- TQ Center Tips and Tools:

  - Recruiting Quality Teachers for Mathematics, Science, and Special Education (www2.tqsource.org/strategies/recruit.asp)

Revise Transfer and Hiring Practices for High-Need Schools

Flawed hiring systems cause large urban districts to lose many of their strongest applicants. Teacher transfer policies, late notification requirements for teachers who are leaving, and other factors result in late hiring timelines that may lead many high-quality teacher applicants to accept job offers elsewhere. States that have effectively addressed this issue have used the following strategies:

- Principal control over transfer policies. California SB 1655 prevents ineffective or non–highly qualified teachers from being transferred to lower achieving schools by changing transfer policies for schools with poor academic achievement (Ann. Cal. Educ. Code §35036)

- Online tools to make applications available quickly

- Adjusting budget timelines so at-risk or high-need schools can make early offers. In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the timeline for hiring was moved to March 1, and high-need schools were provided with the opportunity to begin hiring at the very beginning of the period, before the most qualified applicants were placed elsewhere (for more information, visit www.tntp.org/ourimpact/impact_milwaukee.html)

TQ Center resources:

- TQ Center Tips and Tools: A collection of strategies and resources that address various aspects of teacher quality (www2.tqsource.org/strategies)

Improving Retention: Creating a Culture of Support and Development That Encourages Teachers to Stay

Providing Comprehensive Support

High-quality induction and mentoring programs not only make teachers feel welcomed and supported, but they also ensure that beginning teachers move their instructional practices forward with the guidance of an experienced mentor. Implementing a quality induction program is an action states can take to demonstrate effort to improve the effectiveness of teachers, an assurance of which is required to obtain funding. Improving new teachers' effectiveness has obvious benefits for students, but it also improves the teachers' likelihood of staying in the profession and addresses the associated costs of teacher attrition.

High-quality induction systems include the following elements:

- Frequent and sustained interaction with a skilled mentor

- Ongoing professional development specifically designed for new teachers (seminars, e-communities, etc.)

- Opportunities to observe skilled teachers

- Ongoing formative assessment of performance oriented to a set of teaching standards

States and districts intending to develop and implement teacher induction models should ensure they have the capacity to provide these elements. Examples of quality induction programs include the following:

- Illinois: http://intc.ed.uiuc.edu/documents/pilots/2009FINARPT-Public.pdf

- New York City: http://schools.nyc.gov

TQ Center resources:

- Teacher Preparation and Professional Development in Effective Learning Strategy Instruction (www.tqsource.org/publications/EffLearnStrtInstructionIssuePaper.pdf)

- [Effective Classroom Management: Teacher Preparation and Professional Development](www.tqsource.org/topics/effectiveClassroomManagement.pdf) (www.tqsource.org/topics/effectiveClassroomManagement.pdf)
- TQ Center Tips and Tools:
  - Identifying and Supporting Highly Effective Teachers (www2.tqsource.org/strategies/het.asp)
- TQ Center Publications Database (www2.tqsource.org/resources/publications.asp)

Providing Quality Professional Development and Career Options

Professional Development. Although there are many professional development opportunities made available for educators, the question remains whether these opportunities are targeted to improve teacher effectiveness. Targeted professional development requires the creation and implementation of a quality teacher evaluation system, as discussed below. The remaining challenge in professional development is to determine what opportunities states should offer and require. If a quality evaluation system is in place, information should be available to guide the offerings based on areas of challenge within the teaching community—either areas of individual challenge or topics from which a larger teaching population can benefit.

Examples of professional development focused on individual challenges include the following:

- Training and support to strengthen content knowledge
- Training in pedagogical techniques

Examples of professional development beneficial to a larger teaching population include the following:

- Research or technological advances or brain research advances that could affect teaching and learning
- Information or training specific to the context in which educators are functioning—large populations of English language learners or schools with a large population of culture/ethnic diversity.

Consistent findings enumerate the characteristics of quality professional development. When analyzing their professional development offerings, states should ensure that they embody these characteristics:

- Intensive and ongoing
- Job embedded
- Job relevant
- Linked to school vision and mission

Career Options. Too often career options for teachers mean that advancement in their careers takes them out of the classroom. School districts and states should implement career opportunities that provide roles and opportunities for expert teachers that allow them to share their experience, knowledge, and skills to benefit the school and classrooms. These types of roles could include the following:

- Creating teacher leadership opportunities in which teachers have a voice in policy and practice
- Utilizing excellent teachers as mentors

TQ Center resources:

- [Leading Gen Y Teachers: Emerging Strategies for School Leaders](www.tqsource.org/publications/February2009Brief.pdf) (2009) (www.tqsource.org/publications/February2009Brief.pdf)

Creating Learning Communities

Numerous content- and pedagogy-related professional development offerings already exist in states. Increasingly, however, the creation of learning communities or communities of practice is identified as a positive professional development experience for teachers. States should work to analyze the policies and requirements in place for professional development and the processes by which they determine what professional development to offer and whether it has the characteristics listed above. In addition, states should consider whether they are too narrowly defining professional development in a manner that precludes the creation and support of learning communities and other collaborative learning opportunities for teachers.

The Importance of Identifying and Targeting Effective Teachers

When designed and implemented appropriately, a quality evaluation system should serve as a basis to inform educator support systems, to provide career advancement opportunities, and to determine the extent to which state efforts are improving effectiveness. Assessment can be formative, in which teachers are provided with feedback on how to improve their performance, or summative, wherein teachers are given a summary evaluation score. Both types are valuable for management of teacher talent.

It is important in creating a quality evaluation system to have a clear definition of the standards and expectations for teachers. These standards and expectations will guide the types of evaluation methods implemented. If the performance management system also is tied to professional development and to compensation, there is a greater return on investment for ensuring the alignment of these evaluations with the developed standards. Examples include the following:

- North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards. These standards form the basis of teacher evaluations in the state (www.ncptsc.org/Final%20Standards%20Document.pdf)

- Connecticut State Department of Education: The Department defines the qualities of an effective teacher evaluation program (www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2641&q=320432)

TQ Center resources:

- *Approaches to Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness: A Research Synthesis* (2008). This research synthesis examines how teacher effectiveness is currently measured and offers practical guidance of different evaluation methods.

- *Improving Instruction Through Effective Teacher Evaluation: Options for States and Districts* (2008). This brief discusses the measures used in teacher evaluation and focuses on their strengths, limitations, and current use in states and districts.

- *Communication Framework for Measuring Teacher Quality and Effectiveness: Bringing Coherence to the Conversation* (2007). The communication framework is a tool developed to promote effective dialogue about the measurement of teacher quality and effectiveness.

The Necessity of Quality Data Systems

The overarching aim of any reform efforts should be to identify, support, and develop effective teachers and leaders to ensure that all students have equitable access to these quality educators. This requires a strong data system so that specific challenge areas can be identified and efforts can be both guided by these data and evaluated in accordance with them. The improvement of data systems in accordance with the America Competes Act is established and funded as part of ARRA. To receive the stabilization funds as well as state grants next year, states will have to report on their relative success of implementing a statewide longitudinal data system. The Data Quality Campaign promotes 10 essential elements of a longitudinal data system:

- A unique statewide student identifier

- Student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information

- The ability to match individual students' test records from year to year to measure academic growth

- Information on untested students

- A teacher identification system with the ability to match teachers to students

- Student-level transcript information, including information on courses complete and grades earned

- Student-level college readiness test scores

- Student-level graduation and dropout data

- The ability to match student records between the prekindergarten and postsecondary systems

- A state audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability.

For more information, visit www.DataQualityCampaign.org.

A Note About Compensation

Improving the pool of teaching applicants is an effective way to improve the profession. One approach to encouraging the "best and brightest" to consider teaching as a profession and to encourage existing teachers to stay in the classroom is to support and sustain professional pay, or pay that is tied to career ladders, accountability structures, and performance. Implementing pay reform has encountered challenges. These include fiscal and political costs, not involving teachers in system design or implementation, resistance from teacher unions, and problems with accuracy and objectivity in assessment measures proposed for use.

States considering compensation reform need to consider the following questions:

- What behavior, activities, or outcomes is the compensation reform intended to address?

- How will the teachers be evaluated, and is that evaluation system in place?

- Is participation mandatory or voluntary?

- Will awards be individual- or school-based?

- What stakeholders need to be involved, and how will they be involved?

ARRA includes funding for the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF), a federal program currently in place that supports efforts to develop and implement performance-based teacher and principal compensation systems in high-need schools. For information on states currently funded through TIF and case studies of state programs, visit the Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) at www.cecr.ed.gov.

TQ Center resources:

- *Paying for Teachers' Performance—Strategies and Conditions for Success* (May 10, 2007). This webcast examined the policy, research, and practice of performance-based compensation, specifically focusing on valid, reliable, and ethical ways to evaluate teachers' instructional performance. Experts discussed the promise and pitfalls of value-added and other statistical measures of student achievement growth as well as teaching portfolios and professional administrator evaluations.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of the strategies addressed above is not limited to at-risk or high-need schools, districts, and subjects. They can all be effectively implemented as part of a larger, systemic approach to overall improvement of the teacher workforce and teaching as a career. The challenge of a systemic approach to teacher support and improvement is that there are multiple facets involved. However, these multiple facets also indicate multiple points of entry for improvement efforts. It is important for states to conceptualize these improvement efforts as part of a larger system of human capital management so that each effort builds as part of a larger sustainable system. States should be able to determine their own high-priority needs based on their own data systems. They can then use the action guide in the appendix of this paper to focus and guide their efforts. Building on strategies already underway or implementing strategies addressed in this paper, states should be able to quickly mobilize a plan to access the new federal funds to extend or deepen their work by providing targeted solutions to identified challenges.

The TQ Center stands ready to assist regional comprehensive centers and states as they work towards securing funding and creating systemic, quality systems for the ongoing support and development of an effective teaching force.

Coming Soon:

Summary table of highly qualified teacher state plans to address teacher distribution

Appendix: State Action Guide for Using ARRA Funding to Improve Teacher Quality

Before thinking through the following action guide, states should first take the following steps:

- Identify what funding streams you are trying to access.
- Familiarize yourself with the requirements of those funding streams and determine who the decision makers are.
- Identify what you already have in place and what you need to create in order to be eligible to access these funds.
- Identify what resources are available to you to help you navigate this process.

The resources available on the Learning Point Associates Education Recovery and Reinvestment Center website can be used to find answers to the following initial questions. In addition to providing links to information on federal guidance, the site also provides state-specific resources.

Teacher Quality Needs	
Question	**Responses or Action Steps**
1. What are the primary teacher-quality priority needs in your state or district? • These needs should be based on data, such as equitable distribution of teachers, shortage of teachers in a geographic or content area, or overall shortage of highly qualified teachers (HQTs).	
2. If there is a shortage of HQTs in a specific school, district, or subject area, why does that shortage exist? • For example, an increase in student population or a large population of teachers retiring because of age requires a greater focus on recruitment efforts versus a greater focus on retention efforts if the shortages are a result of high attrition of teachers for reasons other than retirement.	
Measures of Success	
Question	**Responses or Action Steps**
3. What would success look like in the identified priority need(s)? • It is important to identify the measurable goal to determine the types of data needed. For example, if success is based on increased retention of teachers, how many years would constitute retention?	
Key Stakeholders	
Question	**Responses or Action Steps**
4. Who are the stakeholders and potential partners that can be accessed to address the identified priority need? • Examples include teachers unions and institutions of higher education.	

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and is a collaborative effort of ETS, Learning Point Associates, and Vanderbilt University.

NATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE CENTER FOR TEACHER QUALITY   877-322-8700 | WWW.TQSOURCE.ORG   1100 17th Street NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20036-4632

11

Data	
Question	**Responses or Action Steps**
5. What data are needed to inform efforts and accomplishments?	
6. Do you have the data necessary to understand the specific challenges and determine if the strategies are successful?	
7. Do you need to create new data systems or modify your data elements or procedures?	
Strategies	
Question	**Responses or Action Steps**
8. What actions or strategies can your state or district take to address the areas of need? • In addition to strategies listed in this paper, states should look at their HQT State Plans, which have a listing of efforts and initiatives undertaken to address challenge areas.	
Research Base	
Question	**Responses or Action Steps**
9. What evidence or indication do you have that the strategies will work? • For example, if the effort is currently under way in your state or district, do you have data supporting its effectiveness?	
Your Action Plan	
Question	**Responses or Action Steps**
19. Which departments or individuals within your state or district need to be involved in the action plan?	
11. Do you need to convene stakeholders? • If so, who? • What steps do you need to take to convene the stakeholders?	
12. Do you need to update your data? • If so, who needs to be involved in the process? • What steps do you need to take to update the data?	
13. What is your timeline?	
14. What are your benchmarks?	

NATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE CENTER FOR TEACHER QUALITY   877-322-8700 | WWW.TQSOURCE.ORG   1100 17th Street NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20036-4632

12