



CPEC

Update on CPEC's Improving Teacher Quality Program

California Postsecondary Education Commission
www.cpec.ca.gov

Report 10-14 • September 2010 • by Marcia Trott

The summer of 2010 has been busy and challenging for the Improving Teacher Quality program and its staff. Since the June Commission meeting, staff have awarded grants in two competitions, monitored current projects with more than a dozen site visits, and — especially — have been dealing with proposed federal changes that threaten the future of the entire program.

Proposed Federal Changes to the ITQ Program

The Obama Administration and Congress are working on plans to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), now known as the No Child Left Behind Act. The administration has proposed a new framework for programs that focus on teaching and school leadership. Under the proposed rewrite of ESEA, state education agencies such as the California Department of Education would offer competitive grants to school districts for teacher preparation and professional development. Funding would come from restructuring the current ITQ State Grants Program and consolidating it with a program from the previously authorized Higher Education Act that targets pre-service training of teachers. The current ITQ program, administered through state higher education agencies like CPEC, would cease to exist under this new framework.

The administration believes that the new framework offers flexibility to school districts, which it sees as consumers of these programs, and increases accountability for outcomes. U.S. Department of Education (ED) officials indicate that universities can participate in grants if districts invite them, but would likely not be mandatory partners. In effect, ED views universities as possible contractors for professional development programs, not as partners with an equal interest in constructing and delivering the programs.

These developments were discussed by staff from state higher education agencies at ED's annual Title II-A Conference held in Washington, D.C. in June. In the conference sessions, attended by ITQ Administrator Marcia Trott, ED officials emphasized that teacher preparation and professional development programs must meet the needs of the consumers. Little was said about the role of universities in teacher preparation or in-service teacher professional development.

Commission Executive Director Karen Humphrey joined Ms. Trott in Washington. During the visit, they met with Congresswoman Judy Chu, staff of the House and Senate education committees, and staff of several California Congress members. They also met with ED staff and governmental affairs staff from UC and CSU. In some meetings, they were joined by Paul Lingenfelter, Executive Director of the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), who shared SHEEO's perspective on the proposed changes in ESEA. As of September 2010, drafts of the new legislation have not been released, and it is unlikely that the measure will be considered during the current Congressional session. However, congressional staff said it was helpful to hear CPEC's input at this early stage in the reauthorization process.

Other ITQ Activities

Panel Discussion on K-12 and Higher Education partnerships

ITQ Coordinator Natalie Sidarous facilitated a panel discussion at a June 23 meeting sponsored by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, the California Department of Education, the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association, and CPEC. The audience included education deans and faculty as well as K-12 school administrators.

The panel focused on the changes to federal funding that might occur with reauthorization of ESEA, and explained how federal funds can foster lasting partnerships between K-12 agencies and universities. Panelists were Christina Christie from UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, who did research on CPEC's evaluation process, and Lynn Beck, dean of University of the Pacific School of Education, who is director of a current ITQ project. Also on the panel was Judi Wilson of the San Joaquin County Office of Education, who managed a project that continued for 17 years after funding expired.

SHEEO Policy Conference

Ms. Trott and ITQ Coordinator Natalie Sidarous attended the P-16 Professional Development Collaborative meeting for state ITQ directors, held at SHEEO's 2010 Higher Education Policy Conference in August in Providence, Rhode Island. At the meeting, Ms. Trott explained the scientifically based research CPEC has required in order to measure the effectiveness of its projects, and led a discussion of how collecting data helps establish the value of the ITQ program.

Publicizing ITQ

CPEC has published a guide for campus media relations offices with guidelines for announcing ITQ grants. The guide has sample news releases, sample letters for contacting elected officials, and ideas for organizing check presentation events. Also available is a brochure on the current grants. CPEC staff have updated ITQ's website at www.cpec.ca.gov/federalprograms/teacherquality.asp. Several publications were added, including the final research reports for the 2005 grants.

Project Monitoring

Ms. Trott and Ms. Sidarous have conducted more than a dozen monitoring visits since the last Commission meeting. Almost all projects hold summer institutes that provide intensive content information and teaching strategies to their participants. This year, institutes have focused on standards-based content, pedagogy, strategies for English Language Learners, team building, and leadership training.

New Awards and Ongoing ITQ Projects

2010 Teacher-Based Reform (T-BAR), Phase II

In August, CPEC awarded two master grants of \$1,010,000 each to UC Riverside and CSU Chico. These three-year grants enable university faculty to work with 24 teams of three to five teachers from high-need schools to improve their teaching skills and content knowledge.

The universities will select teacher teams to carry out individualized two-year projects. The new grants expand the program to cover the entire state. UC Riverside will work in Riverside, Orange, Imperial, and San Diego counties. CSU Chico will cover inland areas from the Oregon border south to San Bernardino County, and will team with CSU Fresno, CSU San Bernardino, and CSU Bakersfield.

2010 ITQ Projects — four-year grants ranging from \$500,000 to \$1 million

UC Davis, Twin Rivers USD — *Closing the Achievement Gap Write Now: Using an Innovative Literacy Program to Strengthen Teacher Practices and Pedagogy*. \$926,286

CSU Long Beach, Long Beach USD — *Evidence-based, Quality Professional Development in Algebra for Learners' Success*. \$996,284

UC Davis, Robla School District, Sacramento County Office of Education — *Strategic Alliance II*. \$525,449

CSU Long Beach, Long Beach USD, The History Project at CSU Long Beach & Dominguez Hills — *Content-Area Literacy and Academic Success for Students*. \$920,395

CSU San Bernardino, Coachella Valley USD, WestEd/K-12 Alliance, UC Berkeley's Lawrence Hall of Science — *Science Writing Impacts Real Learning*. \$991,537

UCLA, Los Angeles USD — *Fremont Achievement in Mathematics for Excellence*. \$866,544

UC Irvine, Vanguard University, Santa Ana USD, Orange County Department of Education, UCI Center for Educational Partnerships — *Integrating Academic Literacy to Close the Achievement Gap*. \$993,176

Fresno Pacific University, Tulare City School District, WestEd/K-12 Alliance — *Bringing Language and Science Together in Tulare*. \$958,807

UC Berkeley, Oakland USD — *Collaborative Approach to Learning: Bridging Language and Science Teaching*. \$999,677

UC Irvine, San Diego USD — *Teaching Artist Project Grades 3–5*. \$1,000,000

UCLA and UC Davis were awarded T-BAR grants in 2009. This first phase of the T-BAR initiative was so successful that UCLA and UC Davis have been awarded additional funding for a second cohort of 24 teacher teams each. By September 2011, CPEC will be funding nearly 150 teacher teams statewide through the four master grants.

2010 Grants — K-12 Teacher Professional Development Initiative

The 2010 RFP differed from the targeted projects of recent years, offering significant latitude for the types of projects eligible for funding. The 2010 RFP did not specify grade level, discipline, or instructional methodology. CPEC received 40 proposals and accepted 39 for evaluation by readers.

Of the proposals reviewed, 12 were received from UC, 16 from CSU, and 11 from independent institutions. The 16 finalists were interviewed in June and recommendations for 10 grants were made to Director Humphrey in August. She approved the projects, which range from about \$500,000 to \$1 million, and grantees will begin work in fall.

Looking Forward

Scientifically Based Research Conference

Since 2005, all grant recipients must provide scientifically based evaluation research on the outcomes of their projects. The research directors for the projects now meet annually each fall to review their findings. The next meeting will be held on October 6–7 at The Atrium Hotel in Irvine.

Cooperation with California Department of Education

Staff continue to work with CDE on a report discussing the professional development needs of in-service teachers and describing how Title II-A programs help meet these needs. Staff are also assisting CDE to provide information for multimedia materials through an agreement with Apple Inc. CDE's iTunes U portal will provide free content on K-12 professional development, such as videos, audio recordings, and text documents. Educators will be able to access the materials using desktop computers, laptops, and mobile devices. iTunes U will leverage CPEC's ITQ resources and share them with schools that have limited opportunities for professional development programs.