The Changing Role of Higher Education In Preparing California's Teachers

A Roundtable Policy Discussion
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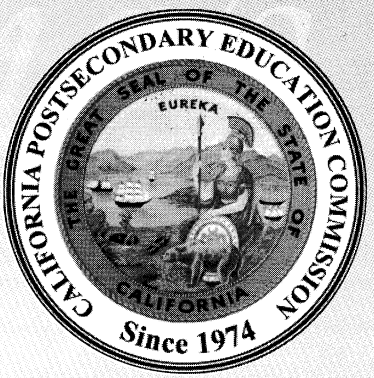

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The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
and its 15 member states work collaboratively to expand educational access and excellence for all citizens of the West. By promoting innovation, cooperation, resource sharing, and sound public policy among states and institutions, the Commission strengthens higher education's contribution to the region's social, economic, and civic life.

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To the Governor,
Honorable Members of the Legislature, and
interested parties:

Times are changing rapidly in education. Californians, from educators to policymakers to parents, are concerned about the quality of education that students are receiving. The K-12 system is under immense pressure to find thousands of new teachers every year at a time when it is increasingly evident that it is critical to have highly qualified, well-trained teachers in every classroom. In addition, many are rightly concerned about the lack of progress on bringing diversity to the teacher workforce that reflects the diversity of the student body.

All of these concerns make the role of higher education in preparing teachers for California's classrooms more important than ever. That higher education understands the changing dynamics and is eager to meet the challenges can be seen on many fronts. Schools of education are expanding and revising programs. There are partnerships that are being formed or renewed between universities and school districts. Increasingly, there is a commitment by higher education to reach beyond the degree into the classroom to support new teachers.

This report, *the Changing Role of Higher Education in Preparing California's Teachers*, reflects a roundtable policy discussion conducted in May 2001 to look at the many changes underway. It also is the beginning of a promising dialogue to promote the partnerships we need to ensure that we have a seamless, effective system for producing the high-quality teacher workforce that California requires.

We hope this report is useful to policymakers and educators as we move forward to meet the challenges of educating students in an increasingly complex world.

Respectfully submitted,

Warren H. Fox
Executive Director

Roundtable Policy Forum: The Changing Role of Higher Education in Preparing California's Teachers

Introduction

California's education system faces a highly complex and challenging environment. There is not only a growing need for teachers but also high expectations for their ability to help students learn what they need to know to be productive citizens in the 21st century. The need for teachers is great. Current projections for California call for 25,000 to 30,000 new teachers per year over the next 10 years. This demand is based on enrollment increases, retirement rates, general teacher attrition, and class-size reduction efforts. At the same time, the strong drive for accountability is raising the bar on what teachers need to teach and what students need to learn.

This new environment requires the state to foster and embrace collaboration between the public schools and higher education, strengthening the dialogue and partnership needed for a systemic, effective, and harmonious system of education. Ensuring continuous, uninterrupted collaboration in teacher education, training, and ongoing professional development will revitalize the entire education system and restore respect and support to the teaching profession. Cooperation is essential if sustained improvement at all levels of education is to take place.

If the state is fully committed to a "qualified teacher for every child" and that "no student is left behind," then it needs a systemic and strategic approach to address the issues: recruiting prospective teachers, preparing and supporting new teachers, providing for their professional development, and strengthening accountability for all teacher education programs.

With these concepts in mind, the California Postsecondary Education Commission believes that considerable attention should be given to a responsive, thoughtful, collaborative, and productive effort to address the preparation and professional development of teachers. While there are multiple initiatives underway within California to address these issues, little coordination exists nor is there an articulated state policy on teacher preparation partnerships among the providers and consumers of teacher preparation programs. The Commission seeks to eliminate barriers and redundancies within and across agencies, schools, and institutions of higher education. Furthermore, it seeks to facilitate and ensure that systemic linkages are forged between teacher education programs and school improvement efforts.

One step toward these collaborative partnerships is to establish and continue an ongoing dialogue among the key players. On May 10, 2001, the Commission, with support and assistance from the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, conducted an initial policy roundtable to begin the dialogue. More than 40 people attended, including legislators, policy experts, and representatives from a wide range of education institutions.

The following report summarizes presentations by the three keynote speakers at the roundtable and provides highlights of the policy discussions among participants. (Comments by individuals are paraphrased rather than quoted directly.)

National Perspective on Teacher Preparation Issues
Eric Hirsch

Eric Hirsch is Program Manager of Education for the National Conference of State Legislatures. In the four years he has worked for the organization, he has written numerous reports, organized meetings, testified to legislatures, and presented at conferences about issues of teacher quality, charter schools, school choice and school governance. He has a secondary school teaching certificate in social studies in Massachusetts and is currently completing his doctorate in political science.

The issue of teacher quality is moving to the forefront for policy makers all across the nation. The statistics offer compelling evidence: 2,000 bills introduced last year, with as many as 4,000 proposed this year. California has been very active in this area, but it is not alone. Many of the states face the same concerns:

- With the aging of the teacher population, retirement is expected to deplete the number of working teachers at an accelerated pace in the coming years. Today nearly one-third of teachers have been in the profession more than 20 years. In Utah, half the teachers will be ready to retire over the next decade.
- Increasing student enrollment, especially in the western states, is creating an additional demand for teachers – and particularly in hard-to-staff fields, such as special education, math, and science.
- State policies, such as class-size reduction, are also creating an increased demand for teachers. About half of the states have adopted some form of class-size reduction.
- Research has demonstrated a critical link between teacher quality and student achievement. The research results have been amassing for years but now are coming to the attention of policy makers across the nation, adding to the pressure to not only find more teachers but also to ensure that they are highly qualified and well prepared to teach.

These forces are driving the large number of bill introductions, but other factors come into play that make the passage of many of these pieces of legislation unlikely. Policy makers and legislators generally agree about the importance of teacher quality, the desirability of developing a set of standards for what teachers should know and be able to do, and the need to hold them accountable. But turning that consensus into practical, effective policies and programs is not easy.

One problem is that the data are inconsistent and therefore difficult to compare. In what is largely a decentralized system, there is little consistency of definitions or reporting requirements. In Vermont, for instance, the records of teacher credentials are such that it cannot be determined whether the person with a credential is alive or dead. However, at the other end of the spectrum, states such as Georgia, Kentucky and North Carolina have such sophisticated tracking systems that they can tell how many out-of-field teachers are conducting classes throughout the school day. These systems are expensive to implement and demanding to keep current. But without credible, consistent data it is difficult to know what is going on and then assess whether policy changes are needed.

Another area that makes policy implementation challenging is the number of different actors involved. Teachers, administrators, districts, the higher education system, state policy makers – most statutes don't delineate clear accountability among these many players for ensuring that teachers are adequately prepared and performing well.

And finally, the whole issue of governance is very difficult. There is little consensus on how to balance the role and responsibilities of the state in making policies that impact teachers versus the district autonomy that has been a hallmark of the country's schools for centuries. This is made more complex by the widespread interest in addressing the issue of equity of opportunity and resources between districts.

All of these factors contribute to an environment where policy changes can be incremental, slow in coming, and sometimes less than effective. Let's look at three specific areas: teacher preparation, professional development, and recruitment.

Equity of Resources

Q. Are states paying attention to the issue of equity – the differential in teacher quality and resources that students face?

Hirsch: The states really haven't tackled this issue effectively as most hiring and compensation decisions are made, most often through bargaining, at the local level. Some solutions range from creating incentives for teachers to go to hard-to-staff districts to improving working conditions there. All of it takes resources. But there's a teacher salary equity lawsuit in Tennessee now, so the issue should be getting increased attention.

Teacher Preparation

State legislatures have approached the topic of teacher preparation gingerly, often because of the education schools' insistence on academic freedom to form programs in the manner they determine is best. Legislatures have been reluctant to impose too much regulation on teacher preparation programs, relying instead on modifying certification and licensure requirements as an indirect method of driving change in preparation. For instance, in 2000 the Indiana legislature required that all new elementary teachers complete 12 semester hours in reading instruction and the Maryland State Board enacted a similar requirement in 1999. These requirements, like those in many states, stick to the "input" side rather than addressing the content of what teachers learn about reading instruction or the "output" – the ability to effectively teach reading.

One tool that all states have for addressing teacher preparation is accreditation. But the process is not generally well understood by policy makers and has rarely been used to terminate programs or influence the design of teacher preparation curriculum. For example, Vermont passed its Results Oriented Program Approval process in 1991, but few programs have significantly changed and no schools have been shut down. The sanctions involved could be significant, but to date have not been applied. Colorado has closed some programs, but with the goal of consolidating duplicative efforts rather than as a response to an assessment of the performance of teacher preparation programs.

Nonetheless, there has been some movement toward focusing less on inputs and more on outcomes in teacher preparation programs. More than half of the states have created or are moving to performance-based standards to direct the design of teacher preparation programs and to justify recommendation for initial licensure. This is occurring primarily through the use of performance assessments. However, questions about how to assess actual teaching performance remains a stumbling block for states as they try to move forward. Three examples:

- In Texas, a statewide rating system for educator preparation programs requires first-time pass rates on certification exams of 70 percent and an overall pass rate of 80 percent. Schools are also rated on six metrics, including the number of applicants and the number completing the program.
- In New York, programs face the prospect of losing accreditation if at least 80 percent of the graduates do not pass assessments. This accountability measure has just been implemented, so there are no results yet.
- In Georgia, the state system is requiring additional course work in expected teaching areas under a 10-principle improvement plan. Schools within the system offer a graduate guarantee. Under the guarantee – a concept that is spreading elsewhere – schools of education offer support to beginning teachers and remediation if required during the early years of the teacher's career.

Sanctions on Education Schools

Q. Are there any states that are using sanctions if education schools don't produce quality teachers?

Hirsch: All states have accreditation programs, but they simply aren't using them to improve education preparation programs. And in fact, many states still don't have effective ways of assessing teachers. Connecticut is furthest along with their portfolio assessment. They evaluate teachers who are moving up from provisional licenses. About 16 percent don't pass the first time. The system took years to create and it's expensive. It really requires a stable political and economic environment, and most states just aren't there.

In addition to activities targeting traditional teacher preparation programs, many states are also building alternative methods for producing teachers. Alternative routes are becoming very popular in California, as well as in other states – including grow-your-own programs, internships, and others. Forty-one states and the District of Columbia report having some type of alternative teacher training certification, with at least 25 of those states reporting an increase in the number of alternative licensees over the last five years. Universities and schools of education are some of the most prominent providers of training under alternative routes and there is a tremendous amount of variation in the amount of support offered prior to teaching as well as when the teacher is in the classroom.

We are just beginning to understand the effect of alternative certification programs. Research supports that programs have increased the diversity of the teaching workforce, but evidence is mixed on retention rates and what components of program design are most important. Another aspect is that traditional programs may be beginning to be less attractive in states with alternative programs. For instance, districts in Colorado can create teacher-in-residence programs in partnership with a university to attract candidates with bachelor degrees into teaching. Many of these programs put these teaching candidates in the classroom with very little training. In comparison, the state requires traditional programs to provide at least 800 hours of classroom work and very rigorous standards before becoming certified. Many students choose the teacher-in-residence alternative so that they can earn a living while obtaining their credential.

Induction programs are another way to increase the number of teachers who find success and remain in the profession. Twenty-eight states and the District of Columbia have induction programs, but there is wide disparity across states in the percentage of new teachers participating, as well as in program design and funding. This means that induction is a different experience depending on where teachers are. Mentor selection, training, compensation and release time are seen as critical components to the success of such programs.

Professional Development

It is believed that sustained, content-specific professional development is the most likely way to inspire new teaching practices and increase student achievement. This, however, is not the kind of professional development that most teachers receive. While 96 percent participate in professional development, only 30 percent nationwide received in-depth study in a specific field and only 15 percent received nine or more hours of this type of training. Thirty-five states mandate professional development for licensure renewal, but most require a certain number of clock hours and do not differentiate between different kinds of professional development activities.

In addition to varying requirements, there are wide variations in spending across districts. Missouri requires districts to spend 1 percent of their budgets on professional development; Minnesota requires 2 percent. Many states, including California, are creating special institutes and academies that focus on literacy, math, writing and other topics.

Expanded School Year

Q. Are states looking at lengthening school years to allow more time for professional development?

Hirsch: There's been a lot of legislation, but little has passed because of the economics involved – expanding the school year means increasing teacher salaries. In North Carolina, for instance, the Excellent Schools Act of 1997 set standards, but the state's poor financial situation means there may not be enough resources to raise teacher salaries. In Alabama, they are committed to raising teacher salaries to the national average but are struggling.

Teacher Recruitment

States are working to both expand the pipeline of prospective teachers and to distribute qualified teachers to hard-to-staff areas. To address the recruitment challenges, states have passed a variety of policies. For example, Texas universities receive more funding for training teachers in critical areas. Other policies include:

- Increasing teacher salaries.
- Strengthening early outreach programs to interest students in teaching as a career.
- Developing grow-your-own programs, where districts support students who return as teachers when they have earned their credentials.
- Providing scholarships and other tuition assistance.
- Streamlining hiring processes.
- Luring retirees back to the classroom.
- Providing bonuses and other incentives in critical geographic and subject areas.
- Enhancing mobility from out of state and within.

Teacher Diversity

Q. What are states doing about attracting teachers who look more like the students they teach? How are they getting around the fact that high standards may put potential teachers of color at a disadvantage because of the lack of strong preparation in their early school years?

Hirsch: Legislatures are feeling that they ought to hold all teachers to high standards. It's very similar to the discussions surrounding student testing and assessment. They are addressing ways to increase the number of students of color entering the teacher preparation pipeline. These include forgivable loans, cadet programs to promote early commitment to teaching as a career, and grow-your-own programs. Connecticut has a program to provide $20,000 each to 50 minority students for teacher preparation. It has been reported that they don't have enough applicants, even though the state has the second highest teacher salaries in the nation.

Conclusion

Much of the pressure that California is facing to find and develop more teachers is also being felt across the country. And to varying degrees, state legislatures are moving to address the challenges with a variety of initiatives and programs to change teacher preparation programs, to make professional development more effective, and to enhance teacher recruitment efforts.

California's Current Policy Environment and Overview of New Directions in Teacher Education
Gary Hart

Gary Hart has been involved in education policy formation for many years and has served in a variety of positions in California state government. He was Governor Gray Davis' first Secretary for Education and prior to that was a member of the California Legislature for 20 years. Hart was chairman of the Senate Education Committee for 12 years and is the author of significant laws concerning charter schools, teacher professional development, class-size reduction, academic standards and higher education bonds. Hart is founder and currently co-director of the California State University Institute for Education Reform, which focuses on education policy work in the fields of teacher education and recruitment, effective classroom practices, and charter schools.

When experts talk about research and the growing demand for teachers driving concern nationwide about teacher quality, it's very familiar – not only familiar but even more pronounced in California because of the magnitude of our severe teacher shortage. California is a large and complex state and there are no easy answers to the need for more and better-prepared teachers.

Having said that, it's also important to recognize that a lot is going on in California to address these issues. With so many initiatives moving forward, it would be difficult to be comprehensive, so this presentation is intended simply to touch on some trends and issues that relate directly to teacher recruitment, preparation and professional development. The focus of my remarks is on those initiatives affecting higher education directly.

Beginning Early

One definite trend is that we are trying to engage students early so that they begin to think about teaching as a career well before they embark on a fifth-year, post-baccalaureate program. Because California's traditional program is designed to place all the teacher education and classroom experience in a single year, a student has very little exposure to what K-12 teaching is all about before he or she graduates with a bachelor's degree. Many become teachers by default rather than by design, opting for the fifth year only because no other career path has caught their fancy.

One initiative that addresses this and that is moving ahead at campuses throughout the California State University System is the new blended approach. These programs introduce teacher preparation courses in the undergraduate years, establishing the relationship between content and pedagogy. Many are designed to allow students to complete their degree and obtain a preliminary credential within four or four and a half intensive years. All provide ample opportunity for students to learn first-hand, through tutoring and classroom observation, what teaching is all about. This early exposure to the realities of the classroom appropriately discourages some students from pursuing a teaching career – but also deepens and solidifies the commitment of many others. The downside is that these programs are modest at this time. We really need to get the entire university at each site more actively involved in bringing teacher education into all academic departments and not remain the exclusive domain of schools of education and liberal studies departments.

Collective Bargaining

Q. Local collective bargaining affects a whole range of issues, from salaries to class size to professional development. Can we maintain a focus on what needs to be done to have more and better-quality teachers without taking on collective bargaining?

Hart: It's an important issue that no one has an answer to but I believe there are some encouraging signs. For example, unions have been supportive of National Board certification, which can deepen teacher knowledge and provide for salary differentials. Unions also are involved in the Peer Assistance and Review process. So we need to and can find ways to approach problems that unions can live with. What I believe is the toughest issue is the traditional salary system, which rewards oftentimes irrelevant college course work. We spend more on traditional college courses than on all other forms of professional development. We need to re-engineer the way teachers are compensated.

Another development is the creation of education minors at some University of California campuses. This, once again, is a useful way to introduce undergraduates to teaching as a career. The UC system has committed to doubling the number of teacher candidates it produces, and the education minor may well help them achieve that goal.

The state's Teaching and Reading Development Partnership grants are also having an impact. These encourage community colleges to partner with universities and K-12 schools to create a pipeline that extends from the high schools through the four-year institutions. Community college students tutor elementary students, getting an early feel for the rewards of teaching. Community college students are guided on a teacher credential track that allows them to earn teacher education credits that are easily transferred to a four-year college. About half the community colleges in the state have received grants and are in various stages of creating, implementing or expanding their programs.

Internship Programs

Internship programs have existed at least since the 1960s, but in the last half dozen years there has been a substantial increase in people using this alternative to become teachers. These programs are designed for people who already have subject matter competency but are lacking pedagogy. Typically, interns are given introductory training and then placed in a classroom while they complete their teacher education. Most of the programs are partnerships between universities and school districts, although some are completely based in a school district.

Traditionally, the idea of putting someone in a classroom before they had completed a teacher education program was viewed with skepticism, but with the substantial increase in emergency-permit teachers throughout the state internships are now viewed by higher education as an attractive alternative. With state support growing from $2 million to $30 million in the last few years, more school districts and institutions of higher education are embracing them. Internships are very appealing to teacher candidates because they provide salary support while the candidate continues his or her training. This is an especially attractive feature to re-entry candidates, who often have family responsibilities and cannot forgo earning a living while completing credential requirements.

Pre-Internship Programs

There are an estimated 40,000 emergency permits now in use – a discouraging figure because despite all the work that has been done in recent years, the number continues to grow. Close to 15 percent of the state's teachers are in classrooms without a credential. The proportion is even higher in high-poverty schools, where the needs of the students are such that we really should be placing our very best teachers there.

The California State University System has responded with a creative approach, establishing the CalStateTEACH program. Those who enroll can complete coursework using distance learning – computers, videos and printed materials – although they also come together as a cohort several times a year. More than 700 people are in various stages of the program, which just graduated its first credentialed teachers in March.

Professional Development

Q. Now that seven out of eight UC campuses have minors in education, the system will become an increasing source of teachers. The next step is looking at what role the campuses can play in professional development. What trend do you see there?

Hart: There have been some recent surveys about teacher attitudes toward professional development. These indicate that the strongest negatives are coming from senior teachers in the secondary system. They want academic enrichment in their subject field, not classroom management techniques and other courses better suited for beginning teachers. One thing that will help is more dialogue between faculty members and practitioners, so that professional development is more relevant to teacher needs.

Diversity

The diversity of California's teacher workforce is improving, but not as rapidly as the student population is changing. Today there are more Latino than Anglo students, but the proportion of Latino teachers lags far behind. But the numbers of African American and Asian teachers are relatively proportionate.

This is an area where the work that community colleges are doing is very important because so many students of color begin their higher education there. In addition, California has a very successful paraprofessional program. This takes people already in the classroom as teacher aides – often people of color – and supports them through the process of obtaining a bachelor's degree and credential. One advantage is that the participants tend to be highly committed to teaching because they have already experienced the classroom and know both the challenges and rewards.

Induction

One of the hallmark programs in California is Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA), which has been evaluated and found to be extremely successful in supporting new teachers and reducing very substantially the attrition rate among new teachers. One big issue is how to scale up to include all beginning teachers without diminishing the program's quality and the effectiveness. A major difficulty is finding enough veteran teachers to provide mentoring without removing a majority of the best teachers from the classrooms. This is a problem particularly in low-performing schools with high numbers of emergency-permit teachers and few veterans to provide mentoring. One of the great fringe benefits of BTSA is that it has fostered many strong partnerships between institutes of higher education and school districts as they work together to make BTSA effective.

Teacher Quality

As California moves to a standards-based education system, it's important that teacher preparation be modified to reflect rigorous new standards. In the past, many education professors have not been particularly interested in or in philosophic agreement with the standards – nor has higher education been consulted much as the standards were developed. Instead, in general they have remained committed to their own approach to teacher preparation, regardless of the new expectations of and demands on teachers. There has definitely been a tension between academic freedom, state policy, and district preferences.

But California is developing a new credentialing process with the intent of ensuring that teacher preparation is aligned with the state standards. The new two-tiered credential will set in place initial requirements for a person who is completing teacher preparation and then final requirements for the end of the induction period. At some point in the future, the state will require an actual assessment of a teacher's ability to teach. Knowledge of how to teach to the state standards will be a critical component of the assessment process.

Program Accountability

Q. We have a number of new programs as well as old ones – but no one is responsible for accountability. There's never any conclusion or paradigm shift. With a lack of statewide control over education, is it possible to hold the program originators accountable?

Hart: We do have a fragmented system – a state Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board of Education, the Secretary for Education, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), and others. But the Joint Committee on the Master Plan for Education will provide an opportunity to address governance matters. It does seem to me that we have a regulatory mechanism in place – a licensing commission (the CTC) with the regulatory authority to take a thoughtful approach to the redesign of teacher preparation. And that's what they are doing with the new credential process.

Professional Development

Historically, teachers have received salary awards for their years of seniority and number of college credits. Too often there is a laissez faire approach that allows teachers to take whatever courses they choose to advance on the salary schedule. Today, we know that professional development should be much more focused and based on what a school needs. California has three strong initiatives that address this issue:

- The California Subject Matter Projects have long been a major provider of professional development opportunities. Most recently, they have been directed to target low-performing schools and link content to the state standards.
- The Governor's Professional Development Institutes have grown substantially in a short period of time and the governor's 2001-02 budget proposal calls for massive expansion. These focus on early reading, algebra, and language acquisition, offering high-quality, intense training during the summer.
- National Board certification. California's teachers can be rewarded with $10,000 upon becoming board certified and can receive an additional $20,000 if they then teach in a low-performing school for four years. In addition, school districts have added salary enhancements (in Los Angeles, 15 percent). We're beginning to see the development of support networks to help teachers through the certification process, and higher education is beginning to play a role by developing master degree programs that incorporate board certification.

Conclusion

We are entering some challenging times, as the economy slows and the budget is depleted by the energy crisis. California has been generous with investments in teacher quality in the past few years. The challenge will be to sustain these programs in the current economy. Previous history indicates that retrenchment usually affects education spending because it is such a major part of the state budget.

Regardless of budgetary issues, higher education has a key role to play as California moves forward with its many teacher preparation and professional development initiatives. These institutions not only are already participating in many of these programs but also can help us monitor our progress, determine what is working, and guide future modifications.

Improving the Linkage Between Higher Education and K-12
Senator Dede Alpert

Senator Dede Alpert (D-San Diego) is widely recognized as one of the Legislature's foremost advocates for public education. An assemblywoman for six years and in her second term as senator, Alpert currently chairs the Senate Appropriations Committee, the Joint Committee on the Master Plan for Education – Kindergarten through University, the Select Committee on Family, Child and Youth Development, and the Select Committee on Genetics and Public Policy. She was recognized as "Legislator of the Year" by the California State University System and "Senator of the Year" by the California School Boards Association in 1998.

From the beginning, when the first Master Plan for Higher Education was created in 1960, the embedded policy has been that California wants to ensure a high-quality education for every student – regardless of wealth, color or language. In particular, the plan envisioned everyone having the opportunity to participate in the higher education system. This was a student-centered rather than institution-centered philosophy that has put our state in good stead throughout the world. Other states and other countries point to our Master Plan as a model.

There were hopes that the first plan would guide the state for four or five years at least. But with a review every decade and some modifications, it has guided our efforts for 40 years. Now we are embarked on a thorough review with the goal of expanding the master plan to all levels of education, improving the system and making it seamless from kindergarten through higher education – a goal that will require the different systems to work together in ways and to a degree that they never have before.

To conduct the review, we've established working groups with representatives from the many interest groups. We have education officials and education associations, but we also have practitioners, researchers, business leaders and civic organizations. It makes the groups large but ensures that a variety of perspectives are brought into play as we delve into details. There are seven groups (with an additional one working on birth-through-five issues):

- Student learning
- Alternative models for teacher preparation
- Professional development
- Workplace conditions
- Governance
- Finance
- Facilities

Each group is focused on using research to inform their work, rather than relying on anecdotes or considering political pressures. Their work is expected to be complete by the end of this year and we will begin writing the Master Plan in January 2002. Even before we begin that process, we can see several important trends that will be woven into the new plan. These include:

- **Integration Across Systems** – Traditionally, higher education has had no responsibility for K-12 education and therefore little involvement. Their job was well defined: Take care of higher education. But today it is clear that none of the pieces will work as well if they don't work together. Students in the K-12 system end up in higher ed. Higher ed prepares the teachers for K-12. They are inextricably linked.

- **Quality Teacher Distribution** – The growing reality revealed by research is that the quality of the teacher is key to student achievement. Some other education reforms may have been easier or more popular, but essentially it is the relationship between the student and the teacher that counts. That means that every student should learn from a qualified, effective teacher. And that requires far better distribution of qualified, effective teachers than we have today.
- **Governance** – California does not have a unified, single system for governing education. But we do have a Constitution that says the state will provide education for all children. Ultimately, the state is responsible and must take a leadership role in teacher recruitment, preparation, induction, and professional development. When it comes to accountability for teacher preparation and performance, some universities are beginning to take on this issue by providing guarantees and ongoing support.
- **Education Leadership** – Often when we look at why a particular school is doing well despite income levels, language barriers and other at-risk factors, we find that it is the education leader at that particular school. We cannot replicate those individuals, but we need to look much more closely at how education leadership is developed and what we need to do to make these positions more attractive and workable.
- **Diversity** – A very important issue is what we can do to make sure that teachers and faculty reflect the diversity of the student population. How can we address the gap between the workforce and the students? How can we attract them into the teaching profession and then into positions of leadership?

Data Systems

Q. We want to see accountability but we often can't get the data to see if our investments in new programs are paying off. Is the Master Plan going to address data collection?

Alpert: Data collection is an important issue. Currently we have no way to deal with a particular cohort of students and understand the effect of different programs. Data consistency and information sharing is something we need to address, and the Master Plan will reflect that.

Rewriting the Master Plan is not simply an exercise. The Legislature is strongly committed to improving education and expects the public institutions to be part of the solution. A lot of the work that is done is piecemeal. The importance of the Master Plan is that we are doing something more comprehensive and more systemic that can guide us into the future. We are renewing our commitment to join together to create a system that provides high-quality educational opportunities at all levels. We are addressing how we can build the capacity to produce the teachers we need and want for our classrooms. And we are very much focused on the learners and what they need. We recognize how important this is to the future of California.

We have a small window of opportunity at this time because attention is focused on this issue and people are interested and care about the outcome. With the help of all of the players and stakeholders, we can produce something that will not simply sit on a shelf but will actually make a difference.

Roundtable Discussion

With the variety of perspectives at the roundtable forum, the discussion of recruitment, teacher preparation, and professional development issues was rich and broad ranging. The following is a synthesis of many of the individual comments.

Recruitment

There was general consensus that it is difficult to attract people into a profession with low pay, poor working conditions and eroded respect. One participant directly attributed the problem of teacher shortages to the rationality of the marketplace. "It's simple economics," he said. "People are acting very reasonably. We say teachers are different because they are dedicated, that they will put up with low pay and poor conditions. But it just isn't true." He offered the thought that the more the state tries to regulate its way out of shortages, the more impossible the situation becomes. He advocated looking at ways to make the market work to attract people, even if the answers turn out to be highly controversial politically.

Another participant agreed that salaries are too low and argued that despite the common saying that money shouldn't be thrown at problems, in fact the things that discourage people from entering teaching as a profession can be solved with money. Still another spoke about the non-salary issues that make a difference to teachers: feeling safe at school, how the buildings look, lack of student discipline, and whether students come to school without breakfast. One person said more should be invested in determining why teachers leave the field. "We should investigate why the wings are falling off the airplane instead of focusing on building new airplanes" and then see what can be done to address those issues. It was suggested that any such investigation should include a determination of the other occupations currently employing credentialed teachers.

Several participants spoke about the need to have a more vigorous approach to recruiting minorities to become teachers. There was agreement that this specialized area of recruitment needs to be addressed separately, both strategically and tactically, because the techniques that work for the general population simply may not be appropriate or effective.

In the midst of dealing with the need to recruit more teachers, there also is the issue of eliminating emergency permits. One school district representative worried about how the schools would survive if the permits were completely eliminated. The answer, another participant said, is to phase in the elimination and continue to address the working conditions that make emergency permits attractive to teachers and to districts.

Teacher Preparation and Professional Development

One high-level issue is the potential for disconnect between state policy and where institutions are headed on their own when it comes to reforming teacher preparation programs. The historical nod to academic independence may no longer work well when the development of state policy is a fast-moving train that is already out of the station. There is a need to bring the institutions and state policy into alignment. However, one participant warned against developing rigid, "teacher-proof" curricula that define every single element of how to teach. She said it would be difficult to attract the best and brightest students into teaching if the job were simply to follow a formula rather than to develop and use professional judgment about how to best teach each student.

Another participant pointed out that expectations for teachers are much higher today and the teacher preparation programs need to reflect that. One example is that under the new California standards, every child needs to learn algebra; in the past, only self-selected students took algebra. In addition, he said, "We didn't used to believe that all kids can learn. The problem is bigger than just getting the best and the brightest to teach – today it takes much greater talent to meet our new, higher expectations."

Still another said that his experience shows that many beginning teachers have adequate content knowledge but are lost when it comes to being able to convey that knowledge to children. "What they have learned doesn't translate into competence in the classroom," he said. "It may take four or five years to become minimally competent, yet teachers expect to be granted tenure at the end of two years." A participant added that the most frequent complaint she hears from new teachers is that they don't know how to teach children with different learning styles.

Perhaps the most frequently expressed concern is whether the "pipeline" for preparing teachers can be enlarged fast enough in the face of the huge pressure for more teachers and particularly for teachers in hard-to-staff subjects. One participant said that even if all the math majors in the state were induced to become teachers, there still would not be enough math teachers to meet the state's need. Another pointed out that Los Angeles Unified School District alone needs to hire an additional 3,000 to 5,000 teachers every year. "We are making a lot of baby steps, but there is no major statewide thrust," she said. "I see some good things, but it isn't happening fast enough." Several expressed doubt that the programs and institutional will are in place to produce the number of teachers needed.

Growth in teacher education programs is taking place, however, with growth in the number of teacher candidates every year – but growth that is simply not at the rate needed. One participant said that it is not enough to expand the number of faculty at schools of education. "We need to do more than just add more faculty," she said. "We have to retool our efforts and do things differently." She advocated creating a new class of faculty by bringing in qualified practitioners to teach for a year and taking other creative approaches.

Overarching Issues

Several participants brought up the fragmentation that exists in California – the fragmentation of governance, as well as fragmentation of initiatives to address problems and challenges. But at least one person offered the perspective that fragmentation is perhaps appropriate in a state as large and complex as California. Adding that he has always been skeptical of highly centralized systems in others states, this participant said he is optimistic because of the many changes that are taking place. "Look at what has been done in a short period of time," he said. "K-12, higher education, businesses and others are all talking to each other – and that wasn't so 10 years ago."

However, one of the key areas of concern is the lack of consistent and methodical evaluation of initiatives. Many programs are started with great hopes and high expectations, but few are monitored and evaluated for effectiveness. Even when they are, if they don't perform as expected, programs are rarely eliminated. As one participant put it, "Evaluation is not the sexy piece of reform" but it is critical to ensure the state focuses its resources on things that will make a difference and directs its investments toward the highest-priority, most-effective initiatives. Another stressed the need for an integrated comprehensive data system. "I don't think another field would try to make policy based on the bits and pieces of data that we have in education," he said.

One participant said that a key role that higher education can play is to bring other areas of expertise to bear on school problems. This could include architects to determine better ways to build schools, sociologists to address student problems and other fields that may have expertise to help schools be more effective and efficient.

In summing up, one forum leader said that the overall discussion had a positive feel because it appears that answers are not beyond our knowledge – that problems are solvable. There was apparent consensus that continuing discussions will be an important and valuable tool for implementing solutions.

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*Terms are for six years and expire in December of the year noted in parenthesis.
**Terms are for two years and expire in December of the year noted in parenthesis.
***Terms are for three years and expire in December of the year noted in parenthesis.
All other terms serve at the pleasure of their appointing authorities.

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