

**Commission on Access to Sound Basic Education
Teacher Work Group
Draft Priorities**

Recommendations regarding *Leandro*'s mandate to staff every classroom “with a competent, certified, well-trained teacher who is teaching the standard course of study by implementing effective educational methods that provide differentiated, individualized instruction, assessment and remediation to the students in the classroom.”

Note: Excellent principal leadership; social, emotional, and health support for students; and a reasonable, lower pressure assessment system are all necessary to improve teacher retention and are being addressed by other working groups.

An adequate number of teaching positions, teacher assistants and instructional support personnel¹

1. The State should fund enough teacher positions to allow for differentiated, individualized instruction depending on the needs of the students attending each school.
2. The State should provide enough teaching assistants and instructional support personnel to enable each student to receive appropriately differentiated, individualized instruction and to adequately support teachers.
3. Each school district should have adequate flexibility in allocating these resources to enable the district to meet the needs of the particular students and teachers in each school.

Recruitment

1. Expand the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program
 - a. Over the next four years, increase the NC Teaching Fellows Program funding annually from the current 200 slots per year to 1,000 per year. If there are more applicants than available slots, priority should be given to students who agree to teach in content areas with the most severe shortages and students who agree to teach in low wealth school districts or high poverty schools² for the payback period³.
 - b. Provide scholarships to significantly more prospective teachers but keep the program prestigious.
 - c. Ensure that no Teaching Fellow has a payback period of more than 1 year for each year he/she receives the scholarship.

¹ By “instructional support personnel,” we mean media, reading or math, and technology specialists, etc., not student support personnel such as social workers, psychologists, nurses, etc., who are being addressed by other working groups.

² By “high poverty school” we mean a school in which 75% or more of the students qualify for free or reduced priced lunch or a school meeting such other future equivalent definition as The State Board of Education may determine. The state should closely monitor any attempt by an LEA to alter the student enrollment of a school in an effort to meet this threshold for eligibility to receive to additional benefits under these recommendations. Any such efforts, especially those that might result in the increased segregation of schools, should be prohibited if it is determined that an effort has been made to increase the concentration of poverty in order to qualify for benefits.

³ This preference would be given to certified teachers who agree to teach or are teaching in charter schools with high concentrations of poverty but not to teachers who agree to teach, or are teaching, in low wealth districts in charter schools that do not have high concentrations of poverty.

- d. Expand the program beyond the current focus on science, mathematics, and special education to all areas of certification.
 - e. Expand the program beyond the five current institutions of higher education (IHEs), particularly to minority serving institutions, and to additional regions of the state. Maintain the program's focus on the most effective, high quality teacher education programs in the state that, at a minimum, should be fully accredited programs based at IHEs.
 - f. Provide multi-year state planning and implementation grants to enable IHEs to improve their preparation programs. Interested IHEs would submit applications and improvement plans to the Teaching Fellows Commission.
 - g. Provide resources for a statewide network to provide supplemental programming for Teaching Fellows at all participating IHEs.
2. Create and fund a statewide entity to coordinate and enhance efforts to recruit, place, and retain teacher candidates and beginning teachers among IHEs and school districts.
 - a. Establish as a separate entity, as in South Carolina, or house it within an existing entity selected through a Request for Proposal (RFP).
 - b. Major tasks could include:
 - i. developing and implementing a plan to recruit competent college students and graduates into effective, high-quality, accredited teacher certification programs; and develop and place more teachers of color, teachers committed to rural areas of the state, and teachers committed to teaching in low wealth, low performing, and high poverty schools;
 - ii. implementing evidence-based, credit-awarding programs that encourage high school students to prepare for careers in teaching; and
 - iii. operating, maintaining, and expanding the TEACH NC website developed by DPI and BEST NC.
3. Provide multi-year innovation grants to IHEs or IHE-school district partnerships to experiment with ways to encourage non-education majors and students majoring in high-need academic areas to become education majors or add teacher certification to their current major. Provide funds to evaluate these experiments and disseminate lessons learned.

Preparation

1. Adopt and follow a strategic, long-term plan for preparing highly qualified teachers that relies on available empirical evidence. The plan should prioritize direct investments in teacher education programs at IHEs across the state that are fully accredited, or to institutions that are partnering with those IHEs, and should hold those IHEs accountable for preparing teachers that are ready to teach a broad array of students. The state should move away from short-term, "put warm bodies in schools at any costs" approach. The State should:

- a. Increase the percentage of the teacher workforce produced by public and private North Carolina IHEs to 70 percent within 6-8 years;
 - b. Provide adequate funding to IHEs to increase the number of NC prepared teachers committed to teaching in NC;
 - c. Work with IHEs to right-size their teacher education faculty to accommodate increased enrollments in teacher education programs following a decade of severe declines in enrollments, and provide resources needed to enable IHEs and their LEA partners to improve the quality of their teacher preparation programs;
 - d. Define the necessary characteristics and support for high quality programming delivered in cooperation between bachelor degree granting IHEs and community colleges.
2. State-funded or approved preparation programs should prepare all their teacher-graduates to be able to effectively deliver differentiated, culturally relevant instruction within their certification areas to all students. Coordinate an effort to develop common guidelines for preparing teachers, especially at the elementary level, to be able to teach reading and mathematics effectively to a broad array of students.
 3. Develop, fund, and evaluate a pilot program that provides teachers with education degrees a high-quality post-BA residency in low wealth districts or high poverty schools. Teachers would receive a stipend, additional mentoring support, and complete their master's degree in exchange for 3 additional years of service in a low wealth school district or a high poverty school.

Placement

1. Provide annual recruitment bonuses, totaling \$10,000 over four years, to new certified teachers who commit to teach in a low wealth school district or high poverty school for four years. This recruitment bonus should also be paid to a certified teacher who meets current established indicators of high quality, transfers from a school that does not have a high concentration of poverty to a high poverty school, and commits to staying there for four years. At district's election, bonuses may be paid in even increments (\$1,250 per semester) or in graduated amounts after the teacher successfully completes each semester (ex. \$500 after each semester in year one, \$1,000 after each semester in year two, \$1,500 after each semester in year three, and \$2,000 after each semester in year four). The State should fund these bonuses on a sliding scale depending on the resources of the school district, with the State paying between 50 percent and 100 percent of the cost.⁴
2. Develop and fund a state loan repayment program, into which prospective education students can be accepted as early as college sophomores or second year community college students, that repays 20 percent of a certified teacher's student loans each year for up to five years, for teachers who teach in a high poverty school or a low wealth district. First generation college students should be prioritized. Teachers who are in their first five

⁴ See explanation of sliding scale below.

years of teaching who are teaching in high poverty schools or in a low wealth district would also be eligible for this state loan repayment program⁵.

3. Issue an RFP and provide funding to support up to four long-term, strategic Grow-Your-Own-Teacher partnerships. The RFP would be competitive, and proposals would be evaluated on merit, as well as the geographic area served. Partnerships could include school district(s)/local communities and community colleges and/or IHEs. Each proposal would integrate best practices for the recruitment, preparation, induction, professional development, and retention of their teachers; as well as explicitly target increasing the diversity of the teaching workforce. Partnerships would be funded for 5 years, and funding would include annual formative assessments and formal evaluations at appropriate intervals conducted by external evaluators.

Induction

1. Expand the North Carolina New Teacher Support Program (NC NTSP). Provide full NC NTSP services to all beginning teachers in low wealth school districts and in all high poverty schools⁶, for each teacher's first three years, with state funding provided on a sliding scale depending on the resources of the school district, with the state paying between 50 percent and 100 percent of the cost⁷.

Teacher Compensation

1. Eliminate the "teaching penalty" across NC over the next five years. Commission an NC-specific wage comparability study to determine comparable pay for teachers in comparison to other professions which require similar education, credentials, responsibilities, skills, etc. Given the results of similar studies, it is highly likely the study will find a significant gap in earnings of K-12 teachers in NC compared to workers with similar education and work experiences, who work in comparable careers.
2. Pending the recommended study, the state should move teacher pay (including teachers who are paid by district funds) to the level of other college graduates in NC.
3. Provide increased compensation for advanced credentials that are correlated with more effective teaching (e.g. National Board Certification, content-based master's degrees).

⁵ Certified teachers who teach in high poverty charter schools are also eligible for this state loan forgiveness program.

⁶ High poverty charter schools should be eligible to enroll their certified beginning teachers in the NC NTSP with funding provided by the State in accordance with the sliding scale explained below.

⁷ See explanation of sliding scales below.

4. Provide incentive pay for teachers with certification areas in which there are severe shortages, and for teachers in low wealth school districts or high poverty schools⁸. This incentive pay should be on a sliding scale between 20% and 10%.⁹

Teacher Support and Retention

1. Respect teachers as professionals by engaging them in shared decision-making and leadership at the school- and district-levels and empowering them at the classroom-level to meet the needs of their students. Train and develop administrators so they have the capacity to create these positive teaching and student learning conditions.
2. Provide adequate funds to school districts for relevant, integrated teacher professional development and enough paid teacher work days in the calendar for school districts to provide collaborative teacher and principal professional development without removing teachers from the classroom during instructional time.

Career Pathways

1. Expand grant funding for school districts to develop, implement, and scale career pathways plans. The following actions should be taken to enable the successful development of career pathways programs:
 - a. Provide class size waivers and other flexibility as necessary for school districts to implement career pathways experiments or plans.
 - b. Continue to provide/expand funding for formative assessment and evaluation of career pathways programs and the dissemination of lessons learned.
 - c. Provide ongoing funding to low wealth school districts for salary supplements or the support personnel necessary to sustain implementation of successful career pathways plans.
 - d. Provide the resources for school districts that are experimenting with career pathways to collaborate with each other.
 - e. Provide grant funding for LEAs that have successfully implemented career pathways programs to partner with smaller LEAs that do not have the resources to develop these programs.
 - f. Provide funding for teacher and principal leadership development to increase the pool of teachers and principals who can successfully implement leadership roles in career pathways plans.

⁸ This increased compensation will increase the LEA ADM amount, and charters will automatically benefit from these funds that go to the LEA (even if they are not serving any high needs students), so teachers in charter schools, even those who are not required to be certified, and who are not paid on the teacher salary schedule, should not also receive this incentive pay.

⁹ See explanation of sliding scales below.

Sliding Scales

The sections on the New Teacher Support Program, placement bonuses, and incentive pay all recommend that the State fund them in low wealth counties, and high poverty schools that are not in low wealth counties, on a sliding scale.

We recommend the following framework for the sliding scales, based on using the State's current method for determining low wealth counties for purposes of the Low Wealth School Fund. A three year rolling average of the county's percent of average county wealth should be used to provide predictability and stability:

- The counties that have <75% of the average county wealth, will get 100% of the assistance that is being proposed (100% of the cost of NTSP, \$10,000 placement bonus, 20% incentive pay).
- For the counties that are >75% and <100% of wealth, the assistance will be reduced by 10%, in four 6-percentage points of wealth increments, thus avoiding a cliff. A county with 75-81% of average wealth would get 90% of the assistance, one with 81-87% of average wealth would get 80%, one with 87-93% would get 70%, one with 93-<100% of wealth would get 60%.) For example, a county with 83% of average wealth would get 80% of the cost of NTSP, an \$8,000 placement bonus, and 16% incentive pay.
- If a county has 100% or more of the average wealth (and therefore is not considered a low wealth county), it will get 50% of the assistance, but only for those schools in that county that have high concentrations of poverty (50% of the cost of NTSP, \$5,000 placement bonus, 10% incentive pay.)