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Great Teaching and Learning:

Creating the Culture to Support Professional Excellence

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Fulfilling the mission of providing all students with access to great public schools rests on a shared responsibility to ensure that every classroom and learning environment is led by caring, committed, and qualified educators. NEA embraces this charge and calls on education stakeholders and constituencies to join in meeting the challenge of ensuring that new educators are profession-ready and that all educators engage in professional growth throughout their careers.

NEA began to chart a course to greater student learning through strong professional practice with its 2011 report, Transforming Teaching: Connecting Professional Responsibility with Student Learning, and its 2015 Accountability Task Force Report which outlined a vision for shared responsibility and student success:

Every student deserves to have a team of educators that cares for, engages, and empowers learners; provides challenging instruction and supports; and enlists the entire school community to ensure student success.

The Task Force calls for a system that supports excellence from preparation, to entry into the profession, and through a continuum of professional development… The new vision—a system of shared, mutual responsibility—is founded on the premise that educators are ultimately responsible to students, to their colleagues, and to the profession, and that the profession itself will maintain the highest standards and expectations.

Developing this vision for professional learning and growth was the next step in NEA's pursuit of our shared vision. In 2015, the NEA Representative Assembly charged an expert panel of educators and other educational leaders, including representatives from key partner organizations, to provide recommendations for how to create a system of continual professional learning with a constant focus on student needs. Panel members drew on their own expertise and an in-depth review of exemplary practices that foster increased learning for educators and students. Strategies from across the country and from leading education systems around the world were considered in the development of this call to action.

This report provides a road map of recommendations for everyone involved in education: educators, schools, districts, and all stakeholders and constituencies. It also recognizes that educator preparation and professional growth are only one piece of a complex puzzle – the contexts in which educators and students work and learn also shape the extent to which students achieve their learning goals.

I want to extend my thanks to the panel for its outstanding work and their dedication to offering a bold plan that promises to make a real difference in the lives of students, families, communities, and the professionals who have chosen education as their calling.

Lily Eskelsen García

Introduction

Student learning is influenced more profoundly by the quality of the teacher than by any other school factor. Ensuring that every student has access to a great school demands that we focus on the quality of teachers. From preparation to induction, throughout a career of continuous improvement, and achieving accomplished practice and teacher leadership, this work promises to open the doors of opportunity for students and has the potential to transform lives.

The National Education Association's (NEA's) core values assert that "each student, regardless of family income or place of residence, deserves a quality education." These words came to life in 2011, as NEA assembled a task force of outstanding educators to study the keys to excellence in the teaching profession.

That task force issued challenges for work to be done by policymakers, schools and districts, NEA's educator-members, and the Association at the local, state, and national levels. Transforming Teaching: Connecting Professional Responsibility with Student Learning (2011) continues to serve as an important guide for the work of all who share NEA's vision.

Building on that foundation, NEA's Accountability Task Force Report (2014) offered additional bold steps on the path to great public schools for every student.

Continuous growth toward professional excellence for each teacher is essential if we hope to realize the vision that each student pursues and attains challenging goals for learning. The 2015 NEA Representative Assembly issued a charge to answer the next logical question:

If we believe the quality of the teacher in the classroom is truly the most significant school factor contributing to student learning, then what must we do to support the growth, development, and excellence of teachers throughout an entire career?

This report provides our response to that crucial question. Combining the expertise and experiences of an expert panel of outstanding teachers, educators, and community members with a review of exemplary practices, we offer important recommendations to achieve and sustain new norms of professional excellence throughout each teacher's career.

In 2011 and 2012, the NEA Professional Standards and Practices Committee (PSP) outlined a framework consisting of five phases of a teacher's career and development – aspiring teacher (preparation), emerging teacher (induction), professional teacher, accomplished teacher, and teacher leader. NEA uses this framework to organize the discussion of desired characteristics and professional supports for each career phase. In addition to the five phases from the NEA Professional Standards and Practices Committee, our expert panel added a sixth phase— recruitment of potential teachers—as an integral part of our overall recommendations.

Evidence is increasingly clear that teachers, working in an environment designed to provide positive support for their professional growth, continue to deepen their knowledge, and expand their skills throughout an entire career. With this in mind, the phases used to organize this report are referred to as a "professional continuum," though they are not necessarily sequential. Teacher leadership, for instance, can be seen within the performance of teachers across the entire range of individual phases of a career. Also, as an educator takes on new and different responsibilities or investigates a new instructional strategy, it is very possible that she/he may move from accomplished practice to emerging teacher while developing new skills and fluency of practice.

Keys to transformation – As the panel reviewed exemplary practices and developed its vision for each career phase, several systemic factors emerged as essential to achieving and sustaining the desired culture of learning and professional excellence. This report describes the key factors identified as essential to transforming culture and norms of practice.

Career phases – Next, we explore each of the six career phases for a teacher. The discussion for each phase includes the following elements:

• **Overview/definition –** Explanation of who is included in a given career phase.

• **Vision –** A brief presentation of the desired future including norms of professional supports, conditions, and performance for the teacher during the given career phase.

• **Landscape of opportunities –** Challenges are noted and an overview of the range of current conditions and practices for the given career phase is identified. These descriptions are intended to suggest potential changes and areas for improvement in order to achieve the desired vision. Opportunities are presented in the form of examples that embody some parts of our vision.

• **Keys to transformation –** Achieving the desired vision of each phase of the professional career relies on pursuing five "keys to transformation." As presented, each phase includes descriptions and/or examples of how these keys to transformation might apply.

Recommendations and conclusions – The report concludes with a landscape of recommendations for action. These recommendations are a compelling call to action on behalf of our vision for schools, for the teaching profession, and most importantly, for our students. Priorities for action are highlighted from the extensive, broad set of recommended actions for multiple constituencies.

Keys to Transformation

Models of excellence emerging across the country and internationally demonstrate that, while there is no panacea for solving all of the challenges of supporting professional growth and improving student learning, there are crucial common elements of culture and values that drive positive results in schools.

These "keys to transformation" must permeate entire organizations with a singleness of purpose and commitment. The beliefs and actions of leaders are crucial—teachers will replicate the organizational structures administrators put in place in the way they manage their classrooms and treat their students. If school (or district) leaders become bureaucratic and controlling, it will inevitably show up in classrooms that are less focused on authentic learning and more focused on test preparation, adherence to rules, etc. (McNeil, 1988).

As we present each phase of a teacher's career, we also introduce examples showing how each of the five keys to transformation are at work. These five common elements of culture and action are briefly described below.

Passion for learning

Learning should be the goal that permeates all decisions and actions in the school. Teachers constantly pursue ways to enhance student learning and deepen understanding. Teaching strategies are designed to engage students in authentic demonstrations of what they have learned and how it applies to real-world situations.

Teachers find a deep sense of fulfillment as students demonstrate mastery of skills and experience the "aha" moment of understanding. Teachers and schools work strategically to build student motivation on a foundation of mastery and understanding rather than on amassing points and grades.

Decisions about teacher professional growth must be made based on sound learning principles (e.g., Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning, 2011.) Each school/district faculty member is a learner and models a commitment to reflection on practice, personal growth, and continuous improvement. Well-designed and implemented professional learning experiences provide fuel for a teacher's passion and continuous pursuit of excellence.

Deep learning is constructed on a foundation that connects theory and practice. Learning complex skills such as teaching requires time for reflection. Skills become a fluent part of the teaching repertoire through practice, coaching, and mentoring over time. Even as teachers study theory and participate in coaching and practice, they use these same techniques to help their students connect theory and practice, develop skills, reflect, and coach each other.

Recognizing the crucial role of relevance and personal goals in determining learning experiences, teachers are encouraged to collaborate as they develop their own goals for professional development. They implement a similar model to encourage their students to participate in developing learning goals and support their students through culturally responsive practices.

When passion for learning and a culture that recognizes the worth of each person are at the heart of all decisions made, the work will be aligned and actions will be focused. Assessments will be matched with learning goals, and professional development will connect to students' learning

Assessment for excellence

Assessment for excellence begins with a shared vision for what the individual being assessed should know and be able to do. Teaching involves a complex set of skills, specialized knowledge, and the ability to apply these with creativity and sensitivity. Assessment of performance should be grounded in the teacher's reflection-on-practice and should be a foundation for continuous professional growth. Assessment for the purpose of demonstrating performance appropriate for each career phase should be aligned with clear and challenging expectations for that phase of the professional continuum developed by the profession itself. National Board Certification as a performance measure of accomplished practice could serve as a model of how demonstrations for all other phases of the teaching profession might be constructed and maintained by the profession.

Assessment for the purpose of employee evaluation should arise from a locally bargained, evidence-based system of peer review linked to performance expectations supported by a strong system of professional development matched to employee experience and needs for growth. Peer coaching and support must be carefully aligned to support the development of each teacher to successfully demonstrate professional knowledge and skills for their work.

Assessment of teaching knowledge and skills should also serve as a model for how teachers, schools, and other education stakeholders establish shared vision for challenging expectations for student knowledge and skills across all content

areas. Just as performance assessment is needed to measure the complex work of teaching, it is also the means teachers and systems should use to track meaningful student learning.

With learning as the ultimate purpose for assessment, schools should provide students with multiple ways and opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and skills. Not everyone masters content at the same rate, so assessment must have the flexibility to match the learner's developmental level, always supporting continued growth and pursuit of high levels of accomplishment. Assessment must be free from cultural bias and provide sufficient flexibility to demonstrate learning, knowledge, and skills in relevant contexts for the wide range of individuals participating in the assessment.

Assessment of teachers' work as professionals and of student learning should enhance each individual's passion for learning and should evoke a personal sense of mastery (Pink, 2009). This vision for assessment of professional practice transcends mere measures of accountability. For PreK-12 students, this vision for assessment contributes to each student's intrinsic motivation to achieve mastery rather than merely accumulating points or receiving a grade.

Culture of collaboration

A culture of collaboration means that classroom doors are open as teachers collaborate regularly and frequently. Teachers engage in co-teaching, observing, and coaching among peers. External partners (e.g., higher education faculty) participate in helping teachers improve their practice as they help students learn.

PreK-12 schools and teacher preparation programs (TPPs) collaborate to design, implement, evaluate, and improve the quality of their programs. This partnership extends to support for ongoing professional learning for both PreK-12

faculty and for the faculty of TPPs. Technology also serves as a vehicle to expand opportunities for collaboration and professional learning.

The community is deeply committed to student learning and connected to its schools, investing resources needed for facilities, salaries, and instructional materials, and connecting businesses and community projects to student learning and service. The community provides a supportive environment to teachers at all phases of teachers' professional lives. Teachers, schools, and districts collaborate with community members in building positive learning environments for students. This culture of collaboration helps teachers grow in their understanding and appreciation of community and cultures, and the community is enriched by the cultural experiences of each teacher.

Authentic autonomy

The three factors Pink (2009) found to be at the heart of human motivation for people to pursue complex and challenging work with passion and commitment can each be found within the five keys to transformation. Sahlberg (2013) reinforced the importance of autonomy, noting that "…teachers and students must teach and learn in an environment that empowers them to do their best. When teachers have more control over curriculum design, teaching methods, and student assessment they are more inspired to teach than when they are pressured to deliver prescribed programs…"

Studies of outstanding professional learning systems in other countries reveal that professional autonomy of teachers guiding their own professional learning goals and strategies also naturally results in collaboration with colleagues. As teachers understand how peer coaching, reflection, and collegial interactions are central to enhancing their

individual professional growth, they embrace collaboration and work toward shared goals (Jensen, et al, 2016). Teachers also demonstrate a professional commitment to developing skills that will positively impact the success of their students.

As teachers experience genuine autonomy in developing professional learning goals they, in turn, build a culture of increased autonomy for their students, encouraging student choice in charting a plan for how they will pursue major learning goals and in determining what authentic work they will use as demonstrations of learning.

Worth of each person/community

Teachers and all school faculty convey that they genuinely care for students as individuals and believe in their potential. Teachers are committed to helping their students grow and achieve. The adults in the school are engaged in a continuous quest to understand more deeply the impact of race, culture, societal, and economic conditions, etc., on their own perceptions and to explore implications for learning needs of students. Teachers, schools, and districts partner with the community to ensure that schools are safe, supportive environments for each person who works and learns there. Each individual in a school is valued, and their culture and heritage are respected and treated as assets.

The teachers and all the other educators who work in schools seek to know and understand the cultural groups that comprise the school's community. They appreciate each group's contribution, and value diversity. By understanding the uniqueness of each culture, teachers and other school personnel are able to respond appropriately and effectively to the diverse needs of students, families, and communities.

Teachers and other school personnel work to ensure that the policies of classroom, school, and district support diversity and inclusion. They drive changes into the system through both policy and personal action.

Teachers connect with the communities where they teach through their support of the school and the families it serves. Parents and community members are welcomed to the school with a spirit of dignity and respect. As they engage in planning and decision making for the school, the results are transformative for improved student learning and school culture (Southern Education Foundation, 2016).

Teachers and all other school personnel are treated as important individuals within the community. The professional commitment of teachers is honored through professional compensation and working/learning conditions. Teachers are embraced by the community, supporting them as they grow in appreciation of the diverse cultures they serve. Communities demonstrate an appreciation for the culture and background that teachers add to their combined experiences.
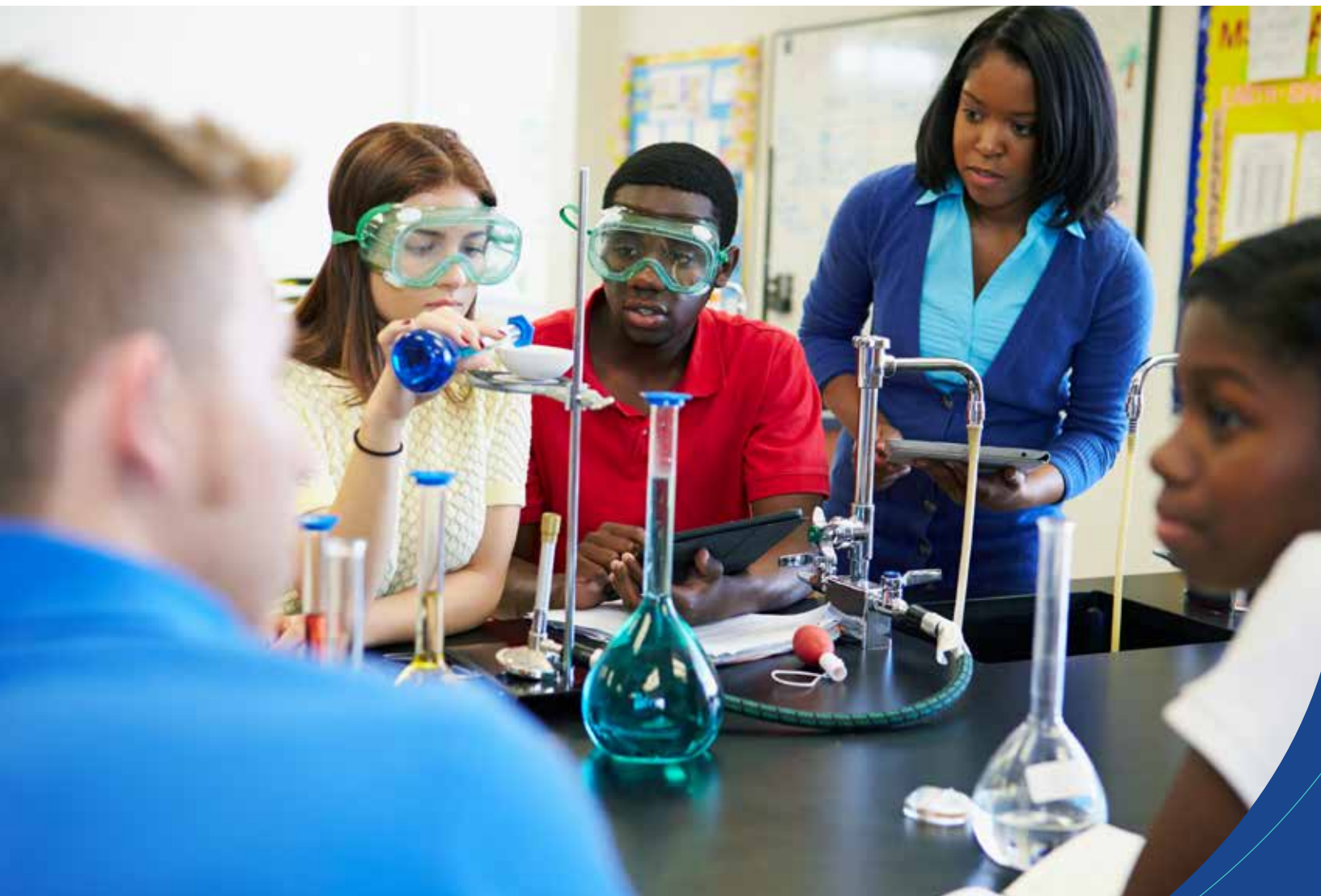
Career Phases:
From Challenges to Vision

The "potential teacher" phase: A time when a future teacher candidate begins to learn about the teaching profession and is encouraged to consider teaching as a career prior to admission to a formal postsecondary teacher preparation program. This may occur during high school (even in earlier grades) for some, while others become potential teachers later in life, possibly as a career change. Some schools offer initial developmental support to PreK-12 students as part of career explorations prior to entering formal postsecondary teacher preparation.

Vision

The next generations of teachers must reflect the diversity of our society and classrooms, enriching our understanding of culture, race, language diversity and all other aspects of individual difference. PreK-12 students will be able to see their teachers as positive role models of varied races and backgrounds.

Individuals who demonstrate openness to the broad range of cultures represented by their future students, value diversity in classrooms and schools, and show a potential for engaging in culturally responsive practices as an educator, should be a major target for recruiting potential teachers. Potential teachers should be recruited based on both previous academic achievements and on their potential for academic success, rather than screened out because of opportunity gaps in their previous academic preparation.

These future teachers bring undeveloped potential so that, after engaging in the significant demands of a TPP, they will be ready to enter the profession with a solid academic knowledge base, a deep understanding of the content they will teach, pedagogical understanding connecting theory and practice, and the dispositions that will help them foster the growth and development of each student. No one is recruited to the profession already possessing all of the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions—that is the reason for teacher preparation programs.

Increasingly, teaching must be a career of choice, particularly as both the conditions of PreK-12 schools improve and attitudes towards teaching as a valued profession are embraced by policy makers and the community. PreK-12 teachers model enthusiasm for their work and encourage promising students to consider teaching as a career.

Communities must demonstrate that they value the teaching profession and encourage their own PreK-12 students, as well as community members working in schools in nonteaching roles (e.g., paraprofessionals), to consider teaching as a career.

PreK-12 schools, higher education partners, local teacher unions, and student program chapters must collaborate to support recruitment, often with intentionally designed programs. These programs must be grounded in sound design principles such as those developed by Educators Rising (2016) and should help students to experience the

rewards of teaching, while also developing a foundation of experiences prior to entering a teacher preparation program.

Landscape of Opportunities

Intentional recruitment efforts for potential teachers usually occurs through career fairs and college recruitment days in PreK-12 schools. Targeting schools with diverse student populations is also a common strategy of teacher preparation programs as they seek to increase the diversity of their own candidate population.

With teacher turnover still over 33 percent within the first three years in the profession (higher in many high-need schools), some schools/districts have turned to "grow-your-own" programs that seek to help paraprofessionals already working in the school to transition to a teaching career.

Some schools (usually high schools) offer courses introducing students to teaching as a career. These courses are included within career and vocational programs in schools eligible for Carl D. Perkins funding and are taught or coordinated by Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) faculty. Since the expertise of FACS faculty is usually child development, the natural tendency has been for these programs to enroll future elementary teachers.

Some additional factors related to recruitment into teaching preparation include:

✦ "Educators Rising" partnered with NEA and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) to develop and advance a set of standards for programs to introduce PreK-12 students to the teaching profession. These standards focus on developing knowledge and skills identified as crucial by educators from across the country. (Educators Rising Standards, 2016).

✦ Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grants provide some with hope for pursuing teaching as a career without amassing insurmountable college debt. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) offered recommendations to improve the efficacy of the program.

✦ Colleges and universities also conduct recruiting activities to encourage undecided individuals and other students changing their majors to become future teachers.

✦ Interest in education careers by high school seniors is at an all-time low (Flannery, 2016). Only 4 percent of 2015 high school graduates, less than half the percentage from 20 years ago, indicate an intention of becoming teachers/educators (Gerwertz, 2016).

✦ The overall diversity of those entering teacher preparation programs in many locales remains relatively unchanged over the past 20 years (Peters, et al, 2016).

✦ Preservice teachers generally enter teacher preparation programs with minimal cross-cultural experiences (Peters, et al, 2016).

✦ While increasing numbers of grow-your-own programs intend to assist paraprofessionals and others working in hard-to-staff schools, there is doubt about their success rate actually producing significant numbers of new teachers (Heiten, 2012).

✦ Only limited partnerships between teacher preparation programs and PreK-12 schools to recruit future teachers are currently in place.

In addition, practitioners in the field identify other factors that discourage PreK-12 students from considering teaching as a career. Potential teachers recognize the great disparity among schools in terms of professional support and the quality of working conditions that teachers experience. Public policies increasingly exacerbate this disparity. School choice programs and other efforts that divert significant resources to a selected subset of schools fail to acknowledge that every student deserves a great public school education, not merely those who happen to come from the dominant race, live in an affluent ZIP code, or whose parent(s) may decide to send them outside of their own community.

Students from disadvantaged schools often experience a tremendous opportunity gap leaving them far less prepared academically for postsecondary success in teacher preparation or other career choices (GAO 16-345). Teacher shortages in key curricular areas also result in less prepared educators teaching in schools with greater diversity and higher poverty. Lack of adequate preparation, insufficient induction support, and challenging working conditions all contribute to an ongoing high turnover rate for staff in these schools creating a phenomenon called churn.

The churn that exists in these diverse and higher poverty schools results in a lack of positive innovation and less engaging teaching strategies (Johnson, 2016). Students in these schools may fail to see teachers with the extensive experience and skills to teach in more culturally responsive ways.

Keys to Transformation in Practice

Achieving the desired vision for a diverse, well-qualified new generation of teachers who are committed to career-long learning and professional growth will not happen without intentional recruitment efforts. Candidates (the term used to describe participants in a TPP) who hold crucial beliefs about the worth and potential of each student, along with the teachers' role in giving students encouragement and direction should be targeted and selected. The keys to transformation are a crucial part of both culture and actions during the recruiting phase of a teacher's career.

Learning – When PreK-12 students encounter teachers with great enthusiasm and passion for learning, they are more likely to be attracted to a career with tremendous intrinsic rewards. Teachers with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to engage in culturally responsive teaching also portray teaching as a fulfilling career.

As more experienced teachers engage students in deeper discussions of why they use particular strategies, they help students learn more effectively, giving insights into the nature of a teacher's work. PreK-12 schools with such a positive environment help students transcend the notion that points, grades, and scores are the currency of success. Student learning—developing skills, and deepening understanding—are what teaching is all about.

Assessment – Helping students prepare for college means more than focusing on preparation for standardized, norm-referenced tests. Schools

must model performance-based assessment that is free from bias and grounded in demonstrating mastery rather than earning points. Authentic projects contribute to learning and help to document meaningful student progress.

Collaboration – PreK-12 schools, TPPs, unions and their student programs must be partners with a shared vision for identifying and recruiting promising future teachers and ensuring that they have confidence in their ability to succeed. These partners provide potential teacher candidates with academic supports and tools to navigate the path to admission into postsecondary education.

These partners collaborate with their communities to create programs, courses, and experiences that allow potential teachers to gain a positive understanding of the teaching profession. They collaborate to develop successful grow-your-own programs to identify and support potential career changers who are likely to stay in the communities where they work.

Autonomy – PreK-12 schools motivate teachers by giving them greater autonomy over the design of teaching and learning strategies and by giving students greater autonomy over their academic goals and the authentic projects they choose on their learning journey. Programs that help students see their potential for a range of career opportunities allow them to choose teaching because it matches their values—their passion for learning and their commitment to help others find success.

Worth of Person, Communities – Those involved in recruiting future teachers convey to students that they have real potential to succeed academically. Regardless of the opportunity gaps they experienced or economic challenges in their personal backgrounds, students need to know that there is a pathway for them to career success through continued learning. This may mean a career in teaching.

But, the doors of opportunity should be wide open, with a spirit of hope and realistic supports to help students in whatever career path they choose.

School improvement efforts focus on advocacy for adequate resources for schools and districts to overcome an opportunity gap for students and the lack of a challenging and comprehensive curriculum. Professional learning for current practitioners supports their efforts to model culturally responsive teaching and positive classroom management for potential teachers.

School leadership in schools serving economically disadvantaged students is focused primarily on creating the positive professional learning conditions that are likely to encourage experienced professionals to invest a lifetime of their career at the school and in the community (Kraft and Papay, 2016).

Programs to recruit potential teachers use Educators Rising standards as a design guide, focusing on culturally responsive teaching as well as a spirit of fairness, equity, and diversity as values that educators must embrace. Practicing teachers see the dispositions of "teacher" in the lives of academically promising students and give them support and encouragement to pursue teaching as a noble calling to serve others. Communities understand and embrace their role in recruiting promising individuals into the profession. School districts and communities model high levels of professional, cultural, and emotional support for teachers during all career phases, particularly for aspiring teachers in training and emerging teachers beginning their careers. (Osler, 2016.)

The "teacher preparation" phase: Aspiring teachers (generally called candidates by TPPs) participate in some form of TPP designed to help them acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to be "profession ready," receive a license/certificate (terminology varies from state to state), and become a "teacher of record."

Vision

TPPs have successfully undergone national review by the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) using standards established by the profession and by embracing the culture and design principles described below.

Candidates are selected from a competitive pool of applicants and possess both the academic potential and the personal dispositions that will contribute to a successful career and lifelong commitment to learning. Those selected reflect the diversity of our larger society.

Candidates receive needed supports to successfully demonstrate academic proficiency, particularly in areas in which they plan to teach. Even if opportunity gaps resulted in fewer experiences for some candidates, the TPP helps them acquire needed knowledge and skills in ways that model culturally responsive teaching and project-based learning for deep understanding.

Candidates engage in experiences that deepen understanding of race, culture, impact of poverty, and a range of factors that influence students' needs and impact their own perceptions and beliefs. They apply their understanding through culturally responsive teaching in their field experiences and clinical practice.

Candidates deepen their awareness of systemic bias as well as bias that results from each individual's previous life experience. Through collaboration with their mentor and deep personal reflection, they take steps to mitigate personal bias and to eradicate inequities within the system.

Candidates' field placements provide a full range of experiences in meeting the needs of diverse learners. Coursework is infused with ongoing field experiences to make real world connections to theory and provide opportunities to practice skills in context. Candidates participate in a full year of clinical practice modeled after the design principles identified in Teacher Residencies (NEA, 2014) to develop a foundation of required teaching skills.

Candidates receive financial support (e.g., grants, stipends, or salaries during clinical residency) to mitigate the overall cost of pursuing a career that has not yet matched the earning level of other careers with comparable requirements and responsibilities.

PreK-12 teachers and schools are full partners with TPPs in developing, implementing, evaluating, and improving their programs. PreK-12 faculty are integral to teaching TPP courses and developing the theoretical framework adopted by the TPP. PreK-12 teachers are well versed in the TPP curriculum, assessments, and philosophical beliefs. Their knowledge of the TPP is a resource in working with candidates.

PreK-12 faculty who serve as "cooperating teachers," "clinical practitioners," mentors, etc., are skillful teachers demonstrating accomplished practice and are carefully matched with candidates. They participate in ongoing professional development to enhance their skills as teachers and as mentors of future teachers. They model a commitment to continuous learning that strengthens professional practice and deepens their understanding of self, along with the culture and backgrounds of their students, colleagues, and communities. They demonstrate a commitment to their students, their school, and their profession as they embrace this significant role, actively promoting the quality of the next generation of professionals preparing to teach.

TPP faculty have current classroom experience, model outstanding practice in teaching and learning, and engage students in use of technology to enhance learning. TPP faculty also model the commitment to lifelong learning, deeper understanding of pedagogy and culture, and contribute to the growth of the candidates and in-service practitioners they teach.

NEA Student Program chapters collaborate with TPP faculty and PreK-12 schools to offer activities to enhance the candidate's experiences and strengthen performance. Candidates begin to experience leadership and professional responsibility through roles and activities of the Student Program. Student Program chapters provide a significant opportunity to extend the candidates' community connections and deepen cultural understanding through service and learning projects.

Prior to employment, candidates earn an initial license to practice based on a performance-based assessment of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions identified by the profession as essential for initial practice. As they begin their career, there is a seamless connection of professional support from clinical practice to mentoring/induction.

Teacher Residency and Links to Early Career Support San Francisco, CA

The vision for year-long preparation residency followed by a seamless multi-year induction for emerging teachers is being realized through the San Francisco Teacher Residency (SFTR) program. Crucial to the long-term success of this program is its partnership nature, bringing together the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), the University of San Francisco (USF), Stanford University, the United Educators of San Francisco (UESF), AmeriCorps, National Center for Teacher Residencies, Community Initiatives, and 100Kin10.

The program features a one-year teacher residency followed by three years of paid induction as an emerging teacher. With a five-year track record to consider, the residency program has addressed the challenge of staffing high-needs schools and subject areas (96 percent of graduates teach in these positions) and ensuring profession readiness for new teachers to successfully work with diverse students.

The program has also successfully recruited and retained candidates that increase the overall diversity of the SFUSD faculty. One measure of the inequity of educational opportunities for PreK-12 students is the stability and experience of the teaching staff in their school. The SFTR retention rate for all completers through 2015 was 89 percent, an impressive result compared to the five-year retention rate for SFUSD at large (50 percent) and Teach for America in SFUSD (20 percent). The success of candidates in meeting needs of diverse learners is built on an intentional focus on social justice beginning with the opening weeks of orientation prior to residency. Candidates are encouraged to become "equity crusaders" in San Francisco schools.

Each of the partners in the SFTR is finding opportunities for growth and improvement as they reflect on the first five years of the program. For instance, there is a realization that cooperating teachers need careful selection and ongoing training as they serve as mentors and models of culturally responsive teaching. Teacher preparation faculty are seeing a stronger connection between theory and practice being made as teacher residents experience theoretical coursework about how to teach embedded along with the year-long practice of those skills. Even with such areas for improvement, the program has made a significant and positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning in SFUSD.

See also:
http://www.sfteacherresidency.org/

Measuring UTRU Network Program Impact (August, 2015)
http://2nzvmtmxyesbi7fm3pk4v9h7.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/UTRU-SFTRImpact-File-Reference.pdf

Landscape of Opportunities and Challenges

Only a few decades ago, teacher preparation almost always included a core of academic course-work linked in some way to subjects the candidate was aspiring to teach, followed by two or three semesters of education and pedagogy classes, then a semester of student teaching. Student teaching experiences were frequently placements of conve-nience for geography, comfort level of the candidate, and the PreK-12 school's selection of cooperating teachers.

While the majority of programs continue with a somewhat improved model similar to that described above, greater change is definitely in the works.

Critiques of traditional TPP quality, growing num-bers of vacancies in hard-to-staff positions, and an overall shortage of candidates entering the teach-ing field all contribute to a rapidly changing land-scape of routes to professional practice.

TPPs now range from 'shortcut' programs consisting of a few weeks of training followed by employment (usually working with a mentor), to residency programs offering pedagogy coursework and a full year of clinical practice alongside a qualified cooperating teacher.

Here is a summary of a few current issues and trends:

✦ In an effort to "raise the bar" for teacher quality, there are some who call for increased academic admission standards for candidates (e.g., the orig-inal CAEP standard 3.2) with potentially negative impacts on candidate populations who experienced opportunity gaps in their own PreK-12 experience.

✦ Diversity of candidates entering the teaching profession continues to remain relatively unchanged over the last 20 years (Peters, et al, 2016).

✦ Almost 10 percent of teacher candidates com-pleting programs since 2000 are from non-higher education programs (Levine, 2010).

✦ Programs such as Teach for America continue to offer a semester (possibly in the summer) of preparation prior to becoming a teacher of record supported by a mentor.

✦ Teachers with alternate route certification have significantly higher turnover rates than those from traditional route or residency programs (Redding and Smith, 2016).

✦ Shortcut preparation programs may address vacancies, but academic performance of PreK-12 students in these teachers' classrooms is notably lower (Helig and Jez, 2010) and teacher retention is worse than both traditional routes or residencies.

✦ With more instruction in pedagogy and extensive clinical practice, candidates are more likely to stay in teaching and achieve better learning outcomes (Ingersoll, et al, 2012).

✦ Retention of candidates who complete a residency program is generally far higher than for other programs—as high as 85-90 percent.

✦ Teacher residency programs are emerging as a model to significantly improve the readiness of candidates when entering the profession as a teacher of record (NEA, 2014).

✦ The number of year-long programs akin to residencies is also increasing, replacing traditional field experiences (NEA, 2014).

✦ Residencies currently serve as a way to increase the diversity of candidates entering the profession in some settings.

✦ Changes from NCLB to ESSA could ease high-stakes testing pressures on PreK-12 schools, allowing increased collaboration with TPPs and future teacher candidates. State statutes and policies may still interfere, however, with the new flexibility.

✦ ESSA provides specific opportunities to create with potential for federal dollars to assist as programs are implemented.

Keys to Transformation in Practice

Learning – The enthusiasm that a teacher candidate brings to the profession must be nurtured and supported by the enthusiasm and encouragement of TPP faculty and cooperating teachers who also must model a spirit of continuous growth and show how theory and practice continue to be interwoven in their instructional decision making.

Candidates engage in reflection on practice. Coaching and feedback helps candidates increase their understanding and fosters their ability to reflect on practice. Candidates are encouraged to observe their cooperating teacher and other experienced faculty, then to participate in follow-up discussions, hearing the reflections of the experienced colleague.

TTP faculty use opportunities in PreK-12 schools to maintain skills, to model teaching for candidates, and to demonstrate their own commitment to lifelong learning.

The TPP values faculty who work to support candidate learning by recognizing supervision and other work in PreK-12 schools as criteria for determining tenure and promotion.

The TPP faculty and PreK-12 practicing educators who support developing aspiring educators model a deep value for the family and cultural background of each student and help the aspiring educator develop their repertoire of culturally responsive practices and positive classroom management strategies.

Assessment – Candidates participate in varied types of assessment throughout their preparation program to help them learn and grow and to experience models of assessments to guide their own use of assessment instruments.

Prior to receiving an initial license to become a teacher of record, a candidate's profession readiness is determined by demonstrating mastery of the curriculum/content they will teach and through a performance assessment of teaching aligned with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions established by the profession.

Collaboration – PreK-12 faculty, schools, districts, and TPPs collaboratively design, implement, evaluate, and improve all aspects (coursework, field experiences, clinical practice, assessment, theoretical framework, etc.) of their programs to prepare teachers. As a result, PreK-12 faculty are

well prepared to build on candidates' previous experiences when they work with candidates during field experience/clinical practice. Cooperating teachers are carefully matched with candidates through collaboration between PreK-12 schools and TPPs. Candidates experience norms of collaboration in schools both through joining in school-based professional learning communities and as cooperating teachers and other faculty engage in peer coaching and collegial observations of others' teaching.

Aspiring teachers develop skills to collaborate with families and to tap community resources to improve student learning and to enhance student opportunities for authentic work.

Autonomy – During preparation, candidates are afforded options for some of their coursework and for learning/project options within courses. Clinical practice helps candidates develop knowledge and skills to exercise autonomy in designing culturally responsive lessons that meet individual student's needs. Candidates also learn to provide their students with autonomy in selecting authentic learning experiences they use to demonstrate mastery.

Worth of Persons, Communities – Candidates are recruited intentionally to enrich the diversity of the teaching profession. All candidates, regardless of background are afforded learning experiences to meet their individual academic, social, and affective needs in a manner that models the dignity and respect with which their future students should be treated. Candidates are provided a supportive environment in which to gain greater personal awareness and understanding of cultural, economic, and other factors that have impacted them. Candidates grow in their appreciation of the rich diversity in their schools and classrooms even as they develop the skills to respond appropriately to challenges and opportunities that come with diversity and inclusion.

Communities and districts collaboratively provide intentional and ongoing support and a safe environment for the academic, cultural, and emotional development/needs of candidates and emerging teachers (Osler, 2016). Communities support the growth of educators' cultural understanding while also valuing the culture and heritage each educator contributes to the school.

The "emerging teacher" phase: The teacher holds an initial license/certificate as a result of successful completion of a TPP. Her/his career begins for the first time as teacher of record. Activities of this phase are often referred to as teacher induction and may include new teacher mentoring. This phase should last at least two years and should culminate with a performance demonstration of skills necessary to receive full licensure.

Vision

The district, school community, and union collaborate in developing a vision for the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they believe are essential characteristics of a profession-ready teacher. They collaborate in recruiting, hiring processes, and the full range of induction support for each new teacher.

When the new teacher is hired, a support system engages her/him in a well-planned and personalized system of support (induction.) Weeks or months prior to the first day of contractual service, the mentor contacts the emerging teacher to initiate a positive professional relationship. The school and district provide the teacher with access to classroom(s), curriculum materials, etc., to facilitate their initial planning. The school, district, union, and community strive to personally know each emerging teacher and to help them connect with culturally supportive networks and resources to overcome the isolation of a new job, new community, and new cultural settings. Knowledge about each teacher also serves to value their uniqueness as assets.

The union and district human resources department assist with completing administrative details in a manner that does not overwhelm or overstress. They collaborate in helping the emerging teacher navigate bureaucracy related to employment issues, benefits, and the transition from initial to full licensure.

Contractual responsibilities for the emerging teacher reflect the additional demands on time and energy while starting a new job. They provide a reduced load of teaching duties to allow for regular, ongoing mentoring and support during the school day. Responsibilities and the level of mentoring support are adjusted to match the emerging teacher's capacity and needs throughout induction.

The emerging teacher is paired with a mentor who demonstrates accomplished practice, skills in working with adults, and who is matched to the mentee's (emerging teacher) teaching assignment and personal characteristics. Both the mentor and mentee receive training, orientation, time to collaborate, and other resources to support a productive professional relationship. Induction includes helping the new teacher become familiar with the cultural groups within the school community, building connections with families, and identifying resources that may help their students be more successful.

The emerging teacher participates in instructional coaching (possibly with her/his mentor) matched to individual needs. She/he conferences regularly and develops increased self-reflection skills. She/he also has opportunity to observe other teachers and to engage in dialogue about professional practice.

The mentee receives substantive feedback on teaching as well as support in developing skills for self-reflection. Mentoring and coaching include developing pedagogical skills and growth of personal cultural awareness and ability to meet the needs of each learner via culturally responsive practices. Mentoring and coaching experiences are confidential.

Formal expectations for the emerging teacher are tailored to their development. Mentoring and coaching are aligned with school and district performance expectations. The emerging teacher's coaching experiences are aligned to allow for practice and to support specific stages of the evaluation process. While initial expectations are adjusted to encourage growth and meet their developmental needs, emerging teachers are also provided clear models and descriptors of the kind of accomplished practice to which they should aspire throughout their careers.

The emerging teacher is encouraged to participate in school/district/union activities and committees that enhance their professional practice, help them embrace the positive culture of their school and district, and foster leadership skill development. These activities must always be balanced with maintaining the primary focus on teaching responsibilities, continuing development of teaching skills, and moving to a professional license.

After two or more years of teaching with induction support, the emerging teacher demonstrates the professional skill to receive full licensure via a standards-based performance assessment (possibly a portfolio of artifacts demonstrating skills) that is independently assessed. If necessary, additional induction support is available to facilitate continued growth until the full range of knowledge and skills is successfully demonstrated.

> Throughout the emerging phase for the new teacher, her/his original TPP maintains

a connection that facilitates a transition from TPP support to mentoring from the school/district and provides feedback to the TPP on the design of its programs.

Landscape of Opportunities and Challenges

The emerging career phase for teaching may be the one area that has a significant history and widespread implementation of desirable support practices. Mentoring and possibly peer assistance and coaching are not universal, but they are commonplace, often mandated by state statute. In some states, successful completion of a mentoring program is the gatekeeper to achieving full licensure.

Even with the broader attention to professional growth in many schools and districts during the induction experiences for emerging teachers, the expert panel noted several characteristics in the landscape that pose either challenges or opportunities:

✦ Depending on the quality and content of the preparation program, the emerging teacher may need varied types and amounts of support (Ronfeldt, et al, 2014).

✦ The quality of mentoring programs varies and poorly designed programs may actually produce negative results (Shields, et al, 2003).

✦ The quality of the mentor selection and their training increases new teacher learning and success (Moir, et al, 2009) (Ingersoll and Smith, 2004).

✦ Adjustments in workload for emerging teachers is virtually nonexistent in actual practice. In fact, workload and assignment may be even greater than for experienced colleagues (Feiman-Nemser, 2012).

✦ A hodge-podge of licensure requirements, along with allowing individual TPPs to make recommendations for licensure, leads to standards that are not

uniform, equitable, or comparable across institutions and results in wide variation in the readiness of emerging teacher knowledge and skills (Pecheone and Whittaker, 2016).

✦ As long as the low bar exists for entry from some shortcut routes (programs that lack adequate clinical practice and links to understanding pedagogy), the induction support for some emerging teachers will be massive and, even with significant support, student learning will be negatively impacted.

Keys to Transformation in Practice

Consider the following examples of how the keys to transformation are at work in the decisions and actions needed to achieve the desired vision.

Learning – Every educator in the school participates in peer coaching. The culture of lifelong learning and continuous improvement is modeled for the emerging teacher by peers, by school/district leaders, and in every aspect of professional practice.

The commitment to learning can be seen in teachers' decisions and in classroom and school policies. Understanding and honoring individual differences, each person is afforded additional practice and mentoring when needed and multiple opportunities and measures to demonstrate mastery. Support for the continued, career-long growth of all teachers is a model for the expectations for support of PreK-12 student learning.

Assessment – The evaluation of emerging teachers is aligned with the specific set of skills and professional learning outcomes that they are responsible for at the beginning of a career. Moving from initial licensure to full licensure must be based on performance assessments, possibly through review of a professional portfolio that demonstrates the specific set of knowledge, skills, and dispositions established by the profession.

Collaboration – The emerging teacher experiences the pervasive culture of collaboration. They are welcomed into colleagues' classrooms to observe. They are also welcomed into committees and professional learning communities as peers with important perspectives and ideas to add to the dialogue. The TPPs that prepared a new teacher also maintain connections of support and collect feedback for TPP improvement. Emerging teachers are encouraged to participate in virtual communities of practice and in their professional union, providing avenues for their voices to be heard, for learning to occur, and for leadership skills to emerge and grow.

Emerging teachers are mentored as they build positive connections with parents and develop a range of community connections that can enhance opportunities for authentic student learning.

Emerging teachers are frequently engaged in peer coaching, collaborative lesson planning, co-teaching, etc., ensuring that neither they nor any other teacher is every solely responsible for the learning of a particular group of students. Students experience high levels of success in every classroom supported by the culture of professional collaboration.

Autonomy – The emerging teacher is at a career phase that has significant demands for professional growth to move from initial licensure to full professional licensure. These demands, while daunting, offer the opportunity for the emerging teacher to prioritize and to work with her/his mentor/coach to chart a growth plan that fits strengths and interests. The school community should embrace the emerging teacher and provide opportunities to exercise autonomy in planning and implementing activities outside their classroom.

Worth of Persons, Communities – Emerging teachers often come with limited experiences in culturally diverse settings and working with diverse learning needs. While hiring teachers who already possess deep

understanding of culture and the ability to meet diverse student needs is a goal for the school, not all teachers will come with the same degree of readiness. Induction is a crucial time to support the new teacher in making culturally responsive decisions about instruction, policies, restorative justice in the classroom. These characteristics of sensitivity and respect must also be modeled as faculty and administration interact with the emerging teacher. They must personally experience what they are expected to create in the culture of their classrooms. Emerging teachers should be provided with a safe environment and supportive experiences that help them deepen their awareness of their own cultural background and the influence it has on their perspectives in working with students and colleagues. They should experience a culture in which experienced educators demonstrate respect and caring for the community in which they teaching. The time, energy, and focus on a safe environment for the development of cultural understanding of emerging teachers reflects the high priority for social justice within the school and district.

School District U-46, Elgin, IL
Peer Assistance and Review during Induction and Beyond

In School District U-46, labor-management collaboration for a peer assistance and review (PAR) program began in 2011. With the support of an NEA grant, the inaugural year of the program began with one peer consultant teacher (PCT) supporting ten third- and fourth-year teachers who volunteered to receive the one-on-one coaching through the 2012-13 school year. Today, the program has grown into a consistent aspect of the induction, professional development, and appraisal supports within the district. Now, there are four peer consultant teachers (one coordinating the work as a teacher leader with a limited caseload) supporting more than 30 pre-tenured and tenured teachers throughout the district. Over the five years of the program, it is estimated that 121 teachers have participated and over 8,000 students have been affected.

The PAR program was built upon the already established values and beliefs of the teacher appraisal plan and our nationally recognized teacher mentor program. In U-46, PAR provided extended induction for pre-tenured teachers who were without a mentor, as well as a professional development option for teachers seeking additional support as a result of significant changes to their assignment, appraisal needs, or professional growth goals. The labor-management collaboration has provided a culture that embraces growth to meet the needs of a diverse population.

Unlike other PAR programs, some unique aspects of our work include a mandatory joint formal observation cycle with an optional, mutually agreed upon joint informal observational cycle. Also, our reconsideration process elevates the importance of the evidence collected by having the panel deliberate upon evidence presented in the appraisal system to determine if the assigned rating is warranted. The panel makes all decisions through the consensus process.

The growth and development of the program has experienced changes in leadership, the PAR panel, and peer consultant teachers. Also, the PAR Handbook has been refined over time. Still, since the adoption of the program into the union contract, the quality of the support has garnered praise by both teachers and administrators. Comments from participants highlight the focus on effective teaching as positive and growth oriented: "Having the ongoing support of my PCT was the most helpful in improving my practice. The most challenging part was having to start using the framework constantly to reflect and guide my instruction, as well as thinking with the end in mind. My PCT was extremely helpful in continually working on that with me, making sure I completely understood how to use the Danielson Framework to serve my students." Participating Teacher (2014-15)

The contribution of multiple observers working from the same framework to offer feedback was also crucial to helping both peer reviewers and administrators improve the quality of their support: "It was very helpful to have two perspectives and voices in talking with the teacher about his/her practice. I think this helped the teacher understand the importance of developing his/her practice in targeted areas." Participating Administrator (2014-15)

T he "professional teacher" phase: The teacher has moved from initial to full/professional licensure (terminology varies from state to state). Achieving professional licensure should involve a performance-based demonstration of the ability to employ appropriately a broad repertoire of teaching skills. This can be a career-long phase of continuous growth and commitment to excellence.

Vision

The professional teacher is on a rewarding career-long quest for continuous professional growth and pursuit of excellence. As emerging teachers successfully complete a performance assessment to receive full licensure and enter the "professional teacher" phase, they have achieved only an essential foundation. A lifetime of opportunities for growth and countless opportunities to positively impact the lives of students await a professional teacher.

In their pursuit of excellence, professional teachers select learning goals based on their own perceptions of student needs and personal interest. They also collaborate with colleagues to select and plan professional learning for the larger school community. Informal and formal teacher-led professional learning communities (PLCs) identify areas for improved student learning and stronger school climate.

Professional teachers continue to develop increasing skill and sensitivity in responding appropriately and effectively to issues and opportunities that arise working with students, parents, colleagues, and community members from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Teachers collaborate to identify assessments of student learning and measures of school culture that are used to guide the work of their PLCs in selecting goals and measuring progress. Teachers also engage in both reviews of existing research and in constructing and implementing action research projects to determine which strategies to pursue as part of a school's improvement plan and for improvement of their own individual practice.

Teachers seek to document their skills through pursuit of National Board Certification and/or other valid and reliable assessments of teaching based on the profession's standards for accomplished practice.

Teachers participate in professional networks that support professional growth in their content area, grade level, schools, districts, teacher union, and other informal and formal professional groups. Schools, districts, unions, etc., seek to help teachers identify strengths and to support their growth as teachers and leaders of the profession.

Teachers enhance their learning and practice as they participate and grow as leaders during the professional phase of their career. Examples of leadership at this phase might include working with a teacher candidate or mentoring an emerging teacher, facilitating a PLC, advocating for professional learning goals and time, etc.

Professional phase teachers pursue learning opportunities through multiple pathways that link strongly to improved professional practice and to deeper understanding of the content they teach. While pathways to improvement

vary greatly—from courses and degree programs in higher education to collaboration with peers (e.g., PLCs) in the same school district and beyond, from workshops and programs in school and district, to teacher-led action research—common characteristics can be found for almost all successful professional learning systems:

✦ Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011) serve as a benchmark for design of all professional learning.

✦ Professional learning experiences involve extended study of theory embedded with ongoing opportunities to practice new skills over several months/years.

✦ Peers engage in coaching as they support each other in a culture of positive collegiality.

✦ Classroom doors are open and individual practice is public for collaboration and peer learning.

✦ TPPs are integral partners when they come to the PreK-12 school both as learners and in offering research, workshops, and courses linked to the long-term professional learning goals for individuals and groups of teachers.

✦ The union works with the district to ensure that contracts provide the time necessary to embed ongoing professional learning activities in meaningful ways throughout the school year.

✦ Contracts establish an appropriate balance of time spent teaching/supervising students and time engaged in working with colleagues for professional growth.

✦ Teachers received personalized supervision of instruction, focused on teacher-led, teacher-driven professional growth with collaboration as a measure of success.

✦ Evaluation of teachers is strongly supported with opportunities for professional growth through peer assistance and coaching and culminating with peer review.

✦ Evaluation is tiered based on an individual teacher's career phase and experience level.

Landscape of Opportunities and Challenges

For decades, professional development practices generally lacked focus, involved little or no follow-up, did not link to coaching or practice, and were imposed on teachers from administrative levels above. Teachers joked about "drive-by" workshops and "sit and get" experiences. In this environment, the perception was that growth and improvement in performance for teachers significantly diminished after about five years in the profession.

Important evidence to contradict this myth began to emerge, however, as professional learning has increasingly been designed aligned with the best research on practice. Many of those best practices can be found in Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning (2011). Additional insights into this evolving narrative may be found in these observations:

✦ Until recently, professional development in the U.S. has typically been implemented without any specific direction or desired outcomes in mind (Guskey, 2014).

✦ Some systems seek to script practices of "effective teachers" and to mandate that all follow these scripted lessons. The impact of these lessons " actually stunts teachers' ability to make good classroom decisions and obscures bad teaching with its illusion of uniformity" (Wilson, 2010, p. 53).

✦ Misguided teacher evaluation based on test scores can have devastating effects on teacher morale (Scherer, 2012).

✦ Research reveals "extensive evidence that the ratings teachers get from value-added systems are hugely error prone, unreliable, and to a great extent, shaped by which students are assigned to a teacher in a given year" (Darling-Hammond, et al, 2012, p. 11).

✦ Increasing individual autonomy in selecting professional development options increases job satisfaction (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014).

✦ Given a supportive professional learning environment (Papay and Kraft, 2016), additional teacher experience continues to correlate with increased teacher experience into the second decade of teaching and beyond (Kini and Podolsky, 2016).

✦ "In designing professional learning options, high performing systems encourage teacher uptake of both in-school programs and external courses, workshops and further certifications in order to expose teachers to the fullest range of innovative practices" (Learning First, 2016, p. 48).

✦ Professional development in programs consisting of 30+ hours of experiences, coaching, etc., distributed over six months show the greatest impact on learning (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).

✦ Coaching design elements should provide teacher autonomy, come from a "curious" stance, and communicate clearly and transparently (Finkelstein, 2016).

✦ Exemplary professional development is characterized by "teachers' ability to select the topics they want to learn more about and the opportunity to work collaboratively with colleagues" (Nieto, 2009, p. 10).

✦ Genuine partnership between coach and peer teacher is a key to the most positive growth environment (Knight, 2011).

✦ Virtually every high-performing system in an international review spent at least five more hours per week in professional development (with fewer hours supervising/teaching) than the United States (Learning First, 2016).

✦ Professional development systems often cited for excellence rely on the combination of individual autonomy in determining professional learning goals and the natural collaboration that emerges as professionals implement their passion for growth through peer coaching and support (Jensen, et al, 2016).

✦ Teacher-led evaluation systems (e.g. PAR programs) result in significantly higher teacher retention rates, professional growth systems that are strategically aligned with standards for teacher skills, and more rigorous and standards-based employment decisions (Darling-Hammond, et al, 2012).

Keys to Transformation

Learning – New teaching skills and instructional strategies should be introduced within a theoretical context of how/why they are significant. They must be modeled effectively, practiced over time, coached collegially, and evaluated using data and measures of outcomes selected by teachers. In essence, professional learning should be designed using what we know about effective practice for adult learners. If professional development isn't designed in this way, if the time and resources to support change aren't going to be devoted to the effort, then it shouldn't be implemented at all.

Enhancing student learning is a primary factor used by individual teachers, collaborative groups (e.g., PLCs), school and districts in determining priorities for improved professional practice. Student learning is enhanced as teachers engage in career-long professional growth to deepen their understanding of race, culture, and background to build positive connections with students, their families, and the community.

Social Justice Humanitas Academy
San Fernando, CA

The staff of the Social Justice Humanitas Academy (SJHA, a teacher-led school) collaboratively adopted the vision for the school: self-actualization and the realization of one's full potential. While initially this was just a vision for the students, the staff soon realized that this was a vision for everyone—students, parents, partners, and the teachers and staff—everyone needed to fulfill their potential. So, when it comes to professional development, there is a constant dual purpose.

First, professional development (PD) is about the staff making sure they have the vision, skills, and courage to achieve personal and professional self-actualization, thus making them effective teachers. Second, the PD is about responding and preparing opportunities for the students' self-actualization. It is the marriage of these two goals that ensures that teachers have both the autonomy to chart their own professional learning and that faculty collaborate using meaningful data on student learning to pursue more than improved test scores. They ensure students have true access to relevant curriculum that can be applied for success in life.

While the topics of PD for teachers could be imposed from above, the PD is culturally responsive and impactful because it's not a list of topics to check off. It's what they must do. Looking at English language learner data isn't about literacy for the sake of test scores, or reading strategies because reading across the curriculum is important, it's because each student deserves not only a seat in a school, but true access to the curriculum. Students need to be able to relate to the content and they need to learn to build relationships with their peers.

Teachers, too, must relate to the content and build relationships with their teacher peers. Teachers are not computers delivering content. They too must be valued as learners. That is what SJHA focuses on, a PD approach that follows two tracks – supporting students and supporting staff.

For more information, see: http://www.sjhumanitas.org/

Assessment – Student data for meaningful outcomes (often from performance tasks) should be identified by staff and used to chart progress toward improved learning, then used to guide PLCs and inform individuals on ways to improve professional practice.

Achieving "professional" status should be determined by a performance-based assessment. National Board Certification (NBC) is also a valid and reliable assessment, developed by teachers, for teachers, to measure accomplished practice. Activities designed to support teachers in developing the knowledge and skills of NBC are a valuable use of professional development time and energy.

Collaboration – Any new teaching skill targeted for implementation should be the result of collaborative teacher involvement with research of potential options and selection of the specific strategy. The range of authority for PLCs must be sustained or expanded to ensure that teacher led identification of needs and selection of strategies for improvement are at the heart of professional learning and school improvement.

Autonomy – Individual teachers have the opportunity for their voices to be part of collaboratively selected goals for professional learning. Teachers also determine significant elements of their own professional learning goals and activities. To engage in the kind of coaching and practice that leads to significant growth, teacher autonomy is balanced with collaboration so that individual goals for growth can be supported by colleagues in the system or through other networks. Collaboration within the system also ensures that the focus for professional growth has, at its heart, improved learning for students.

Worth of Persons, Communities – Professional learning must help teachers to make culturally responsive teaching the norm for their professional practice. Professional development goals should be linked to helping students master a challenging, relevant curriculum and not just do better on a standardized test. Professional teachers advocate for their students and seek to adapt classroom and school policies in ways that are culturally responsive to the needs of students and their families. Community involvement by professional teachers (and by teachers at all career phases) is valued as a source of professional growth and as a key to school and community improvement.

The profession takes ownership for ensuring that each teacher responds in ways that are positive and supportive of their students. Unions and districts collaborate to ensure teachers receive extensive support in developing both the skills and the dispositions to engage with students, parents, and community members in culturally responsive ways. Through peer assistance and review, they ensure that teaching colleagues are a positive force in the life of students as a necessary condition to remain in the teaching profession.

Accomplished Teacher

The "accomplished teacher" phase: The professional teacher demonstrates the knowledge, skills, and dispositions accepted by the profession as defining an outstanding level of performance. (Note: Many educators may achieve a level of accomplished practice without being recognized through completion of a formal assessment process.)

Vision

The vast majority of teachers are either well along the path in pursuit of the knowledge and skills of accomplished practice or are already performing at an "accomplished" level. While some teachers may choose not to engage in the National Board Certification process, all teachers actively pursue the five propositions the assessment represents:

Proposition 1: Teachers are committed to students and their learning.

Proposition 2: Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.

Proposition 3: Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.

Proposition 4: Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.

Proposition 5: Teachers are members of learning communities. (See http://www.nbpts.org/ for details.)

The National Board Certification process serves as a guide for professional growth throughout the teacher's career. Standards for accomplished practice across 16 different subject areas and at four student developmental levels provide almost all teachers with standards for accomplished practice relevant to their specific teaching assignment. Successfully achieving NBC status provides evidence of excellence for a school as well as for the individual.

The "accomplished teacher" label does not indicate that a teacher has finished her/his professional growth journey. If anything, it may best be attached to those individuals with the greatest ongoing commitment to continuous learning and improvement in practice. These teachers lead by example with their devotion to better serving the needs of their PreK-12 students through their own growth and support of colleagues. Accomplished teachers engage in career-long efforts to build exemplary connections with the community both to strengthen support for the school and to develop greater authentic learning opportunities for students.

Teachers in the professional and accomplished career phases engage in broad professional networks that transcend departments and grade levels and that move beyond schools and districts to include regional, national, and virtual communities. They leverage extended networks to enhance their opportunities for learning and their influence and voice in helping to influence the direction of PreK-12 education and the teaching profession. Accomplished teachers also are engaged in community networks that deepen their understanding of the

cultural groups served by their school and that provide them opportunities to advocate for the needs of their students.

Accomplished teachers have even greater latitude to experiment with teaching and learning strategies, conducting action research and coordinating colleagues in such research, as well. Monetary resources and release time, while available to teachers at all phases of their career, are particularly available to accomplished teachers. They use the additional resources to facilitate their learning and research with the understanding that their wisdom will be invested not only in their individual classrooms, but in the school, district, and extended networks of teachers with whom they connect.

Accomplished teachers also form the backbone of an infrastructure to support others to pursue accomplished status. Districts, policymakers, and teacher unions collaborate to provide coaching, facilitate support groups, and offer financial assistance for fees associated with NBC.

While demonstrating "accomplished practice" through an assessment such as NBC may be a criterion for salary determination, it should be pursued for the value of the process on improved professional practice and its impact on strengthening the teaching profession. Achieving this altruistic goal rests on the assumption that all teachers receive compensation at a competitive professional level.

As teachers change subject, grade, and class assignments, they may not always demonstrate accomplished practice. But their understanding of what accomplished practice is makes it possible for them to develop the skills and knowledge for practice in their new roles.

Finally, to achieve our vision for student learning and opportunity requires a significant cadre of teachers, particularly professional and accomplished teachers, to fulfill needed leadership duties. (See the "teacher leader" phase for more details.)

Landscape of Opportunities and Challenges

The landscape description for accomplished teachers can largely be extrapolated from the conditions and issues for the professional teacher career phase. Very little is done systemically within the profession to leverage accomplished status or to tap persons who have demonstrated accomplished practice for specific responsibilities.

✦ Only about 3 percent of the overall teaching population has pursued and achieved National Board Certification. By contrast, over 90 percent of physicians hold one or more Board certifications (Thorpe, 2014).

✦ Some systems may recognize teachers achieving NBC status in ways that tend to isolate them from colleagues. Some experience negative attitudes among their peers for being singled out.

Keys to Transformation

Learning – Accomplished teachers blaze a trail in tackling the most challenging aspects of improving learning. For instance, they may lead efforts to incorporate culturally responsive teaching into everyday practice. They identify and develop new opportunities for connections between their students' cultures, their communities, and student learning goals. They are increasingly able to facilitate student choice in pursuing individual learning goals.

Assessment – Accomplished teachers provide the credential of their expertise as schools move from testing, earning points, and grades as motivation to strategies focused on learning as the ultimate outcome. They ensure that student reflection on learning from projects is incorporated into their overall design of teaching, learning, and assessment. Pursuit of NBC status demonstrates the crucial role of performance assessment in measuring complex knowledge and skills. Accomplished teachers model the

development and use of classroom assessments that are free from bias and encourage student choice in demonstrating mastery.

Teacher evaluation of accomplished teachers serves as an example of how assessment of practice can be teacher led, growth focused, and can contributes to a positive culture of professional learning.

Collaboration – Accomplished teachers collaborate with peers to create professional learning plans that acknowledge the larger school's need for growth and supporting improved learning for every student.

No single teacher is solely responsible for the learning of any group of students since there is constant collaboration, co-teaching, modeling, coaching, etc., that links accomplished teachers to classrooms throughout the school.

Collaboration by accomplished educators regularly extends beyond school walls to include broader professional communities of educators and the cultural groups and communities served by their school.

Autonomy – Accomplished teachers develop professional learning plans based on personal strengths and needs while also aligning significant parts (or all) of their plan with the collaboratively determined professional growth goals for their department, grade, or school.

Worth of Persons, Communities – Accomplished teachers model their commitment to their students and their profession by continuing to seek understanding of how race, culture, and socioeconomic factors impact their own perceptions and decision making. They continue to expand their repertoire of culturally responsive teaching techniques and their use of positive classroom management strategies.

Professional Phase and Accomplished Practice New York State United Teachers

In 2015, New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), along with other stakeholders including the National Board Council of New York (NBCNY), and the New York State Education Department came together to form the National Board Work Group. The goal of the partner organizations was to examine the current state of National Board certification and seek to identify opportunities to foster increased engagement of New York's teachers in the National Board certification process. The work group's recommendations included:

✦ building awareness around the benefits of the National Board process with all stakeholder groups,

✦ incentivizing the certification process,

✦ leveraging the instructional expertise of the New York's National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs), and

✦ capitalizing on P-20 partnerships and collaborative opportunities.

More specifically, four-systematic needs were identified.

1) Increase awareness statewide of the National Board certification process, and its impact on teaching and learning.

2) Increase funding to help defray the costs of NB certification.

3) Increase awareness of the National Board process as a voluntary, comprehensive, integrated teacher development system that is driven by practitioner knowledge, experience, and context.

4) Promote relationships among the National Board network of teachers, P-12 school districts, institutions of higher education, and other education stakeholders to strengthen the NBCNY Network and promote collaboration for the professionalization of teaching.

To address these needs, NYSUT worked collaboratively with NBCNY's 7-regions, each led by a team of two-NBCTs, to organize and support NEA's National Board Jump Start, a member designed and led early-candidate support program. The NBCNY's Candidate Support Providers' Resource Center website provides access to the latest Jump Start resources, as well as other consistent tools for awareness, board certification, and renewal. This site provides the most current resources and training available to provide implementation support implementation to the whole state and thereby increases equity, access, consistency, and quality for candidates' professional learning experiences. In 2016 NYSUT, NBCNY and Empire State College established graduate credit for each component at an extremely low cost. This incentive is no currently supported in contract language of many local unions, since NYS does not have a state incentive for achieving board certification.

In May 2017, NYSUT and NBCNY hosted their first state-wide NBCT Summit on Teacher Leadership, RISE: Recognize, Inspire, Sustain, Empower, at SUNY College Buffalo. The successful summit brought together accomplished teachers, administrators, and higher education faculty from across all seven regions of NYS to explore important issues and share strategies on teacher leadership. 42 Educators led 20 sessions for 127 participants with topics such as Mindfulness, Next Generation Science Standards, Peer Coaching and Teacher Leader Competencies. Results of the participant survey highlighted the importance of networking and supporting colleagues through collaboration and coaching. All survey responses indicated that the Summit met or exceeded their expectations. Plans are in place to focus on advocacy at the next Teacher Leader Summit. These NBCT member-led, NYSUT-supported efforts are transforming our profession and helping to ensure every child has an excellent public education.

Teacher Leader

The "teacher leader" phase: Teacher leadership can occur as an element of each of the other phases of a teacher's career rather than being a sequential element of a continuum. It is most often experienced (and largely discussed here) as a means for the professional and/or accomplished teacher to broaden their impact on student learning and to contribute to their school, district, and the larger profession. It should not be discouraged, however, even at earlier points of a career as long as it is appropriately balanced with other professional responsibilities.

Vision

Teacher leadership is at the heart of transformation in any school. Teachers create the norms of practice, character of communication, and sense of values that form the culture of a school. Empowerment for teacher leadership is not an act of assigning roles or conferring authority but is rather a state of mind—teacher leaders embrace greater responsibility for the culture and work of their school and profession.

Teacher leaders are champions for social justice through professional development for culturally responsive teaching, as advocates and activists for the needs of students and communities, and as leaders of their professional union in fulfilling its vision for public schools and for the success of each student. Teacher leaders seek to solve problems; they initiate actions, and are enthusiastic adopters of positive change, thus encouraging colleagues to join the effort. They push their profession, communities, and PreK-12 schools towards excellence.

Teacher leadership provides a highly motivational career path so that individuals can continue to pursue their passion for working with students while expanding their influence and engaging in new professional challenges.

For a school to achieve the vision for performance requires a significant cadre of professional and accomplished teachers who have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to fulfill varied teacher leadership responsibilities.

Teachers— throughout all phases, but particularly in professional and accomplished career phases— are frequently engaged in professional learning to develop their leadership skills. Some of the roles for which teacher leaders will be in high demand include:

✦ Cooperating teacher, clinical supervisor, mentor, coach, peer assistant, peer reviewer

✦ Instructional designer, assessment designer, curriculum planner

✦ Action researcher, data analyst

✦ Facilitator of building PLCs, committees, study groups

✦ Facilitator of district and school-community committees, task forces, projects

✦ Professional development facilitator, adjunct instructor

- ✦ Spokesperson, author

- ✦ Community organizer

- ✦ Advocate for schools and for the needs of students

- ✦ Leader of professional association/union

- ✦ Member of professional standards board, teacher advisory council, etc.

- ✦ Program evaluator, accreditation team member, etc.

- ✦ Policy analyst, policymaker

In some instances, teacher leader roles are part of hybrid job assignments or embedded or in addition to a traditional assignment. And on occasion, a teacher may take on a leadership role for an extended time with full-time release from traditional teaching duties. In any case, teacher leadership is not seen as a pathway out of the classroom, but an enhancement to the work of teaching and learning.

Teacher leaders are engaged in continuous professional growth that includes increasing their skills and expanding their capacity for action. Schools, districts and teacher unions intentionally foster development of teacher leaders and seek to identify individuals with apparent potential as leaders.

The teacher leader embodies a humility and passion that transcends and mitigates resentment among peers. Teacher leaders build organizational commitment and instill a belief that the leader genuinely cares for the well-being and success of students and colleagues. The caring and compassion of teacher leaders is crucial to their ability to help colleagues and communities engage in deep discussions about culture, social justice, culturally responsive teaching, and positive discipline in the classroom. They are able to facilitate growth as they model personal reflection and growth.

Teacher Leadership Institute
NEA, NBPTS, CTQ

The Teacher Leadership Institute (TLI) is a joint project of the NEA, the Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ), and the NBPTS. From the development of The Teacher Leadership Competencies (2014) to the design and delivery of workshops, sessions, activities, and readings, each element of the TLI has been designed and implemented with teacher leader voice at the forefront.

Funding from NEA, the W.H. Kellogg Foundation, and The Ford Foundation helped to ensure a three-year pilot was successfully implemented across 13 states. In nine of the thirteen pilot sites, individual teachers from districts across a state came together—in person and virtually—to participate. Overarching skills such as understanding adult learners were complemented with three more specific strands: instructional leadership, policy leadership, and association leadership. A focus on social justice was infused throughout all elements of the program.

While the word "initiative" in the original TLI name indicated that the entire project was an initiative of three organizations, participants and facilitators soon realized that it applied even more forcefully for what participants did. Each of the 500+ aspiring teacher leaders was called upon to identify some concern, issue, area for improvement in their own school, district, or community setting. Participants then applied the skills and knowledge from the TLI experiences to the task of framing their chosen problem; bringing resources including colleagues, partner organizations, etc. together to plan strategies to solve the problem; and then to collaboratively implement strategies. They also engaged in reflection both on the success of their work for the specific concern they chose to address and reflection on their own skills and areas for growth as leaders.

Literally hundreds of teacher-initiated, teacher-led, transformative projects have been implemented in a wide array of settings as a result of the teacher leaders at work. At times bureaucracy or lack of formal roles may have posed challenges for the teacher leaders, but they came to realize that empowerment is a state of mind; the belief that someone who has knowledge, skills, and the attitude to make a difference in the world can accomplish great things for their students and their schools.

See also: http://www.teacherleadershipinstitute.org/

School and district administrators foster teacher leadership by offering a culture where new ideas are welcomed, individual initiative is seen as an asset, and the talents of others are valued. Schools and districts recognize the power of distributed leadership with both formal as well as informal roles and opportunities for teachers to lead. Teacher leaders and administrators in both formal and informal roles recognize the power and synergy that arises from a spirit of genuine collaboration—a culture in which the contribution of each person is valued and respected.

Teacher leaders create and promote opportunities for new leaders to develop and serve, particularly encouraging and mentoring diverse peers as emerging leaders within the school, community, and union. They systematically support the growth of other leaders to add to the strength of the organization and eventually, to take on responsibilities as they move on to other duties.

Landscape of Opportunities and Challenges

Teacher leadership is a largely underdeveloped and untapped resource in schools. Organizations frequently attempt to compartmentalize teacher leadership with narrowly defined areas of responsibility and limits on actions. These organizational limits cannot, however, diminish the impact of a respected colleague on culture and action within a school.

Even as teacher leadership holds tremendous potential for positive transformation of schools, it may also carry negative perceptions that must be addressed to overcome the potentially harmful effect. For instance, teacher leadership duties within school structures are sometimes perceived as negatively impacting teaching and student learning. Sometimes, formally recognized teacher leaders are perceived as recipients of favoritism in their school or district. Teacher leaders

within unions may be perceived as focused on adult needs at the expense of student needs.

Here are some additional observations about the landscape:

✦ While widely accepted as an important element to achieve excellent schools, "teacher leadership has not taken hold in either a strategic or systemic way" (Coggins & McGovern, 2014).

✦ In some instances, teacher leadership may become an indirect pathway out of the classroom, possibly to the detriment of the perception of "teacher leader" in general, and to the loss of an excellent teacher's impact in a classroom.

✦ The frequency of articles about teacher leadership in many publications for PreK-12 educators is evidence that this is still a new concept that the field is learning how to use effectively and, at times, a concept for which a certain amount of trepidation and turf defense must be overcome.

✦ Teacher unions, schools, and districts are often perceived as limiting pathways to leadership development and responsibilities rather than facilitators of growth and opportunity.

✦ Programs such as the Teacher Leadership Initiative/Institute have found ways to empower teachers as change agents and problem solvers with profound impact on their schools and communities even though they have no formal titles or system-conferred authority.

✦ Teachers working in schools with strong professional environments improved over time significantly more than those working in weak environments (Kraft & Papay, 2016).

✦ International examples can be found for teacher leadership as part of career ladders within the teaching profession and, if appropriately bargained to ensure positive support of teachers within the

system, may prove useful as one way to ensure opportunities and appropriate recognition for teacher leadership.

✦ In addition to acting as an important resource for implementing programs that enhance student learning and improve professional growth, teacher leadership can have a profound impact on overall school culture (Wahlstrom & York-Barr, 2011).

Keys to Transformation

Learning – Teacher leadership is nurtured through ongoing professional growth opportunities for teachers at all phases of their careers as teacher leadership is needed within groups and settings throughout the professional's career. Professional growth focuses building skills and fostering dispositions for collaborative work and distributed responsibilities that characterize the most effective organizational structures. Models such as the Teacher Leadership Competencies (CTQ, NEA, & NBPTS, 2014) provide a framework to help teachers envision ways they can positively impact student learning beyond their own classroom and the quality of their school and profession.

Teacher leaders understand their crucial role as change agents, helping to broaden the use of culturally responsive teaching and positive classroom management. Their efforts result in support for increased learning for PreK-12 students, professional learning of colleagues, and greater connections to community resources and authentic project opportunities.

Assessment – Teacher leaders recognize the importance of meaningful data in guiding decision making and evaluating progress for students, for their own skills and actions, and for schools and organizations. They build their skills both to create effective measures of progress and to analyze outcomes and strategically plan based on data. Teacher leaders foster the use of meaningful data sources by colleagues in their pursuit of improved student learning. They use student learning data

to support their advocacy for ample and equitable resources and greater learning opportunities for every student.

Collaboration – Teacher leaders recognize that the power of any transformation is in the shared vision and commitment from genuine collaboration. Teacher leaders actively seek to incorporate the vision and values of colleagues, their community, and students in developing and implementing any strategy to improve their school and profession. Teacher leaders assume pivotal responsibility for creating a culture of collegiality and acceptance of all—a culture that embraces diversity as an invaluable asset.

Autonomy – Teacher leaders bring their own priorities and skills to their informal and formal leadership roles. As a result, they must have the opportunity to tap their particular gifts, pursue their particular passion for how to make schools better and to systemically improve student learning. Teacher leaders need to exercise their own creativity and initiative to tackle the problems that match their area of focus.

By expanding the skills and opportunities for greater numbers of teacher leaders, the full landscape of school transformation becomes possible even as individuals exercise autonomy in the areas of emphasis they choose.

Worth of Persons, Communities – The teacher leader has a heightened responsibility to the profession, colleagues, their students and their communities to move professional practice—even in areas where change is uncomfortable. Teacher leaders will demonstrate caring and respect for each of their colleagues while also helping them challenge long-held beliefs and practices that may fall short of culturally responsive teaching and may even reinforce institutional racism. There may be no one better than a respected colleague to speak frankly and confidentially about their own journey of awareness to support others in making genuine progress toward a culture of social justice.

Recommendations for Action

Based on the challenging aspects of vision across each of the career phases for teachers, the panel developed an extensive landscape of recommendations with work to be done by various major constituencies involved in working with teachers and by teachers themselves. A set of top priorities for action follows these extensive recommendations.

The recommendations are grouped to indicate points of collaboration and how partners fulfill their individual roles. Recommendations related to teacher contracts should be bargained and built on a foundation of mutual trust and collaboration. The descriptors of applying the keys to transformation offered for each career phase serve as examples of the kind of decisions to be made in design and implementation of these recommendations. Genuine transformation will require attention to each phase of the career and commitment by each of the stakeholder groups listed below.

Overarching Keys to Transformation:

✦ Each educator and each PreK-12 student is a learner and expected to enthusiastically participate in meaningful growth.

✦ Assessment should be performance based and authentically reflect the knowledge and skills being assessed.

✦ Each person and each partner must be responsible for collaborating in support of individual teachers and PreK-12 learners, and strengthening the system throughout the teaching career.

✦ Individual autonomy is crucial to personal transformation and continuous learning as a professional.

✦ The system and the decisions and actions of individuals should always convey a sense of worth and respect to each person: PreK-12 students, PreK-12 educators, higher education partners, families, and community members.

	Teachers	NEA & Affiliates	School/Districts	Teacher Prep Programs	External Partners & Community	Policymakers
Potential Teacher	Provide positive message and modeling about teaching careers.	Future teacher programs: Collaborate to develop and cosponsor programs such as Educators Rising with learning experiences or coursework aligned with Educators Rising's 2016 standards.			Highlight and honor teachers of all races and backgrounds within the community.	Provide resources for future teacher programs
	Collaborate with families, community organizations, and other education partners to advocate for changes to improve the desirability of teaching as a professional career choice.	Jointly lobby for resources to improve professional level of salaries throughout teacher careers Collaboratively bargain for contract improvements and lobby for changes in policies that negatively impact teacher working conditions and career stability.		Advocate for improvements in PreK-12 salaries and working conditions using relevant research.	Collaborate with education partners to advocate for changes to improve the desirability of teaching as a professional career choice.	Provide funding for improved professional salaries throughout the career. Amend/improve policies to end negative impacts on teacher working conditions and career stability.
	Encourage students from under-repre-sented populations to consider a teaching career.			Host various recruitment events targeting diverse populations.	Work to develop funding for salaried teacher residency programs and forgivable loans to open opportunities to excellent teacher preparation programs to all promising candidates.	

Ensure that every PreK-12 student, regardless of socioeconomic status, geographic location, race, gender, or other personal characteristic, has access to a challenging and broad curriculum that includes access to upper level coursework, specialized programs of interest to individual students, and 21st century skills that foster creativity, problem solving, and that open a full range of postsecondary opportunities.

Ensure that teaching and learning experienced by PreK-12 students engages them with authentic experiences, community connections, opportunities for choices about content and the kind of demonstrations of mastery that best represent their individual learning styles.

Aspiring Teachers

	Teachers	NEA & Affiliates	School/Districts	Teacher Prep Programs	External Partners & Community	Policymakers
	Participate in training to develop teacher leadership skills as cooperating teachers and adjunct TPP instructors. Participate as cooperating teacher and mentor for candidates appropriately matched to their qualifications.	Teacher Preparation Programs: Collaborate in the design, implementation, evaluation, and improvement of teacher preparation programs. Use recommendations of NEA's 2014 "Teacher Residencies" as a guide for design. Include elements such as: ✦ Ensure candidates explore the range of experiences both within PreK-12 classrooms and beyond to be "profession ready" upon program completion. ✦ Ensure cooperating teachers have the teaching skills and abilities to positively foster professional growth for the aspiring teachers with whom they work. ✦ Provide ongoing training for cooperating teachers, provide them feedback on their work in those roles, and gather feedback from them about programs. ✦ Collaboratively and purposefully pair candidates with cooperating teachers. ✦ Integrate cooperating teachers as faculty within the teacher preparation program. ✦ Provide compensation for additional expertise and responsibilities of serving as cooperating teacher. ✦ Use professional/accomplished PreK-12 teachers more broadly in TPP roles both in schools and on campus. ✦ Ensure that TPP faculty also have recent, relevant PreK-12 experience. ✦ Programs focus on candidate ability to meet needs of every student through culturally responsive practice and sensitivity to student differences including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation/gender identification, disability, religious beliefs, residence, primary language.			Advocate for school-community-preparation program collaboration to create extensive community-based learning opportunities for PreK-12 students and rich experiences for candidates to work with parents and connect with the communities where they teach. Work to ensure a culture in PreK-12 schools that welcomes TPP faculty as full partners and collaborators, supports the presence of candidates during their field experiences and clinical practice, and includes hybrid roles for teacher leaders both in the school and as adjuncts with TPPs.	Require all TPPs to be accredited by CAEP. Require all TPPs to provide full-year clinical experiences. Provide financial support to candidates during clinical practice and compensation for teacher leaders serving as cooperating teachers.
	Provide best-practice tutoring to candidates needing academic support.	TPPs partner with PreK-12 schools to provide academic support to promising candidates needing assistance. Programs must model culturally responsive teaching and best practices in authentic learning environments.				Ensure policies are not gatekeepers to become teachers prior to participating in a TPP.
	Ensure candidates engage in a full range of experiences working with parents, families, and in the community during field experiences.	Develop and implement extensive experiences for candidates to work with parents, families, and in the community both within the school and beyond. Ensure candidates develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to meaningfully engage parents in the teaching/learning process and to develop learning experiences that are culturally responsive to and honor the background of each student.				
	Collaboratively develop and implement experiences to help aspiring teachers build positive connections with the communities where they work and for schools, unions, and communities to provide support for the psychological, cultural, and emotional needs of the aspiring teacher.					
		Create a network of preparation programs, schools and districts sharing successful TPP practices and fostering collaboration across all partners.				
	Collaborate in development of standards for "profession readiness" and assist in developing performance-based assessment processes for those standards.	Lead partners in setting national standards for "profession readiness" of candidates and development and use of a performance assessment of candidate readiness.	Provide candidates with access to experiences to enhance their development of "profession ready" knowledge, skills, and dispositions.	Ensure design of programs aligns with national standards for both program design and "profession readiness" of candidates.	Help provide avenues for aspiring teachers to demonstrate the ability to positively connect with parents and communities.	Require successful completion of a profession-developed performance assessment to determine candidate "profession readiness" prior to initial licensure.
		Bargain additional compensation for cooperating teachers commensurate with their specialized knowledge, training, and increased responsibilities.		Systemically show value of work with candidates and PreK-12 schools (promotion, tenure, etc.)	Provide funding to allow for bargained compensation for cooperating teachers as teacher leaders.	
		Use NEA Student Program to connect candidates with role of union in teacher quality and meeting needs of PreK-12 students.			Work to develop funding for salaried teacher residency programs and forgivable loans to open opportunities to excellent teacher preparation programs to all promising candidates.	

Emerging Teacher

	Teachers	NEA & Affiliates	School/Districts	Teacher Prep Programs	External Partners & Community	Policymakers
	Participate in training to serve more effectively in roles as either mentor teacher or instructional coach. Model effective professional practice including building a positive culture of support for peers and for PreK-12 student learning.	Induction Programs: Collaboratively bargain and implement research-based new teacher induction processes including the following characteristics: ✦ New teachers receive frequent mentoring and coaching for areas of interest and needed improvement for at least two years. ✦ Mentors/coaches have the teaching skills and abilities to positively foster professional growth for the emerging teachers with whom they work. ✦ Mentors/coaches receive ongoing professional development for their roles are carefully matched to their mentees' teaching assignments and needs. ✦ Provide tiered support matched to emerging teacher's developmental needs. ✦ Modify new teacher responsibilities to address demands of beginning a new career. ✦ Mentors, coaches, and new teachers have time during the contract day to perform the conferencing, etc., for the program. ✦ New teachers receive ongoing, meaningful feedback on performance and areas for improvement. ✦ Tier new teacher evaluation to match developmental level and align with support for skill development.		Provide support beyond program completion to ensure a smooth transition from teacher preparation to career induction experiences. Continue to collect follow-up data on candidate satisfaction, employer satisfaction, and candidate success in achieving full professional licensure.	Communities ensure their policymakers provide ample support for high-quality preparation, induction, and ongoing professional learning of all teachers and the resources to ensure each student has access to a great public school.	Provide resources to allow staffing needed to fully implement quality, two-year new teacher induction programs using well trained and compensated experienced peers with release time to perform mentoring and coaching duties.
	Collaboratively develop and implement experiences to help emerging teachers build positive connections with the communities where they work. Collaboratively develop and implement programs to support the psychological, cultural, and emotional needs of the emerging teacher, particularly to support the successful induction of teachers from underrepresented groups.					
	Participate in locally bargained peer review system.	Collaboratively bargain, develop, implement, monitor, and adjust a research-based peer review evaluation system. Establish a culture that trusts the fairness of the evaluation system. Extend the evaluation system to include targeted professional development support for teachers struggling to meet performance standards.				Institute polices requiring locally bargained research-based teacher evaluation systems.
	Collaborate in developing standards for professional licensure and assist in developing performance-based assessment processes for those standards.	Lead partners in establishing national standards for professional licensure of emerging teachers and development and use of performance assessment (e.g., portfolio of artifacts demonstrating essential knowledge and skills.	Align induction experiences and emerging teacher evaluations with the standards and requirements for achieving full professional licensure.	Develop workshops and coursework to assist new teachers in developing towards full professional licensure on a path to accomplished practice.	Support emerging teachers in demonstrating competence in connecting with parents and communities.	Require successful completion of a performance assessment (as described under the NEA and affiliates column) developed by the profession to achieve candidate readiness for full licensure.

	Teachers	NEA & Affiliates	School/Districts	Teacher Prep Programs	External Partners & Community	Policymakers
Professional Teacher	Every teacher participates actively in using data from and reflection on their own performance, feedback from peer coaching and observation, and information from teacher evaluation to develop individual goals for professional growth. Teachers participate in group goal setting and seek to align individual goals with group needs. Teachers demonstrate life-long passion for learning and improved professional performance.	Professional Development Programs: Collaboratively bargain and implement professional development systems aligned with Learning Forward (2011) "Standards" and with the following characteristics: ✦ Each teacher participates in non-evaluative peer coaching and peer observation. ✦ Teachers collaborate in developing group goals (department, grade level, school.) ✦ Each individual teacher has autonomy to set and pursue professional growth goals. ✦ Time in the school day and other resources are provided over extended months for learning and development of any professional skill. ✦ Targeted support is provided for pursuit of National Board Certification and other demonstrations of accomplished practice. ✦ Targeted support is provided for developing teacher leadership skills. ✦ Teachers are encouraged individually and in groups to engage in action research. ✦ Networking is encouraged both within department/grade and school and across departments and beyond school and district.		Coursework and degree programs for the advanced preparation of teachers are aligned with fostering the knowledge and skills within the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards' Core Propositions	Communities ensure their policymakers provide ample support for high quality preparation, induction, and ongoing professional learning of all teachers and the resources to ensure each student has access to a great public school.	Implement teacher license renewal policies with flexibility for teachers to identify and pursue goals both to improve their performance as teachers and to develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions as teacher leaders. Provide resources to fund job-embedded professional growth with the characteristics described here. Provide funds to assist with pursuit of measures of accomplished practice (e.g. National Board).
	Collaborate with communities and districts in the development of culturally responsive opportunities for students to engage in authentic community-based learning projects.		Collaborate with teachers and communities in the development of culturally responsive opportunities for students to engage in authentic community-based learning projects.		Collaborate with teachers and districts in the development of culturally responsive opportunities for students to engage in authentic community-based learning projects.	
	Advocate for and participate in locally bargained peer review system.	Collaboratively bargain, develop, implement, monitor, and adjust a trusted system of evaluation via peer-review. (Extended from Emerging Teacher)		Offer coursework to assist in developing teacher leaders that can facilitate peer review.		Institute polices requiring locally bargained research-based teacher evaluation systems. (from Emerging)
		Participate actively in opportunities to lead the profession through involvement in local, state, and national NEA.	Provide professional learning opportunities to foster teacher excellence and teacher leadership development			

	Teachers	NEA & Affiliates	School/Districts	Teacher Prep Programs	External Partners & Community	Policymakers
Accomplished Teacher	Participate in training as a community facilitator; apply those skills to foster use of local and extended virtual communities.	Collaborate in the development and use both of local networks (department, grade, school) and extend to virtual networks of teachers as networked improvement communities.				Provide resources to develop and implement virtual networks
	Offer support to colleagues who may be pursuing NBC.	Extend the system of professional supports from the professional phase to include accomplished and teacher leader phases.		Use "teacher leader standards" and "teacher leadership competencies" as a basis for coursework in developing teacher leaders.		
	Model professional dispositions through enthusiastic ongoing participation in professional learning, peer coaching, and peer review.	Continue the Teacher Leadership Initiative. Assist locals, states, and consortia to implement teacher leadership programs to foster both Association leadership development and teacher leaders for other roles in schools.	Provide opportunities for accomplished teachers with appropriate leadership skills to use those skills within the district.	Provide avenues for accomplished teachers to participate in various roles within TPPs (e.g. ,instructors/ad-junct faculty)	Support hybrid roles and release time during the school year to allow teachers to participate in extended training, networking, and leadership roles beyond the school. Support efforts to bargain compensation systems that recognize teachers who demonstrate accomplished practice through fair, objective measures of their knowledge and skills.	
	Expand leadership skills by volunteering to participate in Association leaders training. Increase involvement through volunteering and running for union office.	Encourage the use of accomplished teachers deemed to have crucial leadership skills in various roles as representatives of the teaching profession. Encourage involvement in Association leadership roles,				

	Teachers	NEA & Affiliates	School/Districts	Teacher Prep Programs	External Partners & Community	Policymakers
Teacher Leader	Seek additional skills to serve in various needed roles for teacher leaders.	Collaboratively bargain and institute positions for teacher leadership that continue to provide teaching connection through hybrid assignments or defined periods of full-time release from classroom teaching. ✦ Bargain for compensation and working conditions for teacher leaders in positions with special expertise or extended responsibilities.		Use "teacher leadership competencies" as a basis for coursework in developing teacher leaders. Monitor school/dis-trict needs for teacher leaders to meet demands for formal coursework.	Provide funding to address the extensive need for teacher leaders in schools. Support bargained salary enhancements for a lattice of teacher career opportunities that address needs for their expertise in varied roles. Support hybrid roles and release time during the school year to allow teacher leaders to engage in additional responsibilities and to participate in extended training, networking, and leadership roles beyond the school.	
				Lead work with partners to define standards and skills for teacher leadership roles and to develop and use performance-based assessments of these skills.		Adopt endorsement standards for teacher leadership and use performance assessments developed by the profession.

The recommendations of NEA's expert panel provide a comprehensive agenda (see grid) for work by every constituency involved in the preparation and ongoing professional growth of teachers, as well as for teachers, themselves. The panel's top priorities for action are outlined below through two sets of recommendations.

Crucial First Steps for Change are a set of broad goals for change that should be implemented using the five keys to transformation cited above.

Constituency Priorities for Action are specific strategies that should be implemented by several key groups working to prepare PreK-12 educators. We urge each of the constituencies to embrace these recommendations, using the keys to transformation as a guide to how the work must be accomplished.

Crucial First Steps for Change:

Clinical Practice – Each aspiring teacher must participate in a carefully designed year-long clinical experience in the classroom of an excellent/accomplished teacher trained for the role of clinical practitioner and that works effectively with adult learners, mentoring and fostering the professional growth of peers. Financial support should be provided to aspiring teachers, particularly during their clinical practice year.

Professional Standards of Practice – Stakeholders, led by PreK-12 teachers, should establish clear expectations/standards for knowledge and skills needed for initial licensure and for full professional licensure. This collaborative, profession-led group should translate this work into the development and implementation of performance assessments used to determine who meets the expectations for various phases of the profession. These standards should be part of a coherent system that culminates with a profession-defined demonstration of accomplished practice (e.g., National Board Certification.)

Authentic Demonstration of Practice – As a culmination of the teacher preparation program the aspiring teacher must demonstrate the necessary knowledge and skills through the profession-developed performance assessment. Teachers moving from "emerging" to "professional" phase should demonstrate knowledge and skills (determined by representative members of the profession) through performance assessment activities.

Professional Induction and Support – Each Emerging Teacher must participate in a multi-year extensive induction program that includes working with a qualified and trained mentor and peer coach who is afforded the necessary time to fulfill their duties. The professional duties of the emerging teacher are also modified to allow time to participate in mentoring and to engage in the additional time required for a novice to plan for instruction, assessment, and reflection on practice.

Continuous Professional Growth

✦ **Autonomy –** Each teacher, regardless of career phase, must be afforded the opportunity to collaborate with peers to development and implement their professional learning plan with autonomy to match that plan to their individual needs, strengths, and interests.

✦ **Effective Design –** All professional learning should be planned and implemented according to sound design principles outlined in Learning Forward, including sufficient focus over extended time for research, coaching and practice, and reflection. Adequate time must be provided within the professional work day to accomplish these activities.

Accomplished Practice – Each teacher must be provided the opportunity and encouraged to participate in professional learning communities focused on improved practice in the areas of NBPTS's Five Core Principles. Collaborative groups should facilitate both the ongoing professional growth of National Board Certified teachers and those pursuing such measures of accomplished practice.

Professional Evaluation – Formative and summative evaluation of professional practice should be aligned with and support the professional learning plan for each teacher and should be facilitated by a trusted teacher-led system of peer review.

Teacher Leadership – Teacher leaders (at least 20 percent of teachers in each setting) should be intentionally developed to meet the systemic demands for persons to serve in the host of roles for teacher leaders including, but not limited to: clinical facilitators, mentors, peer coaches, peer reviewers, professional learning community facilitators, advocates, professional organization leaders.

Constituency Priorities for Action

To accomplish the crucial first steps described above, the following actions may be considered priorities for various stakeholder groups:

Teachers should:

✦ Participate actively in the development, implementation, and ongoing monitoring of profession-driven national standards and performance assessments for the profession of teaching.

✦ Participate actively in the development, implementation, and ongoing monitoring of individual and school professional development to ensure they offer individual autonomy, collaborative strategies, ongoing focused effort over time, and peer coaching and reflection on practice.

✦ Actively pursue continuous professional learning and improved practice including: achieving National Board Certification, engaging in action research on teaching and learning, developing leadership skills to meet the needs of the profession, infusing their professional practice with culturally responsive practices, and caring for each student.

✦ Become passionate advocates for PreK-12 students and citizens of their profession through involvement in the values and work of the teachers' union.

✦ Model a passion for teaching and encourage promising students to pursue a career in teaching.

NEA and its Affiliates should:

✦ Lead in bringing together a coalition to establish standards for initial teacher licensure (profession readiness) and full professional licensure.

✦ Lead the coalition in developing, implementing, and monitoring a performance assessment system for initial licensure and a system of performance demonstrations (portfolio) to attain full licensure.

✦ Actively support, in collaboration with schools/districts, the development of teacher leaders to meet the need for cooperating teachers, mentors, peer assistants/reviewers, professional learning community facilitators, organizational leaders, and community advocates for PreK-12 schools.

✦ Collaborate with communities, schools, and districts to design and implement strategies to help all teachers deepen their understanding of race, culture, and social justice and to strengthen their skills in working with students, parents, and community in culturally responsive ways.

Teacher Preparation Programs should:

✦ Apply the standards for initial licensure and professional licensure developed by the teacher-led coalition of stakeholders along with NBPTS' Five Core Propositions as a guide for developing teacher preparation programs.

✦ Require all pathways for teacher preparation include a minimum of a full year of clinical practice with a well-trained, carefully matched, qualified professional/accomplished teacher (collaboratively selected and trained along with the host school/district). Field experiences should be infused throughout coursework prior to the clinical practice year.

✦ Support candidate academic skill development through culturally responsive authentic project learning. Support candidate development of cultural competency through collaboratively developed, extensive and intensive interactions with diverse PreK-12 students, fellow teacher candidates, and TPP faculty.

Schools/Districts should:

✦ Develop and implement (in collaboration with teacher unions and communities) an induction program including at least two years of support with a trained mentor.

✦ Develop and implement (in collaboration with teacher union) professional growth structures for all teachers that provide individual autonomy; peer collaboration for establishing building and district goals for professional development; experiences to foster deeper understanding of culture, race, and culturally responsive teaching; and peer coaching over extended periods of time for application of all new knowledge and skills.

✦ Develop and implement (in collaboration with teacher union) a practitioner-led system of peer assistance and peer review.

✦ Develop and implement (in collaboration with teacher union) structures that promote teacher leadership and a culture of collaboration.

Communities should:

✦ Partner with teacher unions, schools, districts, and teacher preparation programs to develop and implement induction experiences to help aspiring and emerging teachers to develop positive community connections, deeper appreciation for and skills in working with cultures within the community, and to build a shared sense of mission for social justice and opportunities for all students.

✦ Partner with teacher unions, schools, and districts, to develop and implement authentic, community based learning opportunities that allow students to explore meaningful topics of interest that develop.

✦ Partner with teacher unions, schools, and districts, to advocate for/ensure availability of resources, policies, and positive school environments so that each student has access to a great public school education.

Policymakers should:

✦ Enact policies to require that all TPPs provide a full year of clinical practice and to be nationally accredited through CAEP.

✦ Provide resources needed for TPPs to institute programs culminating with year-long clinical practice and to provide stipends to support candidates as they complete their preparation programs.

✦ Use profession-established standards for both initial licensure and for movement to full professional licensure and profession-developed/administered performance assessments/measures as the primary factors in granting licenses.

✦ Recognize successful completion of NBC's performance assessment process as the benchmark for accomplished practice.

✦ Remove entry barriers to those wishing to pursue teacher preparation and require that TPPs provide significant supports to develop the academic foundation and cultural competence of each candidate to ensure "profession readiness" upon program completion.

✦ Provide resources needed so teachers, schools, districts, and communities can provide quality career-long professional learning for educators; experiences to build positive cultural understanding among teachers and communities; and access to a great public school education for every student.

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Expert Panel Bios

Harold Acord

Mr. Acord was a Spanish teacher at Canyon Springs High School in Moreno Valley, California for 25 years and is currently in his second term as President of the Moreno Valley Education Association (MVEA). He started as an MVEA Site Rep. He has served on the local Exec Board for thirteen years and served as Vice-President before becoming President. He also has been active on various MVEA committees and workgroups including the Bargaining Team and Grievance Committee, etc.

Active with the California Teachers Association's (CTA) State Council of Education, Mr. Acord served as chair of the Credentials and Professional Development Committee. Since 2006, he has been a liaison from CTA to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. Mr. Acord was appointed by the California Teachers Association to the CTA Teacher Evaluation Workgroup and as an NEA member of the Board of Examiners for the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education's Board (NCATE). Most recently he has been appointed Chair of CTA's Teacher Pipeline Workgroup.

Originally from Michigan, Mr. Acord is a graduate of the University of Michigan. His family has been involved in unionism in Flint, Michigan since the 1930's.

Tracy Cropsey

Mrs. Cropsey is a teacher leader who has taught middle school science for Marcellus Community Schools in Michigan for the past 12 years. She is a 2015 NEA Teacher Leadership Initiative (TLI) fellow and she serves as a Michigan coach for TLI. Mrs. Cropsey has an undergraduate degree from Western Michigan University, Secondary Education certification from Goshen College, and a Master of Arts in Education from Cornerstone University.

Mrs. Cropsey is currently pursuing a graduate degree in Curriculum and Instruction in Science Education. In addition to her responsibilities as a teacher, Mrs. Cropsey is President of the Marcellus Education Association.

Joe Doctor

Dr. Doctor leads strategy development, strategic projects, and policy for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. His work focuses on elevating the role the National Board can play to strengthen the professional career continuum for teachers and advance the teaching profession. He leads the National Board's partnership with the Network to Transform Teaching, a group of state, district, and practicing teacher stakeholders using the networked improvement community methodology to develop breakthrough improvements across the career continuum.

Dr. Doctor coauthored "Raising the Bar for Teaching" with Jal Mehta, arguing for adapting supports other professions have put in place as a strategy to elevate teaching. He joined the National Board in 2012. Previously, Dr. Doctor was a manager at the Bridgespan Group, a strategy consulting nonprofit serving the social sector. He holds a doctorate in education leadership from Harvard University.

Melissa Erickson

Mrs. Erickson is a committed and passionate child advocate, with more than 15 years of progressive leadership in positions related to community organizing and volunteer management. Locally, she has served as President of the PTA in Hillsborough County, Florida, the nation's eighth largest district. She is an active participant in community engagement groups surrounding the school district's initiative to empower effective teaching. She also has organized community engagement forums for the U.S. Department of Education to support improvement in neighborhood housing turn around schools.

As a military wife and a former teacher, Mrs. Erickson is a strong advocate for the Common Core State Standards, believing their adoption will have a significant impact on the ability of military families to obtain high quality education for their children, while accommodating the military's need to move personnel. Mrs. Erickson was recognized by former President Barack Obama as a Champion of Change.

Chelsey Jo Herrig

Even early in her career as an educator, Ms. Herrig is recognized as dynamic leader. Ms. Herrig was elected Chairperson of the NEA Student Program in 2014, she completed her term in August, 2016.

Ms. Herrig grew up in a single-parent household in the small town of Jackson, Minnesota, while her mother worked two jobs to make ends meet. Ms. Herrig majored in Elementary Education at Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU), graduating with a mathematics endorsement and minor in Special Education. Prior to her election as Chairperson of the NEA Student program, Ms. Herrig served as the Co-President of the SMSU Education Student Program for three years. She is currently completing her studies and plans to continue her career as an educator.

Christopher Ho

Mr. Ho has been teaching Social Studies for six years, five years in Hawaii and one year in Nevada. After moving to Hawaii and realizing the difficulty many people face in transitioning to another state, he decided to join his local union and work for the betterment of teachers. This year, Mr. Ho was elected vice President of the Hilo Chapter and Institute Chairperson.

Mr. Ho recently created an online course to help empower Hawaii teachers to advocate and educate their colleagues. This was the first course of its kind to be offered to teachers in Hawaii and was created as result of Mr. Ho's experience with NEA's TLI program.

Maria Hyler

Maria E. Hyler is a member of Learning Policy Institute's (LPI) Educator Quality and Deeper Learning teams. She is co-lead for an upcoming study on teacher preparation for deeper learning. Dr. Hyler also represents LPI on several initiatives focused on teacher preparation, development, and leadership. Her work focuses on structures and systems that support student success, best practices for preparing aspiring teachers to teach students of diverse backgrounds, and preparing equity-centered educators.

Dr. Hyler previously served as Assistant Professor of teacher preparation and professional development at the University of Maryland, College Park. She began her career as a high school English teacher in San Mateo County, CA, where she achieved National Board Certification in Adolescent Young Adult English Language Arts.

Dr. Hyler received her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from Stanford University, an M.Ed. with a teaching credential from Harvard Graduate School of Education and a dual degree in English and Africana Studies from Wellesley College.

Mary Ellen Kanthack

Mrs. Kanthack has evolved from a formally trained pianist to a fourth and fifth grade teacher at Brookwood Middle School in Genoa City, Wisconsin, into a Nationally Board Certified Teacher, Middle Childhood/Generalist. She attained her Elementary 18, political science and Speech Communications licenses, along with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from the University of Wisconsin Parkside. She continued to grow and expand her education in active research with a focus on brain based learning in her graduate program, that led to a Master of Arts in Teaching from Aurora University. Her post graduate studies have included a focus on teaching mathematics, writing and science, authentic, metacognitive instructional strategies and personalized learning.

Mrs. Kanthack has served as president, vice president and building advisor for Genoa City Educators' Association. She is known as an advocate against the misuse of standardized tests and for her strong support for students with special needs.

Chosen by NEA to work among the top teachers in the nation, as part of the Association's Master Teacher Project, Mrs. Kanthack helped build and publish a new, free online resource of original math and science lessons which includes integrated technology. She continued this work as a consultant for BetterLesson, to help teachers better apply strategies in their practice and help them understand the scaffolding of Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards.

Shelly Moore Krajacic, Chairperson

Ms. Krajacic is an English and drama teacher from Ellsworth, Wisconsin. She was elected to the NEAs' Executive Committee in July 2015 for a three-year term.

Ms. Krajacic is a third-generation Wisconsin public school teacher with almost twenty years of classroom experience. She is a National Board Certified Teacher. Prior to her election to NEA's Executive Committee, Ms. Krajacic served in numerous national, state and local leadership capacities, as well as serving on several Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction committees. In addition, she is a member of the Board of Directors for the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC), and served on NEA's Board of Directors for six years. She also was a candidate for the Wisconsin State Senate in 2011.

Ms. Krajacic earned her bachelor's degree from University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and a master's degree in English Education from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, where she previously served as an adjunct instructor.

Tommie Leaders

Mr. Leaders is a fourth grade teacher with the Council Bluffs Community School District in Iowa. He is a third year teacher who is constantly looking for ways to improve his practice and advocate for the teaching profession. Leaders is currently pursuing a master's degree from Concordia University in Education Administration. Mr. Leaders previously served as Chairperson of the National Education Association Student Program. Since beginning his career in Council Bluffs, he has been very active in the Council Bluffs Education Association, serving as membership chair and as a building representative. He currently serves as President of Council Bluffs Education Association.

Christy Perry

Currently serving as Superintendent of Salem-Keizer Public Schools, Christy Perry has extensive experience in K-12 education. She is passionate in her support of public education and the success of all students. Prior to becoming Superintendent of Salem-Keizer, she spent nine years as Superintendent of the Dallas School District. She also served as a director of Human Resources, elementary school principal, university instructor, and she taught fifth and sixth grades.

Superintendent Perry attended college at Oregon universities, earning her bachelor's and master's degrees in Education from Western Oregon University and her administrative license from Portland State University.

Community partnerships are important to Superintendent Perry. She has served on a variety of boards, and strives to have collaborative partnerships with law enforcement, local governmental agencies, the faith community, and area businesses and nonprofits.

Theo Small

Mr. Small has 26 years of education experience, serving as a special education paraprofessional, classroom teacher, English Language Learning Specialist, and Elementary Science Trainer. He currently serves as Vice President of Clark County Education Association (CCEA), in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Mr. Small is most proud of the work to coordinate organizations to collectively address the issues impacting the Clark County School District (CCSD). This collective impact system approach has influenced how CCSD attracts, hires, and supports teachers & licensed professionals. CCEA recently worked closely in a bi-partisan process to change the delivery system of CCSD to shift decision making at the sight level, where schools will control up to 80 percent of their own budgets. Part of this work is to advocate for Nevada's funding system to become more equitable to address the needs of vulnerable students and families.

Mr. Small sits on Nevada's Teacher and Leader Council, appointed by the governor to create the state's evaluation system.

Darein Spann

Mr. Spann has been an educator for 13 years. He is a high school English teacher at Magee High School in Magee, MS. Mr. Spann is a member of the Mississippi Association of Educators Board of Directors and the NEA Board of Directors, representing Mississippi. In addition, Mr. Spann serves as NEA Human and Civil Rights Committee Chairperson. He was selected Teacher of the Year in 2016 for his building and as the district's nominee for Mississippi Teacher of the Year.

Mr. Spann holds a Bachelor of Arts in English, Master of Arts in Education, and an Educational Specialist degree in Leadership; he is currently pursuing his doctorate. He is a 2015 NEA Teacher Leadership Initiative fellow.

Hanna Vaandering

Hanna Vaandering is an elementary physical education teacher from Beaverton, Oregon. She is President of the Oregon Education Association. Ms. Vaandering is a lifelong learner and proud graduate of Pacific University. She started her teaching career at Ridgewood Elementary, and has committed her life to ensuring that all students, regardless of their zip code, have access to a quality, well-rounded public education.

Ms. Vaandering is particularly proud of her work with Oregon educators and coalition partners to build a balanced system of assessment—one that takes the focus off of testing, and shifts it to where it ought to be—inspired learning.

Ms. Vaandering was elected to NEA's Executive Committee in July 2017 and began her term in September.

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