

Designing a continuum to support effective teaching in New Jersey

Garden State Alliance for Strengthening Education **REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

Strengthening Teacher Preparation in the Continuum

A. Oversight and updating of programs:

1. **To enhance the coordination, validity, and relevance of programs, establish a Statewide Teacher Preparation Commission consisting of major stakeholders.** This body must thoughtfully assess the current state of preparation and induction policies and ensure they reflect more rigorous student learning standards. It also should consider issues related to how teacher effectiveness policies are integrated and aligned across the continuum of practice. With the establishment of a new national accreditation body, The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), the time is ripe for New Jersey to make critical decisions regarding accreditation and program approval.
 - a. This 22-member Commission shall include one representative from each of the following stakeholders:
 - * N.J. Department of Education,
 - * N.J. Education Association,
 - * American Federation of Teachers – N.J.,
 - * N.J. Principals and Supervisors Association,
 - * N.J. Association of Colleges for Teacher Education,
 - * N.J. Field Directors Forum,
 - * N.J. School Boards Association,
 - * N.J. Association of School Administrators,
 - * N.J. Association of State Colleges and Universities,
 - * N.J. Association of Independent Colleges and Universities,
 - * N.J. Council of County Colleges, and
 - * N.J. Parent Teacher Association.

In addition, six P-12 teaching staff members shall be appointed by the largest state organization representing teaching staff members in the state; one faculty member shall be appointed by the statewide organization representing the majority of New Jersey county college faculty, currently NJEA; and three teacher preparation faculty members shall be appointed by the bargaining agent for state college and university faculty, currently the Council of N.J. State College Locals/AFT.

In addition, the Commission shall:

- b. **Provide recommendations** to the N.J. State Board of Education **regarding ways to better link P-12 school districts and teacher preparation programs more closely as partners in preparing New Jersey teachers.** For example, one recommendation might call for creating a P-16 teacher preparation council to enhance partnerships in teacher preparation and induction.
- c. **Study and recommend any necessary revisions to the current New Jersey teacher preparation program accreditation and approval process, including Alternate Route programs.**
- d. **Explore ways to address issues of teacher shortages and/or oversupply.**
- e. **Ensure that alternate route teacher preparation training programs and their providers are held to the same rigor, accountability, and quality standards** as traditional university educator preparation programs.
- f. **Continue to discuss and provide feedback on elements affecting the continuum** of lifelong learning and support of educators.
- g. **Determine the best way to address content-specific pedagogical standards for educator preparation programs,** aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and N.J. Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS), which outline the specific knowledge and skills required in each area of certification.

Also recommended:

2. In partnership with and guidance from the Commission and the non-profit organizations and associations represented on the Commission, **require the state to invest in research** that supports development, continuous improvement, and effectiveness of teacher preparation models.

B. Overall Program Effectiveness

1. **Require programs to connect coursework in the content area, coursework in teaching pedagogy, and clinical practice.**
2. **Provide state incentives for teacher education programs to partner with schools** – particularly in urban and rural areas – in a relationship analogous to those between medical schools and teaching hospitals.
3. **Provide guidelines for school/university partnerships** to include shared decision-making and oversight on candidate selection and completion by school districts and teacher education programs.
4. **Assure through program approval requirements that programs are field-based,** integrating academic and clinical instruction throughout the program, frequently assessing students, and giving students increasing practice as teachers.

5. **Develop new pilot opportunities for teacher candidates to work in hard-to-staff schools through clinical internships** that take place in school settings that are structured and staffed to support teacher learning *and* student achievement.

C. Faculty

1. **Require school of education faculty**, including Alternate Route faculty, **to hold at least one P-12 teaching certificate.**
2. **Require school of education faculty to have current experience working with students in P-12 schools**, either working actively with teacher candidates and cooperating teachers in field experiences, leading or co-leading in-school clusters of student teachers in professional learning communities, or co-teaching children in P-12 schools.
3. **Require each Educator Preparation Program to establish an advisory board that brings together teacher education faculty, arts and sciences faculty, and P-12 faculty**, including teachers and school administrators, to develop the field experience, assure the interconnection between the college program and field, as well as assure alignment of curricula across the college schools and departments engaged in preparing teachers.

D. Cooperating Teachers

1. **Develop standards for clinical practice to serve as the foundation for rigorous criteria for the preparation and selection of clinical faculty and cooperating teachers.** Involve both programs and practicing teachers and administrators in developing these standards and program requirements.
2. **Involve cooperating teachers in collegially working with candidates** to enhance performance and explore ways to assess candidate performance.
3. **Develop curricula for cooperating teachers.**
4. **Develop criteria that assure candidates are supervised and mentored** by effective practitioners, coaches, and clinical faculty.
5. Promote the **importance of added compensation being bargained for these positions.**
6. **Promote networking among cooperating teachers through a statewide Academy** that includes all teacher preparation colleges and programs.

E. Assessing Programs, including Alternate Route Programs

The complex nature of teaching and teacher effectiveness requires that the assessment of programs consider a broad spectrum of elements, not focus on single elements.

1. **Adopt or adapt valid and reliable performance assessments or criteria for performance assessments which are integrated with an overarching program**

framework, assuring required competencies are learned in a systemic approach aligned to the InTASC standards for all routes to teaching.

2. **Formalize a survey of graduates and employers for feedback** to teacher preparation programs to gauge the programs' impact on teacher retention and success.
3. **Monitor performance data including but not limited to “pass” rates of graduates on the PRAXIS II exams to gauge student knowledge of content area(s), job placement rate for new teachers, percentage of teachers working in high needs school districts, and percentage of teachers teaching in shortage areas.** If teacher evaluation is to be considered in rating teacher preparation programs, the N.J. Department of Education must factor in the school and district variables impacting teacher effectiveness including, but not limited to, induction programs, school resources, training opportunities, and curriculum quality. In addition, teacher placement data for novice teachers working in non-public schools and out-of state schools should be incorporated, and the state of the job market should be considered.

Strengthening Teacher Induction

The following recommendations provide a new vision for induction, more closely tying it to preparation and assuring a better transition from preparation to practice:

1. **Establish state incentives for school districts to partner** with statewide education associations, higher education institutions, and other providers to develop, expand, and provide a standards-based mentor training curriculum.
2. **Require the state to monitor school districts to ensure that they provide – during the school day – the mentor training and professional development, time for mentors to meet with novice teachers, and time for mentors to meet with each other.**
3. **Reinstate full state funding to support induction with mentoring.** No novice teacher should be required to pay for mentoring as a condition of licensing or employment.
4. **Extend the induction period to two years**, enabling the standard-licensed second-year novice teachers to work with more experienced teachers in learning teams to develop their professional practice.
5. **Create induction standards to assure quality across the state and develop a review process to assure districts are accountable.** Include opportunities for novice teachers to have orientation, to become members of learning teams, to observe other teachers in action, and to engage in collegial coaching.
6. **Identify appropriate criteria and qualifications for mentoring** with input from the Commission on Teacher Preparation, organizations representing P-12 teaching staff, and teacher preparation program faculty.
7. **Develop regulations regarding specific contact time** between mentors and novice teachers **to assure weekly quality interactions during the workday.**
8. **Involve P-12 teachers and teacher preparation program providers in developing robust induction programs that align with** pre-service program **standards** and the N.J. Standards for Teachers, as well as assure that student instruction remains a key focus of mentoring.
9. **Ensure ongoing training for mentors** in collaborative professional development approaches, as well as other applicable professional learning opportunities during the work day.
10. To assure smooth transitions, **involve in the induction experience the teacher preparation program faculty and cooperating teachers who assist with the pre-service clinical experience.**
11. **Require release time and/or other bargained compensation for mentors and release time for novice teachers.** The commission should address the restrictions of the minimum state-set compensation.

Strengthening Professional Learning

The following recommendations are designed to enhance the support and impact of professional development on the continuum of teaching and learning:

1. **Assure ongoing growth of teachers through research-based approaches to professional learning during the workday**, particularly those supporting collaborative learning and planning, so that teachers can systematically benefit from synergy of the experience and practice of other teachers.
2. **Develop regulations that encourage formation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and require school districts to schedule time within the school day/week for PLCs and other research-based approaches to professional learning** focused on improving teaching and learning.
3. **Ensure that PLC discussions and other research-based professional learning experiences are used to inform practice.**
4. **Develop a non-remedial, robust, and integrated system of evaluation and professional development that stresses continuous reflection by teachers as a non-evaluative tool, encourages innovation, considers both experience** in the assignment and in teaching, and **supports collaboration** in improving teaching and learning.
5. **Identify model confidential peer support programs** for teachers – both those who are struggling and those who voluntarily seek help with challenges.
6. **Restore district and school educator-based professional development committees** to increase participation in professional development planning, with the majority of seats on each committee held by teaching staff members chosen in elections run by the majority representative.
7. **Engage the professional development committees, in concert with school leaders and the majority representative staff association(s), in studying, developing, and recommending creative scheduling and other ways to create collaborative time for all teaching staff within the contractual school day while still providing students with required instruction.** These panels could address time for professional learning across the continuum – including interactions among college faculty, novice teachers, and experienced P-12 teachers; teacher-to-teacher support and growth experiences; PLC and team experiences; and opportunities for teacher leader learning and interactions.
8. **Engage non-traditional professional development approaches to strengthen instruction** across grades/disciplines and to address the needs of other teaching staff members.
9. **Support development of teacher leaders to act as instructional coaches and mentors** in confidential, non-evaluative ways.
10. **Create a state teacher professional development advisory panel to assure teacher input on state professional development policy**, with P-12 teaching staff

members making up the majority of panel members. Teacher members would be selected from nominees offered by the largest state education association representing teachers, except that one seat would be filled by a nominee from the minority teachers' union.

- 11. Ensure that the state aid formula for New Jersey public schools is fully funded,** thereby providing the supports required for teaching and learning, including collaborative professional development and other collaboration required across the continuum.

Strengthening Teacher Leadership

To support the enhanced and emerging teacher leader responsibilities of many teaching staff members and contributions of teacher leadership to improved student learning, the following steps are recommended:

1. **Establish a State Teacher Leader Endorsement Advisory Board.** This board would:
 - a. **Develop a teacher leader endorsement on the instructional license, including the criteria** for that endorsement, required **training**, and **phasing in** of this endorsement.
 - b. Recommend the **elements of the teacher leader program of study and program approval standards be aligned with the** national Teacher Leader Model **Standards** and adopted state standards.
 - c. **Recommend that the program of study include but not be limited to, field experience and additional coursework acquired beyond the standards.** At a minimum, the program of study should include 12 graduate credits or 180 clock hours or a combination thereof with an approved provider of a teacher leader endorsement program of study.
 - d. **Recommend a timetable for implementation** of a new “teacher leader” endorsement.
 - e. **Include as a criterion** for endorsement that applicants complete five years of full-time teaching under a valid State Board of Examiners-issued provisional or standard certificate, or a combination thereof.
 - f. **Use data collected by the N.J. Department of Education (NJDOE) from districts, endorsement holders, and program providers to assess outcomes** associated with the providers of teacher leader programs of study for the teacher leader endorsement.
 - g. **Make recommendations for adjustments to the program of study as needed.**
 - h. **Be made up of** a representative of the N.J. Department of Education, who shall be a non-voting member of the board, plus four members recommended by the N.J. Education Association (NJEA), one member recommended by the American Federation of Teachers-N.J. (AFT-NJ), two members recommended by the N.J. Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA), one member recommended by the N.J. Association of School Administrators (NJASA), one member recommended by the N.J. School Boards Association (NJSBA), and one member recommended by the N.J. Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (NJACTE).

Members shall be appointed by the state education commissioner based on the recommendations outlined above. The board members shall serve three-year terms, except the initial appointee terms shall be staggered as follows: one nominated by NJACTE, one nominated by NJPSA, and one nominated by NJEA shall

serve three years; one nominated by AFT-NJ, one nominated by NJEA, and one nominated by NJASA shall serve two years; one nominated by NJSBA, one nominated by NJPSA, and two nominated by NJEA shall serve a term of one year.

- i. Elect a chairperson and vice chairperson among its members.
 - j. **Within five years evaluate programmatic and other data collected by the NJDOE and make recommendations to the State Board of Education** regarding non-supervisory roles and responsibilities for which a teacher leader endorsement should be required.
2. Require the State Board of Education to **adopt regulations, based on the Advisory Board's recommendations, to establish the teacher leader endorsement**, its requirements, and standards for the program of study, program approval, and approval of program providers.
 3. **Ensure that once the endorsement is established and implemented, that ongoing research is conducted by the state to monitor programs and emerging or evolving teacher leader issues** that will enable the Advisory Board to recommend adjustments as needed.
 4. **Enable New Jersey institutions of higher education, educational organizations, other non-profit entities, or a combination of such bodies to apply to the Department of Education to offer an approved program of study for the teacher leader endorsement**, as long as they met the established standards and were approved by the department.
 5. **Promote a culture of shared decision-making and shared leadership in schools** through demonstration of and support for best practices.
 6. **Ensure role clarity, fairness and transparency in the selection process** for teacher leader positions, **and confidentiality of interactions** among teachers and teacher leaders.
 7. Recognize that this is still a **voluntary, optional endorsement** based on individual's interests, goals, and desires.
 8. **Prohibit school districts from penalizing individuals** through their employment evaluation **for opting not to undertake the formal teacher leader program** or to pursue teacher leader positions.
 9. **Respect the collective negotiations process for determining additional compensation and release time** for those engaging in teacher leader responsibilities, as well as other terms and conditions of employment for such teachers. At the same time, encourage teacher unions and school districts to recognize the added value of these roles and the extra time, work, and expertise needed to complete them.
 10. **Establish the groundwork for future teacher leaders** by ensuring that teacher and school leader/ administrator preparation programs integrate collaboration and teamwork experiences, focus on best practices research in improving teaching and learning, and use technology to build communities of learners among educators.

11. **Redesign school leader** (supervisor, principal, and school administrator) **preparation programs** to support the establishment of a collaborative school culture and shared leadership that engages all staff.
12. Encourage **school districts to offer or provide opportunities for additional professional development** and offer or make available **training for teacher-leader curricula** to individuals who hold teacher leader types of positions and/or eligible staff.
13. **Create teacher leadership academies** with major stakeholders to bring together teachers who exemplify and who aspire to formal teacher leadership roles, both to build on their skills and to share their practice, and to highlight best practices.