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TEXAS TEACHER PREPARATION COLLABORATIVE
An Effective Teacher in Every Classroom

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every August, more than 27,000 first-year teachers enter classrooms all over Texas. The state of Texas offers aspiring educators with 231 different educator preparation program options. We offer teacher training programs through universities and colleges as well as postbaccalaureate and alternative certification programs. Texas has served as a leader in the nation by expanding access and providing many different pathways to teacher certification.

While Texas leads the nation in the diversity and number of ways to become an educator, our current state system of teacher preparation has not guaranteed a well-prepared new teacher in all classrooms every year. Educate Texas convened the Texas Teacher Preparation Collaborative to examine best practices and policies in teacher preparation in higher education, school, district, and national levels; to review research on effective teacher preparation practices; and to make practical recommendations to improve both the policy and the practice of teacher preparation. The Collaborative brought together deans of education, alternative certification leaders, teachers, principals, superintendents, and advocacy leaders committed to improving teacher preparation.

The goal of the Collaborative was to make recommendations that would ensure that teachers are fully equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to lead Texas students and to provide Texas students with a 21st century education. The Collaborative members were specifically selected for their willingness to consider the dynamic needs of teachers and schools. The members identified challenges in how we frame, structure, implement, and evaluate teacher preparation. The recommendations below seek to reframe teacher preparation in Texas from a system focused on processes to a system that drives outcomes. The goal is to improve teacher preparation and ensure that every student in Texas has an effective and qualified teacher leader.

Recommendation 1

Establish a competency-based, tiered licensure system that differentiates performance and strengthens teaching as a profession.

1–A. Tiered Licensure—The *State Board for Educator Certification* and the *Texas Education Agency* should create and define a four-tiered system, in which:

- progression of licensure is based on demonstration of appropriate competencies, as identified by the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) or another commissioner-approved evaluation system, and

- there is a clear differentiation of licensure between teachers with no student teaching or field-based experience (Level 1) and teachers with classroom experience (Levels 2 and above).

1–B. Collaboration—*Texas Educator Preparation Programs* and *Districts* should collaborate to support teachers at Levels 1 and 2.

1–C. Support—*Texas Educator Preparation Programs* should be responsible for monitoring, tracking, and working with their teachers during the first three years of teaching, with the support of the state to share relevant data with educator preparation programs.

1–D. Mentorship—The *Texas Legislature* should allocate state appropriations for mentoring, and *related state agencies* should provide support for mentoring, including considering using Title I, Title II, Title III, or other funds to support mentorship, which is a key component of professional development for teachers at Levels 1 and 2.

1–E. Reciprocity—The *Texas Legislature* should maximize the supply of qualified teachers by expanding the reciprocity of licensure policy. This would entail a Level 2 license with no requirement to complete additional exams to teachers who have been certified in other states and who can demonstrate proficiency on selected, appropriate indicators aligned with T-TESS or another commissioner-approved evaluation system.

Recommendation 2

Enhance the Texas educator preparation program evaluation system to increase accountability, drive program outcome improvement, and provide public transparency on program performance.

2–A. Accreditation—The *State Board for Educator Certification* and the *Texas Education Agency* should raise the standards for educator preparation programs accreditation by requiring all educator preparation programs to:

- obtain national accreditation, recognition, or use an inspectorate model and

- reapply for accreditation in Texas under the new rules.

2–B. Measures—The *Texas Education Agency* should expand educator preparation program performance and accountability measures. Measures should be used to rate and close low-performing educator preparation programs and recognize high-performing educator preparation programs. Suggested measures include, but are not limited to, teacher growth and performance as measured through T-TESS or another commissioner-approved evaluation system, K–12 student surveys, progression from Level 1 to Level 2 licenses, and student outcomes and growth.

2–C. Data Accessibility—The *Texas Education Agency* and the *Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board* should make educator preparation program data transparent through a public, interactive dashboard or almanac.

2–D. Innovation—The *Texas Legislature* should incentivize educator preparation program performance and encourage program improvement through the creation of a Program of Innovation, in which an educator preparation program demonstrating high performance, as measured by state accountability measures, could apply for an innovation waiver.

2–E. Partnerships—*Texas Educator Preparation Programs* and *Districts* and educator preparation programs should use the data to strengthen partnerships aimed at aligning supply and demand needs for trained teachers.

Recommendation 3

Establish a Texas Educator Preparation Evaluation and Innovation Alliance.

3–A. Alliance—The *Texas Education Agency* and the *Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board* should establish an Educator Preparation Evaluation and Innovation Alliance that would set the agenda for, oversee, and advise ongoing evaluations of educator preparation policies and practices in Texas to inform state decisions on educator preparation program practices. Evaluation should be based on trends and questions from a study of data on the dashboard.

- The Alliance would function as an advisory board to the State Board for Educator Certification.

- Members should include representatives from traditional and alternative educator preparation programs; philanthropy representatives engaged in educational issues; members of the House and Senate Education Committees; staff of the State Board for Educator Certification and Texas Education Agency; and K–12 teachers, principals, and superintendents.

- The research and evaluation would be conducted by a qualified research entity.

3–B. Support—The *Texas Legislature* should fund ongoing work of the Alliance after initiation by the philanthropy community.

CONCLUSION

The Texas Teacher Preparation Collaborative developed its final report in order to identify the challenges and opportunities facing our teacher preparation programs. The recommendations are the result of extensive discussions about the outcomes the Collaborative hopes will result in more effective and prepared teachers to ensure that Texas students are ready for the challenges of tomorrow. The preparation of teachers is a shared responsibility, and the Collaborative recommendations aim to inspire systemic change. As a state, we have a responsibility to our teachers and our students to work on improving and modernizing how we prepare our teachers from the moment they show interest in becoming teachers and through their last day in the classroom. We believe these recommendations can make Texas teacher preparation a model across the nation and inform the best policies and practices that can equip future Texas teachers with proper skills to educate our more than 5 million students.

The executive summary, full report, and detailed recommendations are available at www.EDTX.org

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Name	Organization	Role
Jim Nelson	Former Texas Commissioner of Education	Chair
David Chard*	Wheelock College	Vice Chair and President
David Anthony	Cypress–Fairbanks Independent School District	Former Superintendent
Jessica Conlon	TNTP	Partner
Stephanie Hirsh	Learning Forward	Executive Director
Diann Huber	iteachTEXAS	President
Patricia Alvarez McHattan	University of Texas Rio Grande Valley	Dean
Peggy McLeod	National Council of La Raza	Deputy Vice President
Scott Ridley	Texas Tech University	Dean
Mike Savage	Audelia Creek Elementary, Richardson Independent School District	Principal
Kevin Sevin	iSchool High at University Park	Teacher
Rodney Watson	Spring Independent School District	Superintendent
Pam Wells	Region 4 Education Service Center	Executive Director
Randall Woods	Burges High School, El Paso Independent School District	Principal

*Former Dean of Southern Methodist University School of Education

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