

Summary Report for Teacher Preparation Study

Analysis of Teacher Supply and Demand

Analysis of Teacher Selection and Placement

Evaluation of Teacher Preparation Programs

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Introduction

What follows is the summary report for a project undertaken for the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education, to evaluate K through 12 teacher labor market conditions and the teacher education programs that produce teachers. Key topics to be addressed included current and future teacher supply and demand, teacher hiring and placement practices and an evaluation of teacher preparation programs. This report identifies the key findings from each part of the project, and presents recommendations that follow from these findings.

Key Elements from Each of the Reports

Minnesota Teacher Hiring Practices

- Hiring officials were unambiguous when it came to identifying work ethic and communication skills as essential for a job candidate to have. These two features were identified as essential by nearly three-quarters of respondents (73% and 70%, respectively). And in both cases, all remaining respondents identified these two personal attributes as very important.
- The potential for collaborative work, organizational skills, and demonstrating subject knowledge in an interview were endorsed by over 90% of respondents as at least very important, if not essential. The quality of the student teaching experience was identified as very important or essential by 87% of the respondents.
- The majority of respondents claimed that it is not important for a candidate to be a resident in the school district, while another 29% said it is only somewhat important.
- The majority of all hiring officials (60%) said that it is not important that a candidate has attended a teacher education program near their district.
- When asked if their district preferred candidates from particular Minnesota teacher education programs, 85% of respondents claimed to have no preferences.
- While over half of all respondents reported having schools in their district that are not making adequate yearly progress, only a small minority of these have recruitment and placement practices specifically for these schools.

- When asked if their districts try to find candidates from alternative pathway options, 85% of hiring officials claimed they did not specifically target the recruitment of alternative completers versus traditionally licensed teachers.
- Contributing to the workforce diversity was seen by 53% of respondents as either a very important or essential feature of a candidate. However, over three quarters of respondents said that the diversity of the students in a teacher education program is either not an important feature or only somewhat of an important feature of a teacher education program that they consider when hiring.

Minnesota Teacher Supply and Demand Study

- Minnesota has and continues to produce an overall surplus of teachers when comparing numbers graduated and newly licensed to demand based solely on retirements and attrition. However it should be noted that many factors go into the details of supply and demand of teachers in Minnesota. These include location of vacancy, teachers moving out of Minnesota, graduates not applying for licensure and policy changes. All of these contribute to the continued demand for teachers.
- The surplus of supply holds for licensure areas that are reported as being difficult to fill (e.g., Physics, Mathematics and Special Education), although the surplus is much smaller than it is for licensure areas such as English and Social Studies. This contributes to a perceived shortage in these difficult to fill licensure areas.
- Many districts request Special Permissions for Licenses. It is probable that these special permissions are largely used to cover the loss of teachers through preretirement exit from teaching or migration to another district or school, both of which often give schools and districts insufficient time to fill vacancies through the usual hiring procedures.
- The number of special permissions granted by the Minnesota Board of Teaching is a small and declining percent of the total number of teacher Full Time Equivalent (FTE).

This indicates that the trend is toward it being easier for schools and districts to fill teaching positions, even in perceived shortage areas. However, it should be noted that this reduction in special permissions might also be influenced by policy decisions and changes in the types of special permissions.

- There is no significant difference in the requests for special permissions by geographic region in the State.
- Overall teacher five-year attrition from the profession is approximately 30% in the State. The only region of the State where attrition appears to be significantly higher is the Southwest Central region, where it is approximately 40%. This is considerably less than the 50% rate that is often anecdotally mentioned as the national rate.
- Overall retirement rates remain low, ranging from 1.9% in 2003 to 4.8% in 2008. The increase in 2008 is expected to continue in 2009 and 2010, but to begin to decline again.
- National Center for Education Statistics data projects only a modest increase in enrollments in K-12 through 2017, indicating that current overall rates of teacher preparation are adequate. Moreover, the projected need for additional teachers reaches a peak in 2016, with a total of approximately 3100 additional teachers required by the year 2017. This could be more than adequately covered by the number of newly licensed teachers from Minnesota teacher preparation programs alone (3424 initial licenses in 2008-09). However, because of the multitude of complicating factors in the details of teacher supply and demand, it should be noted that there is no guarantee that the graduates from Minnesota's programs will be aligned to the needs of schools, nor enter the teaching profession.
- Due to their historic and current small volume, alternative pathways to licensure are, at present, not playing a significant role in alleviating demand pressures, even in perceived shortage areas. It should be noted that increased numbers of alternative pathways are being developed, especially in the Twin Cities, however their effects are not yet evident.

Minnesota Teacher Preparation Programs

- The requested analysis of teacher preparation program admission criteria and yield rates to determine the academic standing of incoming students cannot be completed at the institutional and program level at this time because the data is not available. Fortunately, the Minnesota Department of Education, in partnership with the Office of Higher Education, Office of Enterprise Technology, Department of Employment and Economic Development, the P-20 Education Partnership and the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care, has very recently received funding to develop a longitudinal data system that is a key step in providing the needed data. This data will allow for a detailed analysis of the academic standing of Minnesota students entering Minnesota teacher preparation programs.
- The requested analysis of the actions by teacher preparation programs to align curriculum with State learning standards presupposes structures and relationships in K-12 education that do not exist in Minnesota. Teacher preparation programs do not align their program curricula with state learning standards for students. Instead, they align their curricula with the teaching standards associated with the licensure requirements that are overseen by the Board of Teaching. The needed link between student learning standards and teacher preparation curricula is made through the alignment of these teaching standards directly with the student learning standards. This is a key focus of the Board of Teaching, and while there is some evidence of good alignment, current work has been limited to standards at the broad level. The Board of Teaching recognizes the need for further detailed analysis and, if needed, further alignment of teaching and learning standards.
- Alignment of licensure requirements and curriculum in the teacher preparation programs is established through the detailed and area specific teaching standards of effective practice established by the Board of Teaching. The Board of Teaching is in the process of changing the method of assuring alignment by moving from the current PEPER system to one with a stronger focus on program effectiveness, called PERCA. PERCA focuses on teacher preparation program outcomes through an assessment of the preparedness and

success of program graduates.

- Aspects of this alignment are also being tested through a recently instituted audit system whereby random (and occasionally targeted) audits examine the uniformity, accuracy and alignment of higher education institutions with Board of Teaching standards and procedures. This audit focuses on the required elements of the teacher preparation programs, in contrast to PERCA, which assesses program effectiveness.
- The ultimate goal of these analyses is to determine whether what a student learns in a teacher preparation program translates into K-12 student achievement when those teachers begin to teach. While this question cannot be answered at present, we will be able to begin to formulate answers once the longitudinal data system is put into place. This system will provide the needed teacher-student data links that will allow one to compare Minnesota trained teachers who then go on to teach in Minnesota with the achievement of their students, and hence the effectiveness of their teacher preparation programs.
- An analysis of the alignment of teacher education programs with best practices would first require some consensus about what constitutes best practices across all of these programs. However, insofar as there is anything one can say about best practices, it is very general (i.e., teacher practical training is important). When one attempts to operationalize these ideas in a form that would allow one to check the alignment between them and the practices of the various programs, one finds that the general idea can be operationalized in so many different ways that such an analysis would, in effect, require a thorough reaccreditation process for each program.
- An additional question arose concerning whether teacher preparation programs follow best practices on induction, mentoring and related professional development. Programs uniformly regard these as important, but currently do not have the financing or other resources needed to support these practices. It should be noted that these are a key focus area of the current Bush Foundation Teacher Effectiveness Initiative.

(See <http://www.bushfoundation.org/education/TEInitiative.asp> for more details.)

Recommendations for Policy Changes

- One of the key lessons learned from the *Minnesota Teacher Supply and Demand Study* is that the perceived shortage of teachers in the state is actually a situation that is due not to the production of new teachers, or an adequate number of teachers, but rather to the constant “churn” of teachers. To adequately understand the reasons for this “churn” requires further study. Thus, recommendations to address this situation cannot go beyond the unsatisfactory claim that we need to discourage teachers from frequently changing jobs. However, work that has been done by others in the state (see Eklund, N., [How was Your Day at School? Improving Dialogue about Teacher Job Satisfaction](#), Search Institute Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2008, for one example) suggests that by improving the working conditions (including environments) of teachers and by making jobs more attractive (not necessarily financially), one would find less job changing and more stability within the teaching profession.
- To understand the connection between teacher education and, subsequently, the achievement of their students, we must engage in long term studies that track teachers and students over time. This requires the kind of longitudinal data that is currently not available. Supporting this sort of long-term study is of primary importance if one is to ever adequately assess the performance of the teacher preparation programs.
- Where a teacher comes from in the state, where they currently live and where they went to school are not significant factors in a teacher hiring decision. However, being able to collaborate, communicating effectively, and having organizational skills are. Since these factors are skills that teacher preparation programs must select and train for if their graduates are to find the positions they desire on graduation, supporting programs in these efforts would in turn assist hiring officials in finding the teachers they want for their schools.