

## **STAFFING FOR EXTRA NEED – Hard-to-Staff Schools and Positions: Union Policies, Union Effects**

### **WHAT IS IN TEACHERS' UNION CONTRACTS?: AN EXAMINATION OF THE CONTENTS OF UNION-DISTRICT COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS AND HOW THEY VARY BY DISTRICT TYPE AND DEMOGRAPHICS**

Katharine Strunk, 2007

The effect of collective bargaining agreements is often discussed, but much of the “knowledge” of what is contained in these agreements is lore. Few studies have reviewed more than dozens of these contracts, and those that have generally have looked at only specific clauses and sections. This chapter catalogs what is actually in district contracts in the state of California. The author finds that, although there are a number of common clauses or chapters across contracts, what is actually included in them varies substantially among districts. Her analysis of these provisions leads her to conclude that there is actually a high degree of flexibility inherent in California’s teacher union contracts, that much of the perceived lack of flexibility in district policies is really the result of numerous state regulations, not contract language, and that contracts in large, urban school districts with high poverty levels and large minority populations tend to be more restrictive than others.

### **THE TEACHER EXPERIENCE GAP: WHAT IS THE REMEDY?**

F. Howard Nelson, *American Educator*, Winter 2006-07.

Nelson examines the common assumption that shortages of experienced teachers in high-poverty schools are caused or exacerbated by the seniority provisions in teachers’ collective bargaining contracts. After analyzing data from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS includes questionnaires from a random national sample of about 53,000 teachers, 12,000 principals and 4,500 school districts) and the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS looks separately at about 7,000 teachers who have both left and stayed in their jobs), he finds, rather, that collective bargaining tends to have a stabilizing influence on staffs in high poverty schools. If anything, the evidence indicates that collective bargaining is associated with *lower* transfer rates out of urban high poverty schools. Collective bargaining also seems to help equalize the number of first-year teachers placed in high poverty and low poverty schools, and results in more experienced teachers being retained by high-poverty schools. The main reasons teachers leave high poverty schools, he says, are unhappiness with administrators, workplace conditions, or their grade and teaching assignments.

### **WHY DO HIGH-POVERTY SCHOOLS HAVE DIFFICULTY STAFFING THEIR CLASSROOMS WITH QUALIFIED TEACHERS?**

Richard M. Ingersoll, Center for American Progress and Institute for America’s Future, November 2004.

Also using data from the Schools and Staffing Survey and the Teacher Follow-up Survey, Ingersoll examines staffing patterns in high poverty schools. By analyzing these teacher surveys,

he finds that high turnover is less due to demographics and retirements than to job dissatisfaction and the desire to pursue a different job. The top six problems cited by high poverty urban teachers who left their jobs are: salaries, class sizes, student discipline, parental involvement, faculty authority, and opportunity for advancement.

**CURBING OR FACILITATING INEQUALITY? LAW, COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, AND TEACHER ASSIGNMENT AMONG SCHOOLS IN CALIFORNIA**

William Koski and Eileen I. Honig, Institute for Research on Education Policy & Practice, Stanford University, March 2007.

After engaging in a thorough review of research literature, California laws and regulations, and 488 California collective bargaining agreements affecting teacher hiring and assignment, the authors come to some very startling conclusions. Specifically, they find “. . . no persuasive and systematic evidence that the seniority preference rules in collective bargaining agreements independently affect the distribution of teachers among schools or exacerbate the negative relationship between higher minority schools and teacher quality.” While some districts are an exception to this general rule, the overall findings lead the authors to conclude that the state must play a greater role in devising incentives for teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools.