

## **BEST PRACTICES: DEVELOPING AND DEPLOYING A SKILLED TEACHING FORCE**

### **THE ARRA: OPPORTUNITIES AND STRATEGIES TO ADVANCE TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS**

National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, Research to Policy Update, March 2009

This special policy brief highlights the key funding streams in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) that support improvements in educator quality, and suggests research strategies and relevant resources to consider in bids to utilize these funds.

### **TESTIMONY, HEARING ON THE STATUS OF FEDERAL PERSONNEL REFORM**

J. Pfeffer, Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia, U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, March 8, 2007

This leading advocate of evidence-based management practices urges caution in the adoption of performance pay plans, arguing that “the evidence for the effectiveness of individual pay for performance is mixed, at best.” While noting that motivation enhances performance, he observes that money is not always the prime motivation and offers a comprehensive list of what he calls “high commitment or high performance work practices” that may be more important. These, says Pfeffer, are rooted in a philosophy that is “one of valuing the workforce, treating it with respect and dignity” and “as if their jobs are meaningful and their contributions important.”

### **POLICY, TEACHING, AND LEARNING**

David K. Cohen and Heather Hill, Chapter 1, *Learning Policy: When State Education Reform Works*, 2001

Education reformers and policymakers argue that improved student achievement requires stronger academic standards, stiffer state tests, and accountability for students’ scores. Yet these efforts seem not to be succeeding in many states. Here, the authors draw on a decade’s detailed study of a California program to improve mathematics teaching and learning to argue that effective state reform depends on conditions which most reforms ignore: coherence in practice as well as policy and opportunities for professional learning. The authors report that state policy influenced teaching and learning when there was consistency among the tests and other policy instruments; when there was consistency among the curricula and other instruments of classroom practice; and when teachers had substantial opportunities to learn the practices proposed by the policy. When these conditions were met for teachers, their students’ test scores rose. Unfortunately, this was the case for only a small minority of teachers.

### **THE SUPPORT GAP: NEW TEACHERS’ EARLY EXPERIENCES IN HIGH-INCOME AND LOW-INCOME SCHOOLS**

Susan Moore Johnson, Susan Kardos, et.al, *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 2004

The authors consider three important sources of support for new teachers—hiring practices, relationships with colleagues, and curriculum—all found in earlier research to influence new teachers’ satisfaction with their work, their sense of success with students, and their eventual retention in their job. They find that a “support gap” exists: new teachers in low-income schools are less likely than their counterparts in high-income schools to experience timely and information-rich hiring, to benefit from mentoring and support by experienced colleagues, and to have a curriculum that is complete and aligned with state standards, yet flexible for use in the classroom. These inequitable patterns of support for teachers reported here have important implications for policies to reduce the achievement gap that persists for poor and minority students.

**ARRA: TEACHER QUALITY PARTNERSHIP GRANTS PROGRAM**

[www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)

This is a synopsis of the Teacher Quality Partnership grant program, which “seeks to improve the quality of new teachers working in high-need local educational agencies (LEAs) and high-need schools by creating successful and high-quality model Pre-Baccalaureate Teacher Preparation programs and/or Teaching Residency programs for those qualified to begin teaching.” The total funding for this program is \$100 million.

**ARRA: TEACHER INCENTIVE FUND PROGRAM**

[www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)

This is a synopsis of the Teacher Incentive Fund grant program, which is intended “to support programs that develop and implement performance-based teacher and principal compensation systems, based primarily on increases in student achievement, in high-need schools. The goals of the Teacher Incentive Fund program include: (a) improving student achievement by increasing teacher and principal effectiveness; (b) reforming teacher and principal compensation systems so that teachers and principals are rewarded for increases in student achievement; (c) increasing the number of effective teachers teaching poor, minority, and disadvantaged students in hard-to-staff subjects; and (d) creating sustainable performance-based compensation systems.” The total funding for this program is \$200 million.