STRATEGIC PREPARATION & DEVELOPMENT TO RETAIN OUR MOST EFFECTIVE TEACHERS
ABOUT THE LEAD AUTHOR
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
Our teacher policy leaders representing nine districts across Washington generated the recommendations reflected in this report. Policy leaders dedicated numerous hours reading through 38 peer reviewed research articles, opinion pieces, and case studies, reflecting on their experiences, and collaborating weekly over the course of ten week periods to engage in thoughtful analysis and debate to develop their recommendations. We would also like to recognize our outstanding former Policy Director, Erin Gustafson, who led the policy teams through their research. Erin compiled the robust array of articles for policy teams to evaluate, facilitated rigorous discussions, and supported our analysis. We would also like to thank the stakeholders across the country that engaged in panel discussions, question and answer sessions, and site visits to contribute their perspectives from multiple vantage points.

TEACHER POLICY LEADERS
Amy Alphin, Sarah Arvey, Joe Boyer, Kris Carpenter, Rich Coker, Emily Elasky, Alison Fox, Nathan Gibbs-Bowling, Bill Harris, Jeni Hoffert, Rachel Johnson, Sara Ketelsen, Sarah Margeson, Elzena McVicar, Mary Moser, Scottie Nash, Suzanne Righi, Evin Shinn, Kelly Smith, Hope Teague-Bowling, & Tina Wooten

ABOUT TEACHERS UNITED
The mission of TU is to grow a network of educators to build an education system worthy of our students’ potential. By developing educator capacity to become responsible leaders and advocates for equity and excellence in student achievement and the teaching profession, we can make the systemic changes our students deserve.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Washington state remains one of the nation’s most beleaguered when it comes to educational equity. Since 1996, Washington has been one of 15 states that have seen the gap between low-income students and their more affluent peers increase in 4th grade mathematics.\(^1\) Since 1998, only Washington, D.C. Public Schools have seen a greater widening of that gap in 4th grade reading (though achievement among low-income students there increased 13% over than span, compared to 3% in Washington state). These trends have long-range implications, not only for students and their families, but for the future of our state.

Extensive research has demonstrated that teacher quality is the most significant in-school factor impacting student outcomes.\(^2\) Thus it is clear that the most positive policy solutions for students would be aimed at increasing teacher effectiveness and ensuring all students have access to highly effective teachers. In this paper, we look at current policy and practice in Washington state and make recommendations for how to strategically prepare, develop and retain effective teachers. Teachers United Policy Leaders recommend:

TEACHER PREPARATION
- Performance Based Preparation: Completion should be contingent upon clinical practice based proficiency as measured by impact on student learning
- Clinical Practice: Mentor teachers should have recent distinguished evaluations
- Strategic Partnerships: Collaboration with districts is necessary for targeted preparation, placement; distinguished teachers should serve as adjunct faculty

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- Professional development should entail structured practice, implementation, observation, reflection, & feedback cycle
- Districts must involve teachers in the design, planning & feedback loop
- PD should be job-embedded and differentiated based on instructional challenges

TEACHER RETENTION
- Districts should expand leadership opportunities to highly effective teachers through career lattices
- Remove barriers restricting hiring timelines to improve access and recruitment of qualified teachers aligned to school mission
- Districts should develop smart retention strategies including exit interview data

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INTRODUCTION

In May of 2013, teachers throughout our statewide network came together to select three issues of concern they believed were of utmost priority to ensure equity for our students and excellence in our profession. Not surprisingly, the three issues are deeply intertwined and center on the most controllable variable in education - teacher quality.

As teachers representing over nine districts throughout Washington state, we have all observed colleagues enter the field ill prepared or ourselves felt we could have been better equipped to confront the challenges of teaching in high poverty schools. We have all experienced the disappointment of looking forward to a day of professional learning to strengthen our craft, only to walk away questioning the connection to our classroom and growth. And unfortunately, we have watched too many fellow teachers leave the profession altogether.

We chose to focus on preparation, professional development, and retention because these elements are critical to building and sustaining a high quality teaching workforce. On a cursory overview, average fourth grade student achievement in Washington exceeds national averages in both reading and math. However, due to the schools most of us teach in, we are well aware of the persistent achievement gap between low-income students and their more affluent peers. In 2013, students who qualified for free/reduced lunch, an indicator of low-income, scored on average 21 points lower in math and 28 points lower in reading. The performance gaps have persisted and expanded since 1996 and 1998.

Washington State 4th Grade Proficiency Rates 1996-2013

Washington remains one of the few states where the achievement gap is growing.

![Bar Graphs](image)
In the era of accountability student performance in Washington has improved; however, Washington remains one of the few states where the achievement gap is actually growing. As practicing teachers we all acknowledge what research has repeatedly affirmed: teacher quality is the most pivotal factor impacting student outcomes. Given that research has also shown that low-income students are two to three times more likely than their peers to be assigned an ineffective teacher, the achievement gap is indicative of an opportunity gap. The enduring nature of the opportunity gap speaks to lack of equity for our students and magnifies the urgency with which we must examine how we prepare, develop, and retain our most effective teachers. From a policy perspective, we need to intentionally prepare teachers to teach in low-income schools.

Our commitment to our students and our vision for improving the public education system for our students has fueled our desire to evaluate the depth of research, converse with a broad array of stakeholders, conduct site visits, and engage in rigorous dialogue with one another to develop our recommendations. As policy leader, Nathan Gibbs-Bowling, stated “Effective reforms will not happen without teachers behind them.” Our hope is to inform policy makers through educator generated policy solutions in effort to solve chronic obstacles and build an educational system worthy of our students potential.

“Effective reforms will not happen without teachers behind them.” –Nathan Gibbs-Bowling, Board President & Teacher

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TEACHER PREPARATION

In a comprehensive analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of Washington’s teacher preparation programs, The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) pointed out indicators of program quality are not readily available or publicly reported. We know that teacher quality is the most important element of student outcomes yet across the state we lack data evaluating the capacity of preparation programs to produce effective teachers. According to another report published by the PESB in 2012, Washington is producing an adequate supply of teachers to meet hiring demands. However, 82% of districts reported having difficulty finding a sufficient number of qualified teaching candidates.

These data points draw attention to the need to examine the effectiveness of our preparation programs in terms of the quality of teachers they produce. It also raises concerns regarding the degree of differentiated preparation to support teachers instructing students from a range of demographics. Research has repeatedly illustrated the vital nature of clinical practice, with teachers noting their field experiences as powerful, and sometimes the most critical element of their preparation. Our policy team examined elements of clinical practice, measures of program quality, and innovative partnerships between university preparation programs and local districts to elevate the effectiveness of teacher preparation.

Does the Current Design of Clinical Practice Adequately Prepare Teachers?

The National Council on Teacher Quality developed five standards to evaluate student teaching:

1. Duration: No less than 10 weeks & represent full-time commitment
2. Cooperating Teacher: Preparation program must select
3. Cooperating Teacher: Must have at least three years teaching experience
4. Cooperating Teacher: Must have capacity to impact student learning
5. Cooperating Teacher: Must have capacity to mentor adults & provide feedback

Washington requires a 10-week placement, that cooperating teachers have three years of experience, and that they have the capacity to mentor adult learners, thus meeting three of the five NCTQ standards. While attempts to elevate the student teaching experience are applauded, we do not believe they are sufficient.

Are preparation programs held accountable for the teachers they produce?

A criticism of preparation programs is the lack of indicators of program effectiveness such as outcome metrics that demonstrate the quality of their graduates/trainees. As mentioned before, an analysis of Washington’s preparation programs illustrates this issue given the deficient availability of program quality measures. In response to federal incentives tied to the Race to the Top grant, preparation programs in Colorado, Texas, Louisiana, and Tennessee have begun to evaluate their effectiveness by examining the achievement of students taught by their graduates.

While some university programs are shifting towards more outcome-based accountability, including UCLA, Stanford University, and University of Virginia, many programs gaining momentum are driven by charter networks such as Relay Graduate School of Education (GSE) and the Aspire Teaching Residency. These preparation programs are designed akin to a medical residency program with rigorous training embedded within the context of schools and classrooms where candidates

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7 Ibid. p.8
plan to teach with master teachers serving as coaches. These more professional practice-based programs typically condition graduation and credentialing upon the teaching candidate’s ability to impact student performance, as measured by standardized and classroom-based assessments. Collecting data on the capacity of the teaching candidates to promote student outcomes not only elevates the rigor of the training but also provides the program with data points to evaluate the effectiveness of the coaching and preparation.

These new approaches to preparing teachers resonated with our policy team, especially given the first-hand account of one of the policy leaders, Alison Fox, who was a 2011 graduate of Relay GSE. A significant amount of her training entailed video analysis of her actual instructional delivery with the coaching of an accomplished mentor teacher. As she notes, “The process of planning, recording, watching, editing, and receiving feedback from an instructor and other teachers was incredibly powerful.” Her preparation was performance-based and specialized through clinical practice embedded in the urban context in which she planned to teach.

**How Could Teacher Preparation Be Improved?**

In response to high turnover rates and inadequately prepared incoming teachers, a handful of innovative school districts are developing strong partnerships with university preparation programs to intentionally develop teachers to succeed with the specified demographic of students served in the district. According to a report published by the PESB on educator workforce, 71% of districts surveyed noted a strong desire for sustained partnerships with teacher preparation programs. Research from the UW has suggested a relationship between proximity of clinical practice and location of first teaching placement and teacher effectiveness as measured by student learning. For example, at Nooksack Elementary School, a field placement partner of Western Washington’s Science, Mathematics, & Technology Education program, 5th grade science achievement based on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) rose from 36% passing to 90% within two years of initiating the partnership.

**Research Investment**

While strong district and university program partnerships are pioneering promising models to more effectively prepare teachers, research is needed to continually develop and refine these innovative approaches to train our next generation of teachers. We recommend Washington invest in research and development to determine effective elements of preparation programs. We also encourage preparation programs to research the characteristics and dispositions of effective teachers to inform training design especially with regard to racial equity and cultural competency.

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14 Ibid. p.12.
CURRENT WA POLICY/PRACTICE

**COMPETENCY**

**CLINICAL PRACTICE**

- **Duration**
  - No less than 10 weeks FT commitment

- **Context**
  - Lack of specialized preparation for specific demographic contexts

- **Qualifications**
  - Mentor teacher must have 3 years teaching experience & mentor experience

- **Feedback**
  - Lack of feedback cycle between student, mentor teacher, & prep program

**INDICATORS OF PROGRAM QUALITY**

- **Indicators**
  - Lack of measures assessing relationship between quality measure of prep programs & impact on student learning

- **Data Collection**
  - Student performance data may be collected yet not shared between P-12 & higher education

- **Accreditation**
  - Entails rating scale based on analysis of assessments & work samples documenting impact on student learning

**PARTNERSHIPS**

- **Faculty**
  - Typically composed of faculty with limited or past experience

- **Funding Models**
  - Silo funding models restrict collaboration of teacher training between districts and prep programs

- **Placement**
  - Typically based on availability of mentor teachers
### OUR POLICY & PRACTICE

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Substantially increase minimum clinical hours required
- Observation or Clinical experience across variety of contexts (geographic, demographic, & grade level)
- Mentors should have current distinguished evaluation rating
- On-going two-way evaluation & feedback between student teacher & mentors
- Develop processes & feedback loops between districts and university programs to monitor program quality and clinical practice
- In a collaborative effort, the state and preparation programs should expand state databases to enable greater accountability of teaching candidate performance through multiple measures
- Accreditation should be partially contingent on the output of effective teachers as measured by state data. The creation of a feedback loop is essential; programs must have a means of monitoring output, which allows them to be responsive if they are not producing effective teachers.
- Prep program faculty should include highly effective practicing district teachers
- Innovative models designed to incentivize development of intentional partnerships between preparation programs and school districts to prepare and induct new teachers
- Incentivize student teacher placement in high need low-performing schools

### POSITIVE CHANGES AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

- Candidates able to observe beginning of year – establishment of tone, culture, & expectations
- Improved connection between teacher preparation & reality of diverse schools
- Routine feedback surveys to drive effective preparation
- Benefit of feedback cycle between student, mentor teacher, & prep program
- Student teachers demonstrating impact on student learning
- OSPI School Improvement & preparation programs share data to support candidates to improve instructional delivery
- Improvement of preparation programs to produce effective teachers as measured by impact on student learning
- Our strongest teachers supporting our emerging teachers
- Blending funding to maximize efficiency to support student learning
- Strong partnerships enable districts & schools to shape their future employees align to learning improvement vision

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Given the new Teacher/Principal Evaluation Project (TPEP) in Washington along with the shift to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), professional learning to support our teachers through these transitions is critical. Key components of TPEP are professional learning using student data, collaborative practice, and formative feedback to modify instruction. Teachers are expected to set professional growth goals in accordance with student growth goals based on reflective practice and on-going feedback. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) notes successful implementation of CCSS will depend on consistent and collaborative professional learning. However, a 2014 survey of 6,000 Washington educators conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in partnership with OSPI, noted that despite these monumental shifts with TPEP and CCSS, 50 percent of teachers responded that professional learning opportunities and the amount of time to collaborate has stayed the same. Additionally, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) conducted a meta-analysis revealing that professional development does not have a positive benefit-to-cost ratio to improve student achievement. Professional development is currently not sufficient to impact professional growth of teachers to improve student outcomes. Across the state, professional learning is highly variable in terms of content and delivery. It also typically lacks a continuous cycle of improvement based on review of effectiveness to support meeting student and professional growth goals. In order to build systemic capacity across Washington state to implement TPEP, CCSS, & NGSS, it is essential to elevate professional development. Professional learning should be designed to create changes in practice in the classroom.

How should professional development be defined?

Given the high variability of PD across Washington paired with implementation of TPEP, CCSS, and NGSS the time is ripe to adopt a statewide definition of professional learning. Professional development includes collaborative planning in small teams, observing other teachers, and targeted and on-going coaching to guide teachers as they acquire new strategies. To fulfill the purpose of professional learning, it is essential to be grounded in teachers and students’ individual learning needs, delivered on a sustained basis with continuous reflection, and feedback to ensure effectiveness in raising student achievement.

Survey of Teachers

To gather additional input from teachers throughout Washington, we conducted a survey regarding their personal experience with professional development. Their responses guided our development of the following criteria for effective PD.

TWENTY-SEVEN TEACHERS RESPONDED TO THE FOLLOWING SIX QUESTIONS:

1. What is the best PD you have experienced?
2. What made the best PD so effective?
3. What is the least effective PD you have experienced?
4. What made the least effective PD so ineffective?
5. If you could change one thing about PD what would it be?
6. What level do you teach?

Criteria for Effective PD:

Improves teacher effectiveness, leading to improved student outcomes
Professional development should be designed to directly improve teacher effectiveness in the classroom as measured by improved student outcomes.

Tied to clear, sustained vision and student achievement goals
Studies illustrate that PD is most effective when clearly tied to school-wide reform efforts. Professional development should be designed to directly improve teacher effectiveness in the classroom as measured by improved student outcomes.

Resources and skills can be immediately implemented in the classroom
Experiences that include structured planning and practice time so that teachers are equipped to implement what they have learned in the classroom are more likely to influence classroom practice and lead to student achievement.

Job-embedded to allow work within schools’ unique contexts
In our own experience, and according to our research, PD experiences are most effective when designed specifically around a specific context, staff composition, and needs. Teachers need time to collaborate with a coach or other teachers to plan a lesson and analyze student data in order to inform upcoming instruction.

Differentiated based on teacher needs and instructional challenges: Previous experience, demonstrated areas for growth, student age group or content area
Experience, knowledge, and skills of teachers are highly varied, as are their opportunities for professional growth. In order to be invested, our surveyed teachers noted the desire for PD to meet their individual needs through increased choice and differentiation.

Involves teachers in planning and feedback loops: Determine focus, content, and methods of PD
One of the biggest challenges from teachers we surveyed was the lack of teacher engagement in the process of PD. Teachers want to have input on what experiences they have and then have a voice in expressing their opinions about the effectiveness of those programs.

Knowledgeable, engaging, responsive leader/facilitator
Administrators, coaches, and teacher leaders need capacity building to effectively diagnose our needs, provide quality-learning experiences, and engage in feedback conversations that push our practices forward.

Allows for active, collaborative participation
From our research and our own experience, we know that teachers learn best when collaborating with each other and actively participating in development activities. Research shows that when teachers engage in development with peers they are more successful at implementing new practices in the classroom.

20 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
Structured practice, implementation, observation, reflection, and feedback
Teachers need time to observe modeling of new skills and strategies, time to practice, and feedback from colleagues. Research shows that when teachers observe modeling and have “hands-on” practice within their own unique context, they are more likely to then try out new skills in their own classroom.25

Sustained and continuous, with follow-ups
Professional development should be strategically delivered with opportunities to practice and receive feedback. The National Staff Development Council recommends teachers engage in development experiences several times per week.26

What does effective PD look like?
If the criteria are implemented, effective professional development would create the cycle shown in the diagram below. Note that teachers are involved in every step of the process and every step is directly related to actual practice in the classroom. For professional learning to occur, teachers need to be invested in the process and engaged in thinking about how it will change their classroom practice and improve student learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENT &amp; DELIVERY</th>
<th>OUR POLICY &amp; PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS</th>
<th>POSITIVE CHANGES AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PD is typically delivered uniformly lacking connection to individual teacher need</td>
<td>Involve teachers in planning to determine focus, content, delivery to meet differentiated teacher need</td>
<td>Professional learning based on teacher needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacks follow-up after PD – limited reflection and feedback to adjust practice</td>
<td>PD should involve observation, reflection, &amp; feedback cycle with continuous follow-ups</td>
<td>Professional development becomes a supported on-going process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralization of PD is varied across the state</td>
<td>Decentralize PD to enable embedding &amp; customization within a school</td>
<td>Enables teachers to drive PD to meet school need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers note a lack of time to collaborate with colleagues</td>
<td>Create infrastructure for collaboration between teachers &amp; schools</td>
<td>Teachers will have access to professional learning communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varied administrator capacity</td>
<td>Support development of instructionally focused administrators</td>
<td>Improved instructional coherence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnover disrupts collegial trust</td>
<td>Cultivate a culture of trust &amp; collaboration</td>
<td>Develops a growth mindset and culture of coherence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characterized by a lack of follow up monitoring impact of PD on instruction</td>
<td>Create effective, efficient, &amp; reliable systems to collect &amp; Lack of data infrastructure limits monitoring of effectiveness of PD</td>
<td>Supports teacher reflection on growth based on PD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create effective, efficient, &amp; reliable systems to collect &amp; Lack of data infrastructure limits monitoring of effectiveness of PD</td>
<td>Use data systems to evaluate and monitor effectiveness of PD &amp; make adjustments as needed</td>
<td>Teacher feedback will drive improvements in PD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of systemic rating system for PD providers</td>
<td>Work with ESDs to develop rating systems for PD providers</td>
<td>Principals &amp; teachers equipped to evaluate effectiveness of PD options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy of PD funds is highly varied</td>
<td>Enable local autonomy of funds for site based PD planning</td>
<td>Administrators equipped to provide differentiated PD to meet staff need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD days are collectively bargained at the district level</td>
<td>Include additional professional development days without waiving instructional days to target individual and school-wide capacity building, including new teacher support, Common Core implementation, and TPEP implementation</td>
<td>More time for teachers to receive on-going development with time to reflect &amp; receive feedback</td>
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RETENTION

A report on Teacher Retention and Mobility in Washington prepared for the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession (CSTP) noted schools in Washington serving a greater number of students in poverty retain fewer of their teachers after five years. The analysis goes on to point out that retention is likely indicative of regional conditions, school dynamics, and district policy. A study from the Center for Education Data and Research (CEDR) exposes the inequitable distribution of teacher quality as measured by both input (experience and credentials) and output (effectiveness) across student demographics in Washington. The research further notes within district transfers illustrate teachers are more likely to leave disadvantaged schools. The higher rates of turnover in high poverty schools correlate with the disparities in student achievement across socioeconomic levels throughout Washington. As we have repeatedly referenced, extensive research illustrates teachers are the most significant element of a students’ academic growth. As practicing educators, we echo this sentiment. We are also familiar with implications of teacher turnover specifically its effects on student learning, instructional coherence, and professional learning.

As Guin (2004) noted chronic turnover in schools diminishes collaborative trust among educators. The issue of teacher retention has direct implications for student equity given that high-poverty schools on average experience 15 percent annual turnover as compared to ten percent annual turnover for low-poverty schools. This discrepancy speaks to the lack of differentiated training both in terms of preparation and continued professional learning to support educators through the challenges of teaching in high-poverty schools.

The retention policy team examined research and initiatives to develop recommendations for smart retention strategies. Smart retention emphasizes the need to increase retention of effective teachers while concurrently reducing retention of teachers who consistently perform poorly. The costs associated with turnover including hiring, induction, and professional development, range from $6 million up to $94 million annually for a large urban district such as Los Angeles Unified. Research has illustrated the greater propensity of early career teachers

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28 Ibid.p7.
31 Ibid. p. 13.
32 Ibid. p. 9.
to leave high-poverty schools to teach in more affluent schools, typically being replaced by a first-year teacher which in turn impacts instructional coherence and organizational culture. Based on a review of the literature, a teacher’s decision to change schools or districts or leave the profession altogether typically involve factors of preparation, hiring practices, induction, working conditions, culture, compensation, and professional growth. Given our experience we chose to focus on five main components of retention: school culture and leadership, working conditions, growth opportunities, compensation, and district human capital strategy.

**How Important is School Leadership?**

The school’s culture and leadership altogether heavily influence teachers considering leaving their teaching assignment or the field. Research suggests that the potential to retain teachers increases when schools exhibit a collaborative team environment under effective leadership. Evidence supports the intuitive notion that a supportive collegial professional environment will positively influence a decision to continue teaching. Studies identify principal leadership as being the most significant factor in teachers’ working environment. Several studies have suggested the difficulty of retaining teachers in high-poverty schools is attributed to a rejection of dysfunctional context of the school culture.

Given the immense influence of building leadership on teacher attrition, we recommend the development and administration of climate surveys to serve as a feedback loop to principals and district leadership. At the district level it is imperative that new principals receive targeted coaching around distributive leadership, supporting teachers, and the development of strategies to retain effective teachers. Districts should prioritize such principal support by allocating funds to principal coach positions. Given the importance of school culture in terms of instructional coherence, districts should remove barriers restricting hiring timelines to enable principals to recruit qualified teachers aligned to the schools mission.

**Are Districts Providing Enough Growth Opportunities?**

Research suggests that well designed differentiated roles and career ladders implemented with fidelity may provide experienced teachers the challenge, increased responsibility, and broadened impact they desire. Differentiated roles entail a range of additional responsibilities beyond the classroom with a stipend. Career lattices refer to a progressive professional growth structure typically involving merit based leadership roles.

In an effort to meet teachers’ desires to take on additional roles to invigorate their work, we recommend districts expand leadership opportunities to highly effective teachers creating hybrid and career lattice positions, like peer coaching, where teachers can remain in the classroom while also fulfilling additional responsibilities. Given the need to infuse teacher voice in policy design and implementation we also recommend OSPI create a policy fellowship for teachers.

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37 Ibid.
39 Ibid.p.4.
Are Current Induction and Professional Learning Opportunities Sufficient?

We have already touched on the value of induction to support new teachers and strengthen institutional culture. Research underscores our sentiment: new teachers who were not offered a district induction to their district had a 41 percent predicted probability of turnover.41 We have also focused considerable attention on professional development given the potential that intensive, integrated, on-going professional learning has to support and retain teachers.

Given the impact of intensive professional development, we recommend the state increase the number of professional development days without waiving instructional days in order to enable on-going capacity building and support. We also believe it essential to expand the rigor and differentiation of professional development offerings in effort to support teachers to meet their professional growth plans.

Does Lock-Step Compensation Help Retain Effective Teachers?

Traditional lock step salary schedules are completely focused on input: they are based on years of experience and degree attainment. Empirical data regarding teachers’ career decisions are heavily influenced by salary differentials; higher salaries are associated with higher retention rates.42 Given the policy team’s focus on smart retention, compensation structures should not be blind to a teacher’s effectiveness. The difference between the quality of a strong and weak teacher can be as much as a full year’s worth of student’s learning.43

The Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) is an Integrated approach to tackling many of the challenges of retaining effective teachers to increase student achievement. The four foundational elements of TAP include: multiple career paths, ongoing applied professional growth, instructionally-focused accountability, and performance-based compensation. Given the multipronged approach of this reform strategy, we suggest districts utilize the TAP as a promising solution to pilot.

41 Ibid. p.89
42 Ibid.p42.
An initial evaluation of Denver Pro Comp, a merit pay structure designed in collaboration with the teachers union, is showing a positive impact on student achievement.\textsuperscript{44} We recommend districts: create working taskforces comprised of an array of stakeholders including teachers, union leadership, human capital staff, and administrators, to study a variety of compensation systems; utilize Teacher Incentive Funds to pilot a few structures; and research the effect on retention. Districts and unions will need to agree to flexible contract provisions in order to pilot performance-based compensation models.

**What Role Does the Work Environment Play?**

The majority of our policy leads teach in high-poverty schools with the accompanying challenges of concentrated poverty. As mentioned earlier, turnover rates are typically elevated at high-poverty schools thus those effective teachers who stay generally acquire disproportionate additional school wide responsibilities amplifying stress levels to meet those demands. A review of research notes that teachers’ working conditions are a strong predictor of attrition.\textsuperscript{45}

To relieve workload on teachers, the state should help districts fully fund family and community partnership coordinators and volunteer coordinators plans in high-poverty schools. Intentional development of community partnerships will support families and enable teachers to focus their efforts on instructional delivery.

**What is Smart Retention?**

As the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future concluded in their No Dream Denied report, high teacher turnover is a leading factor in low school performance, highlighting that half of new teachers leave the professional within five years.\textsuperscript{46} While the report illuminated the issue of retention, it recommended a reduction of attrition by 50 percent, neglecting the need to be intentional about which teachers are retained. A smart retention strategy focuses on retaining more effective teachers while also reducing the number of ineffective teachers. This more intentional approach focuses on increasing the number of proficient teachers at the school level, which increases the potential impact to boost student learning.\textsuperscript{47}

To inform a human capital strategy, districts should systematically evaluate staffing statistics, conduct exit interviews, and develop annual targets for improvement. Information gleaned from exit interviews must be shared with principals to inform their site-based retention strategy. Additionally to improve transparency, we recommend districts share their teacher retention strategy.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{47} Ibid. p.6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEADERSHIP</th>
<th>DISTRICT STRATEGY</th>
<th>CAREER OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>PROFESSIONAL GROWTH</th>
<th>COMPENSATION</th>
<th>WORKLOAD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; analysis of climate surveys is highly variable Executive/Regional Directors supervise principals but do not target support to develop retention strategies</td>
<td>59% of districts note difficulty forecasting hiring needs, 79% lack capacity to use data to drive human capital strategies Districts typically lack retention strategy to communicate Most districts conduct late hiring within 30 days of start of school year due to budget ties to enrollment and often begin the year with unfilled vacancies Due to lack of exit interviews, districts lack information regarding why teachers leave</td>
<td>Opportunities for professional growth are limited and highly variable across districts Policies typically lack teacher input into design &amp; implementation planning</td>
<td>Opportunities for professional growth are limited and highly variable across districts</td>
<td>Lock-step compensation structure disconnected to teacher performance</td>
<td>Effective teachers are typically delegated more responsibility thus increasing workload Teachers in high poverty schools typically spend a significant portion of time supporting students social &amp; emotional needs in addition to instructional planning &amp; delivery</td>
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<tr>
<td>OUR POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td>POSITIVE CHANGES AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL</td>
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<tr>
<td>To expand measures of principal performance, district leadership, principals, teachers, and support staff should collaborate to create periodic building climate surveys Fund principal coach positions to support new principals in the development and use of distributive leadership models, systemic teacher support, and smart teacher retention strategies</td>
<td>Expanded feedback regarding school climate so principals can respond &amp; adjust to support teachers New principals will receive explicit training and feedback to recruit &amp; retain effective teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide principals and district human resource departments' professional development centered on developing and increasing effectiveness of smart retention strategies Create and publicly communicate a policy that outlines the district’s smart teacher retention program, including specific targets for continued improvement in retention of highly effective teachers Remove barriers restricting the hiring timeline to improve access and recruitment of qualified teachers aligned to the school mission To inform district human resource departments and principals’ site-based retention strategies, systematically evaluate staffing statistics including exit interview data</td>
<td>Improved retention and access to high quality teachers Increased retention will foster collaborative trust and instructional coherence Increased access to more qualified teaching pool &amp; decreased probability of opening with unfilled vacancies Principals will utilize exit interviews to adjust leadership &amp; instructional support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Districts should collaborate with the union to expand leadership opportunities available to highly effective teachers by creating hybrid and career ladder positions in which teachers can stay in the classroom while also fulfilling other roles or coaching responsibilities OSPI should develop and fund a Policy Fellowship for teachers. The Policy Fellowship would provide OSPI with direct access to teacher perspective regarding policy design and implementation</td>
<td>Providing growth opportunities to teachers while increasing retention of effective teachers within schools Increased teacher investment in policy design and implementation at the school level</td>
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<td>Pilot the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) to offer multiple career paths, aligned learning, &amp; instructional performance based compensation</td>
<td>Differentiated roles, PD, &amp; compensation to retain high performing teachers</td>
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<td>Create a taskforce comprised of teachers, union leaders, HR staff, and principals, to study and pilot a variety of compensation systems to research how compensation affects retention of highly effective teachers</td>
<td>Improved fiscal efficiency encouraging high performing teachers to continue teaching</td>
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<td>Require principals to show their strategy for addressing issues of workload and be held accountable for it Community coordinators to meet the array of student social &amp; emotional needs will support teachers.</td>
<td>Teacher workload will be managed to prevent burnout Community coordinators to meet the array of student social &amp; emotional needs will support teachers.</td>
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49 Ibid. p.12.
After months of evaluating research, conducting interviews, and iterative discussions focused on the policy topics, seven teachers representing each of the policy teams traveled to Southern California further inform their research. Through site visits to a range of innovative schools and districts policy leaders were able to see strategies in action. They also spoke with senior leaders from each site to discuss design, implementation, rollout, and lessons learned from challenges. Policy leaders visited Green Dot Public Schools, High Tech High, and Long Beach Unified School District. The selected site visits represented a spectrum of both traditional and charter school districts serving urban students with a range of demographic profiles. Teachers inquired about strategies to elevate teacher preparation and professional development and how to apply smart retention strategies.

Common threads emerged throughout the site visits: coherency, agility, data capacity, high intentionality, and a growth mindset. Regarding coherence a strong vision for teaching candidates was shared by all as well as a vibrant collaborative culture. Policy members also noted the agile nature of the districts to design and respond to multiple feedback loops. A sophisticated level of data capacity was also readily noticeable given the depth of analysis of input and output data that each site demonstrated. Many teachers reflected on the high degree of intentionality each site exhibited throughout their planning and implementation. As Evin Shinn, teacher Policy Leader noted “They created enabling conditions in order for them to garner the results they envisioned.” The growth mindset of the leadership teams resonated throughout with the policy leaders. We were struck by how the district initiated the growth mindset, which then permeated to each individual school. Despite variant challenges, the notion of continued reflection and adjustment based on multiple touch points characterized each site visit.

“They created enabling conditions in order for them to garner the results they envisioned.”
**GREEN DOT PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LA**

**Induction**
- 5 full pre-service days and 5½ days throughout the school year for first year teachers

**Professional Development**
- Green Dot develops PD based on needs identified through teacher evaluations
- Teachers evaluated through 9 observations annually
- Growth Mindset

**LONG BEACH UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT, LONG BEACH**

**Preparation**
- Partnership with California State University
  - Highly structure field experience in diverse urban classrooms in LBUSD
  - Faculty composed of exemplary LBUSD teachers
    - Cultivates institutional culture
  - New Teacher Warranty
    - Any concerns from graduate or employer will receive support at no cost

**Induction**
- New Teacher Institute & New Teacher Special Education Institute
  - Week long for new teachers and special educators
- Best Practices Observation & Feedback
  - 3 release days to observe exemplary teachers
  - On-going feedback on observed lessons from coach
- Individual Induction Plan
  - Co-developed with New Teacher Coach
- Elements of Effective Instruction Training
- Trained Coaches
  - Demonstrated 4 years of successful teaching & coaching experience
  - Assist with classroom setup & materials
  - 1:1 mentoring
  - Lesson planning & assessment support
  - Strategies for parent communication
  - Effective teaching strategies
- Trained New Teacher Site Coordinators
  - On-site consulting teachers provide on-going trainings
- Targeted Training for Principals to Support Beginning Teachers
- Funding: State – Beginning Teacher Support & Assessment, Intern grant funds, and through Title II, Part A

**Professional Development**
- Utilizes web platform to differentiate PD offerings based on multiple measures of teacher evaluation
  - Teachers choose from selection of courses aligned to their needs
- Annually teachers participate in 7 days of PD through the following institutes Essential Elements of Effective Instruction
  - 1st & 2nd Year Teachers total of 8 days of instruction

**Basic Literacy Training**
- 6 month on-going training around balanced literacy

**Math Institute**
- 4 day in-depth training focused on content development, instructional strategies, technology, and diagnostic assessment

**Content Institutes**
- 1st & 2nd year teachers participate in 5 days of specific content training
  - Focus on standards, unit planning, lesson design, assessment

**Department Head Institutes**
Preparing Teachers to Meet District Needs

**High Tech High School**

- Developed in-house Graduate School of Education offering two Master of Education degree (M.Ed.) programs:
  - School Leadership: For experienced educators who aim to lead a small innovative school
  - Teacher Leadership: For experienced teachers who aspire to deepen their school leadership capacity
- One-year hybrid programs blends on-line learning with face to face collaboration
- Offer preliminary and Clear professional credentials through its CTC approved District Intern & Induction programs

**Professional Development**

- Hosts quarterly week long residencies
- New and returning teachers
- Observe classrooms
- Collaboration
- Reflect on structures & systems to support student learning
- Teacher Driven
- Multi-day Institutes through the year
  - Interactive workshops on project based learning
  - Classroom observations & collaboration
  - Embedded in the school & classroom
  - Interact with faculty from GSE
- Send educators to workshops across the country and abroad
- Use video to inform practice and guide collegial coaching

**Exemplary Strategies**

**Strong Partnerships Preparing Teachers to Meet District Needs**

Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) partnered with California State University to design a specific curriculum and robust clinical practicum tailored to develop teachers for student success in the district. They utilized accomplished master teachers to serve as Distinguished Faculty in Residency to training the incoming cadre of teachers. This intentionality and blended responsibility strengthened the institutional culture and coherent vision to develop the next generation of effective teachers.

**Comprehensive Induction Programs**

All three sites visited invested significant time, planning, and development into the process through which they supported new teachers. Green Dot Public Schools provides five pre-service days and five and half days throughout the year specifically designed focus on developing first year teachers. LBUSD provides comprehensive support to all teachers new to the district through a week long New Teacher Institute, a week long New Teacher Special Education Institute, 1:1 coaching from accomplished teachers, individualized induction plans, and two additional days of Elements of Effective Instruction training, and three release days to observe effective teachers throughout their first two years teaching. As research has demonstrated, a well-designed coherently implemented induction program has been shown to significantly increase retention of effective teachers.50

**Proactive Retention Strategy**

Through our conversations with leadership of Green Dot Public Schools, the multifaceted nature of their selection process was a highly intentional component of their smart retention strategy. Candidates applying for positions with Green Dot and High Tech High must demonstrate a lesson with current students and reflect on their lesson with the hiring committee. High Tech High also utilizes student feedback of lesson delivery as a component of the selection process. Agility and on-going reflection also characterized Green Dot’s approach to smart retention. Upon hiring a new teacher, leadership would track evaluation ratings throughout the year and cross reference them with the teachers’ selection process ratings as a means to continually reflect on their selection model in terms of the design to enable an effective match between teaching candidates and school culture.

**Differentiated Professional Development**

Both Green Dot and LBUSD implemented highly differentiated professional development opportunities. Green Dot developed professional learning courses based on the needs of their teachers as evidenced by multiple evaluations throughout the year. Teachers at Green Dot are observed nine times annually and provided significant coaching cultivating a growth mindset. LBUSD utilized a web-based portal to develop an individual PD profile based on multiple measures to highly differentiate support provided to teachers.

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PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

Issue Selection
In May of 2013, teachers throughout our statewide network came together to select three issues of concern they believed were of utmost priority to ensure equity for our students and excellence in our profession. Issues considered included: teacher preparation, school governance, district/union collaboration, district investments and outcomes, professional development, and teacher retention. After a comprehensive review of the issues, teachers were polled and ultimately chose to focus on elements of teacher quality: preparation, professional development, and retention.

Research
Policy teams read over 40 journal articles and opinion pieces (Appendix A). They also met with a range of stakeholders across the state and nationally.

Retention Policy Team
Diane Tavenner, CEO & CFO, Summit Public Schools
Marni Campbell, Executive Director NW Region, Seattle Public Schools
Mike Starosky, Principal Leadership Coach, Seattle Public Schools

Preparation Policy Team
Mayme Hofstetter, Dean, Relay Graduate School of Education
Marisa Bier, Program Director, Seattle Teacher Residency
Lindsay Hill, Executive Director, Teach for America
Elham Kazemi, Professor, University of Washington
Jeff Wilson, Project Director, Performance Management Group, The New Teacher Project (TNTP)
Amy Lavold, Visiting Faculty, Evergreen & Pacific Lutheran University

PD Policy Team
Amy Baeder, Executive Director, Curriculum Study Groups
Michael Martin, Tacoma Public Schools

Field Study
Teachers United policy leaders traveled to California and held conversations with leaders from Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD), High Tech High, and Green Dot Public Schools.

Green Dot Public Schools in Los Angeles
Nithya Rajan, Director of Strategic Planning, Kris Terry, Director of New Teacher Development, Kelly Hurley, VP of Human Capital, Julia Fisher, Educator Effectiveness Lead, Dan Helenius, College Ready Framework Implementation Coordinator

Long Beach Unified School District
Pamela Seki, Director Curriculum, Instruction, & Professional Development, Ed Samuels, Assistant Director, Office of Curriculum Instruction, & Professional Development, Nader Twal, Program Administrator, Innovative Professional Development (iPD), Amy Pendray, Teacher Advisor

High Tech High School in San Diego
Larry Rosenstock, Chief Executive Officer