

# **SHEEO Recommendations on Teacher and School Leader Preparation**

## Recommendations for Reauthorization of ESEA and Title II of the Higher Education Act

### **The Obama Administration's Blueprint for ESEA Reauthorization**

The Obama Administration's blueprint for ESEA reauthorization and FY 2011 Budget proposal eliminate:

- HEA Title II Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) Grants, the one federally legislated grant program that supports university-based preparation of teachers and school leaders, currently funded at \$43 million, plus an additional \$100 million through ARRA funds; and
- ESEA Title II Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ) State Grants, administered by state agencies of higher education and reserved for partnership grants between higher education institutions and local school districts, currently funded at \$72.5 million.

The blueprint proposes moving these funds into a new authority in ESEA called the "Teachers and Leaders Pathway" program, under which \$405 million would be available for competitive grants to local school districts and states, but the role and responsibilities of institutions of higher education and state higher education agencies are vague and indirect at best. Higher education institutions directly produce over 85% of all newly hired teachers; they are also a critical resource in the continuing professional development of existing teachers. The omission of a direct role for institutions of higher education and higher education state policy leaders in teacher and school leader professional development is likely to dampen, rather than increase, their engagement in meeting this critically important priority.

### **Guiding Principles and Recommendations to Strengthen Teacher and Leader Preparation**

The Administration's focus on improving teacher and school leader preparation and quality is fundamentally important for strengthening elementary and secondary education in the United States. Its success requires building stronger partnerships between K-12, higher education, and state policy; a clear role and responsibilities for each partner is essential. We propose three specific principles toward that end.

#### **Guiding Principles:**

- ***Building the Capacity of Each Partner:*** Educational leadership at all levels – local and district school leaders, teacher preparation program leaders in higher education institutions and alternative pathways, and state education leaders in higher education and K-12 – have important and complementary roles and responsibilities in supporting teacher and school leader training and professional development.
- ***Promote Synergy, Communication, and Alignment Across Program Strands:*** Current federal programs supporting teacher and school leader training and professional development can and should be strengthened by increasing alignment across these lead partners in designing programs, allocating resources, and promoting improvement.
- ***Recognizing and Promoting Effective Practices:*** The redesign of teacher and school leader training and professional development efforts in ESEA and HEA Title II should build on the effective characteristics of existing programs and the capacity and engagement they have established.

As such, we offer the following recommendations focused on partnerships, alignment, and effective practices:

1. ***Building the Capacity of Each Partner:*** Strengthen the existing three programs targeting teacher and school leader training and professional development by aligning their mission and purpose while sustaining and enhancing the unique roles and responsibilities of each sector.

- Currently, three separate federal programs exist, each focusing on a specific part of the teacher capacity and quality pipeline:
  - HEA Title II focuses on pre-service preparation with grants made by the U.S. Department of Education to higher education institutions;
  - ESEA Title II focuses on recruitment and retention with grants made by state educational agencies (SEAs) to school districts; and
  - ESEA Title II focuses on in-service professional development with grants made by state agencies of higher education (SAHEs) to partnerships between higher education institutions and K-12 schools.
- Collectively, the programs target and engage all of the sectors needed to produce a strong pipeline of teachers and leaders; this engagement should be preserved and strengthened. Each program has the potential to complement the others, but a common mission and purpose is needed.
- An effective system of teacher education, placement, and professional development requires the cooperative efforts of K-12 and postsecondary partners at the state and local levels. Effective partnerships require allocation of responsibility, resources, and accountability to each partner.

**2. Promote Synergy, Communication, and Alignment Across Program Strands: Find notable threads across the programs to build this common mission and purpose.**

- Serve the most vulnerable student populations by focusing on high-need school districts and equitable distribution of highly effective teachers and school leaders.
- Staff the subject areas in most critical need through teacher recruitment and retention efforts in hard-to-staff subjects and schools.
- Deliver standards-based, content-centered teacher training and professional development in ways that drive the development and use of common core standards-based curriculum, instruction, assessments, and content-specific pedagogy.

**3. Recognizing and Promoting Effective Practices: Support the most effective characteristics of existing programs.**

- Competitive process for funding. Currently, HEA Title II TQP Grants are awarded by the U.S. Department of Education on the basis of a national RFP competition, and the ESEA Title II ITQ SAHE State Grants are awarded by the SAHEs on the basis of a state-level RFP competition. In both cases, the competitive process ensures that only those proposals that are of the highest quality are funded.
- Partnerships between K-12 and postsecondary. Currently, both the HEA Title II TQP grants and the ESEA Title II ITQ SAHE State Grants fund partnerships between higher education and high need K-12 school districts, allowing direct collaboration in high-need schools, districts, and subject areas.
- Matching resources. Currently, the HEA Title II TQP grants require institutions of higher education to match federal funding for teacher preparation at 100%; though the ESEA Title II ITQ SAHE State Grants do not currently require fund matching, data from the last five years indicate at least a 50% match in dollars or in-kind services by higher education and LEA partners receiving these grants. Matching requirements leverage local resources to increase the reach of federal grant dollars.
- State roles. Currently, the ESEA Title II ITQ State Grants are administered by the State Education Agencies (SEAs) and the State Agencies of Higher Education (SAHEs). This allows state-level coordination of reform initiation and implementation across sectors.