



The Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

November 5, 2015

WACTE members are the
20 Schools or Colleges of
Teacher Education at more than
50 locations throughout the state
of Washington:

- Antioch University** (Seattle)
- Central Washington University**
(Ellensburg, Lynnwood,
Lakewood, Moses Lake,
Wenatchee, Des Moines,
Yakima)
- City University of Seattle**
(Bellevue, Everett, Seattle,
Renton, Tacoma, Vancouver,
Centralia, Longview, Mt. Vernon,
Grays Harbor, Port Angeles)
- Eastern Washington University**
(Cheney, Spokane)
- Gonzaga University** (Spokane)
- Heritage University**
(Toppenish, Yakima, Seattle,
Moses Lake,
Tri-Cities, Wenatchee)
- Northwest University** (Kirkland)
- Pacific Lutheran University**
(Tacoma)
- Seattle Pacific University**
- Seattle University**
- St. Martin's University**
(Lacey, Centralia, Ft. Lewis,
McChord AFB)
- The Evergreen State College**
(Olympia)
- University of Puget Sound**
(Tacoma)
- University of Washington**
(Seattle)
- University of Washington**
(Tacoma)
- University of Washington**
(Bothell)
- Walla Walla University**
(College Place)
- Washington State University**
(Pullman, Spokane, Tri-Cities,
Vancouver)
- Whitworth University**

The Washington Supreme Court is holding the state in contempt for failing to submit a plan showing how the state would fulfill its “paramount duty” to fully fund K-12 education in compliance with its orders in the McCleary case.

In its contempt citation, the court noted:

*"... the Joint Select Committee notes an analysis estimating that there will be **a shortage of about 4,000 teachers** in 2017-19 for all day kindergarten and class size reduction. It says nothing in the report about how that shortfall will be made up and what it will cost." (emphasis added)*

Implicit in that statement is an expectation that colleges for teacher education will need to produce additional teachers to address the class size reduction.

It will, however, require additional capacity – and the resources and strategies noted below – to fully ramp up teacher preparation to answer the challenges of McCleary compliance and fulfill the mandate in Initiative 1351 (2014) calling for class size reductions in grades 4-12, which is currently suspended.

The solutions must include three important groups simultaneously—prospective teacher candidates, teacher preparation programs and districts/schools. Addressing only one or two of these constituent groups will most likely lead to failure in creating a long term, sustainable response. There must be flexibility in combining strategies employed for each group which can be determined best by representative of these groups

And this effort *must* include teacher preparation programs at both public and private institutions of higher education (IHE). Members of the Independent Colleges of Washington produce half of the new math teachers certified each year as well as a high proportion of science and ELL teachers, and cannot be expected to fully participate in answering this challenge without additional resources and support.

IHE's – both public and independent – must have adequate resources to hire additional faculty, field supervisors, and mentors, to ramp up teacher preparation programs. And, if increased teacher production is expected over the long-term, these programs must have the resources to remain sustainable with tenure-track faculty and not contingent faculty?¹

In the end, no one sector can successfully address the challenge alone. It will require collaboration between teacher preparation programs, the Professional Educator Standards Board, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, community colleges, teachers in the field, administrators, educational service districts, and local school boards to achieve success.

At the request of Representative Gerry Pollet, representatives of Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education met October 28 to consider these questions. The questions are germane not only to the McCleary case in lowering K-3 class sizes, but also to the efforts to subsequently implement Initiative 1351.

The following is a synopsis of that conversation and additional information provided by teacher preparation programs.

Teaching: denigrated, regimented and uncompetitive

Most programs report some vacant capacity in their programs – indicating teaching as a career option is uncompetitive with other career paths people may choose.

Additionally, continued criticism of teachers by public officials, the increase in regimented curriculum and standardized testing, and the decreasing autonomy for teachers to individualize their work makes the profession unattractive for many.

The public must be educated and convinced about the quality and value of teachers and teacher preparation programs.

A clear statement from the governor and the legislature needs to be made to indicate that they are going to put resources behind elevating the status of teaching as a profession in Washington and fostering the creativity of teachers. This should be followed by actions that provide clear evidence of respect for the profession and support for those goals.

Dan Goldhaber and colleagues at the University of Washington have the capacity to look at salary levels of teacher preparation program graduates who do not go into the profession to see

¹ Some public universities report funding shortages with legislatively-mandated tuition reductions and inadequate “backfill” funding.

what the differential is between jobs they accept and what they would have made as a classroom teacher. This should be explored further.

Teacher preparation programs, the state's Professional Educator Standards Board, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Washington Education Association, and local school districts and administrators all have a vested interest in this effort, and all must work together in order to be successful.

Need to attract quality candidates, including those who have left

Consensus is that we need to figure out where high-quality candidates will come from and how the state can create incentives to attract them to the profession. We also need to attempt to bring back into the profession those who received a teaching degree and either left the profession or never stepped foot in a classroom in the first place.

Issues to be addressed include competitive salaries, teacher autonomy, and elevating the public perception of the profession of teaching from one of being denigrated and bashed to one of respected professional with autonomy.

For many years, many career paths were not open to women and people of color. As such, teaching became a viable option. Now, however, more and more lucrative career options may make teaching comparatively uncompetitive.

In that most programs report under-enrollment, there was consensus that a major element of attracting talent to the profession must be, essentially, a marketing and recruiting campaign – illustrating the value of a teacher, the rewards of teaching, and respect for teaching. Oregon and Alaska have begun such marketing, and may provide a template for such work.

This could take the form of a Peace Corps or AmeriCorps – like effort, focusing on the mutual rewards of service. Any such effort also needs to include components to educate the public that there is a teacher shortage. It must also be positive and forward-looking, and not fear-based. A “moon-shot,” can-do, we-can-be-the-best attitude is essential for this to succeed.

But it cannot be solely a marketing campaign to attract the best and the brightest.

University presidents, provosts, and other faculty must support education as a mission of the university.

“Teaching academies” in K-12 schools and colleges of education must build stronger ties.

High school counselors must include teaching as a viable option for high-performing students

STEM programs and scholarship and support programs for first-in-the-family college students need to help – including teaching as a viable and lucrative career choice for program participants.

And there need to be supportive paths for para-educators and those with emergency teaching certifications to become fully-certified teachers.

Key elements that must be addressed as this work goes forward are the importance of:

- Attracting and retaining candidates from underrepresented populations with culturally appropriate outreach and support; and
- *Not* cutting corners or reducing standards – complying with RCW 28A410.290, which states that “All approved (teacher preparation program) providers must adhere to the same standards and comply with the same requirements” in order to uphold our state’s high standards.

Ideas to incentivize and attract new candidates to the teaching profession include:

- tuition reimbursements / conditional loans,
- tuition reduction,
- loan forgiveness,
- stipends during field-based experiences, and
- paid internships

Incentives must be generous enough to attract the high-quality candidates we want, include all of the “hidden costs” such as additional testing, fingerprinting, textbooks, performance assessment (edTPA) and licensing fees, and be flexible enough to address a variety of needs.

Career switchers / retooling

As incentives are implemented, there is a need to distinguish between undergraduate teacher preparation and post-baccalaureate programs, where needs may be different. In other words: build flexibility into any incentives.

Some post-baccalaureate candidates are likely to be career switchers. Other post-baccalaureate candidates will be current teachers who need to expand their expertise with additional certifications in other subjects to address new and changing roles (retooling).

Many of these people will be more concerned with stipends and paid internships to help keep a roof overhead and food on the table than with the debt they might incur (although debt will likely be an element of their consideration as well). Lack of income during field-based experiences is a major deterrent to candidates, since managing outside employment during that portion of their programs is challenging.

Retention

While candidates may be attracted to the profession, retention is also an essential element as a plan is put together – making good induction into the profession, early mentoring and support, and ongoing high-quality professional development opportunities crucial to continued success.

The National Center for Education Statistics reports key factors in retaining teachers in the profession are having a mentor and participating in a quality induction program, and having a salary at or above \$40,000/year in the first five years.²

(Also note that a shortage of administrators also exists, and we need to determine how we support them, too, including mentoring and coaching.)

There must also be a clear career ladder for teachers to keep the profession attractive.

Alternative Routes to Certification

We need to look at additional alternative preparation possibilities, including residency models, and the use of community college programs in teacher preparation. What was once “alternative” has now become mainstream, and current statutes inhibit innovation.

The Professional Educator Standards Board has proposed changing authorizing legislation for alternative teacher preparation routes (HB 1770) to broadly authorize in statute and leave particulars to regulations. This would provide additional flexibility to explore new strategies going forward.

In developing new alternatives, note the need for reaching out to more isolated areas of the state.

Program Staffing

Once more candidates are in the field, the question then becomes: where do we find the supervisors to work with them? Many teachers fear adding the burden of supervising a student teaching experience for fear it will negatively affect their own performance reviews and student test scores. Specific consideration must be given to this to open up additional field placements for what has become increasingly a residency-based model of teacher preparation.

We are fortunate to have a wealth of research expertise and capacity at our disposal in Washington. Our colleges and universities are eager to participate in addressing the wide range

² <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015196.pdf>

of questions related to the issues discussed in this letter. This type of research requires our teacher preparation programs to be transparent about our outcomes. We are committed to partnering with researchers on evidence based program improvement.

For instance, researchers have found that nearly three-quarters of teachers end up accepting their first teaching positions in districts where they were student teachers. Incentivizing more districts to accept student teachers may help alleviate specific teacher shortages in specific schools or districts. This should be explored further to see if the schools with current teacher shortages are accepting student teachers at rates of those without staff shortages.

And since most programs have strong field-based components, any increase in candidates will necessitate an increase in field supervision and mentor teachers.

To accommodate this need, the legislature needs to rethink its “retire/rehire” policy to allow retired teachers to be employed as field supervisors, coaches/mentors, and classroom teachers. They also need to incentivize (and remove disincentives) for current teachers to take on the added responsibility of supervising field experiences.

The legislature must also consider all of the unfunded mandates that are imposed on schools and schools of education. Each, alone, might be small, but the cumulative effect is very large. Addressing unfunded mandates will likely need to be a combination of removing some mandates and funding others.

And there must be concurrent support for strengthening the social services necessary to support students and families in order to achieve the ultimate goal of increased academic achievement.

Change will not be immediate, and solutions need to address both the short-term problem and long-term sustainability. Note that timelines of faculty hiring and program changes will need to be considered for the teacher prep programs as the initiatives are developed and implemented.

In the end, this must be a collaborative effort of teacher preparation programs, teacher candidates, schools/districts, and others. No one group can reach the goal alone.

In summary, solutions must:

- Maintain standards
- Be collaborative
- Support both public and independent teacher preparation programs
- Elevate the profession and raise respect for teaching
- Include market-based salaries
- Include marketing to attract, retain and bring back quality candidates
- Specifically recruit from under-represented populations
- Include flexible incentives
- Include quality induction and mentoring programs
- Include flexible alternative preparation programs
- Support additional program staffing
- Not be financed by taking money from social service programs.

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