

National News:

The Associated Press

Pilot program modeled after medical schools' clinical approach to reshape US teacher education

By: Michael Gormley

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ALBANY, N.Y. — Eight states are beginning a national pilot program to transform teacher education and preparation to emphasize far more infield, intensive training as is common practice in medical schools.

"Teaching, like medicine, is a profession of practice," said State University of New York Chancellor Nancy Zimpher, who is co-chairwoman of the expert panel that released a report on the recommended changes Tuesday in Washington. "Making clinical preparation the centerpiece of teacher education will transform the way we prepare teachers."

The pilot program developed by school and higher education officials with teachers unions to improve instruction is being done in California, Colorado, Louisiana, Maryland, Ohio, Oregon and Tennessee as well as New York. The states agreed to implement the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships for Improved Student Learning created by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

Instead of exposing student teachers to varied classroom experiences at the end of their academic pursuit, the new system would put student teachers into classrooms earlier and more often. It could include rounds, similar to the system used in teaching hospitals in which mentors provide constant critiques to students in real-life situations.

U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan told the gathering, webcast nationally, that too many colleges stress theory with too little classroom time.

"There is little or no accountability for turning out effective teachers," Duncan said, calling for "outcome-based" reviews of teacher training programs. "It is time to start

holding teacher preparation programs far more accountable for the impact of their graduates on student learning and achievement."

The group also recommends more online and video demonstrations as well as case-study analysis by teachers.

"This is huge, a real turning point," Zimpher told The Associated Press.

She said the new model will "turn teacher education upside down" and could be in colleges within two years. And in states with pilot programs, the first elements will likely be in place beginning in the fall 2011 semester.

States with pilot programs will work with school districts and their regional teacher colleges with an emphasis on improving instruction in high-needs, low-income urban and rural districts.

The reform would make teacher education and continuing education a shared responsibility of schools and universities.

The Wall Street Journal

Teacher Training Is Panned; Panel Recommends More Classroom Practice, Higher Standards for Applicants

By: Stephanie Banchemo

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<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703670004575616870109644584.html#printMode>

A panel of education experts has called for an overhaul of U.S. teacher-preparation programs, including a greater emphasis on classroom training as well as tougher admission and graduation standards for those hoping to teach in elementary and secondary classrooms.

The panel's sweeping recommendations, released Tuesday, urge teacher-training programs to operate more like medical schools, which rely heavily on clinical experience.

Teacher candidates should spend more time in classrooms learning to teach—and proving that they can boost student achievement—before they earn a license to teach kindergarten through twelfth grade, the panel said.

"We need large, bold, systemic changes," said James Cibulka, president of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, the group that convened the expert panel. "As a nation, we are expecting all of our students to perform at high levels, so it follows that we need to expect more of our teachers as they enter the classroom."

The panel said local school districts should work more closely with higher-education officials to train student teachers and assess whether they are actually helping students learn. In most states, candidates spend only about 10 to 12 weeks observing teachers or student-teaching themselves, with the bulk of their time spent listening to college lectures.

The nation's colleges of education are a patchwork of programs which vary in quality. Each state sets its own admissions, graduation and licensing requirements, and teacher candidates aren't required to graduate from nationally accredited programs.

As evidence has mounted that teacher quality is the biggest in-school determinant of student achievement, the programs have come under fire. In addition to a lack of real-life classroom training, critics have said the programs have lax admissions standards.

Studies have shown that, historically, students who enter teacher-education programs generally have lower grade-point averages or lower scores on college-entrance examinations than students who enter other professions.

The panel report didn't recommend specific admissions standards, leaving that to individual states and schools. But it said teacher-preparation programs needed to increase their standards to "improve the candidate pool."

Sharon Porter Robinson, president of the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, said many states had ratcheted up admissions standards, but more work was necessary.

"We need to become a more competitive career choice and we need to tap into a much wider span of the talent pool," said Ms. Robinson, who praised the panel's recommendations.

The panel, convened 10 months ago, includes representatives from higher education, K-12 school districts, teachers unions and state boards of education. It doesn't have the authority to institute the recommendations, but has persuaded higher-education and K-12 school officials in California, Colorado, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Oregon and Tennessee to begin trying some of the recommendations in pilot programs.

The panel report also pushes for a tougher accreditation process, saying the current system isn't rigorous enough and that it gives stamps of approval to weak programs. Studies have shown that teacher-education graduates take state licensing exams that often aren't very challenging.

Mr. Cibulka's teacher-accreditation group, for example, turned down only two of the roughly 100 programs that applied for accreditation this year.

Mr. Cibulka vowed in an interview to raise accrediting standards and to revoke accreditation from schools that fall short.

Arthur Levine, the former president of Teachers College at Columbia University who issued a highly critical report on teacher-preparation programs in 2006, said the recommendations were a good start.

"The key here isn't the words in the report, it's whether this report ends up on a shelf somewhere or is enacted," said Mr. Levine, who served on the panel and is president of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation of Princeton, N.J. "It's much easier to write a report than to put it into action."

TIME Magazine

Who Is Best Qualified to Run a School System?

By: Andrew J. Rotherham

18 November 2010

Also Ran On: *Yahoo! News*

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What kind of credentials do you need to run a school district? Especially a really big one? Is a degree in education a better predictor of a superintendent's success than, say, a track record of turning around distressed companies? These are hot questions in the education world right now. Last week, on Nov. 10, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg surprised everyone (including the senior leaders of his city's school system) by tapping publishing executive Cathleen Black to be the city's new school chancellor. In doing so, Bloomberg set in motion an arcane deliberation process. Because Black has not spent three years working in public schools — in fact, her only leadership experience in education consists of serving on an advisory board for a charter school in Harlem — and because she also lacks the requisite 60 hours of graduate-school credits, she will need a waiver from the state in order to take charge of the city's 1,700 schools, 80,000 teachers and more than a million students.

It's understandable why some teachers and education advocates are objecting so vociferously to the idea of an outsider running such a massive system (though it should be noted that if the new chancellor pledged to undo the current reform efforts, many of these same people wouldn't care if Bloomberg had just hired Carrot Top as his new schools chief). If you've never worked in a school before, critics wonder, how can you oversee so many of them? But precisely because the New York City district is so gargantuan, its chancellor needs a skill set far different from that of the average principal or teacher; the school system's annual budget of more than \$21 billion exceeds the gross domestic product of nearly half the world's countries. Let me be clear, however, on two things: At this point, there's no way to tell if Black will be an effective leader of New York's megadistrict. And what is lost in all the speculation about her is how outmoded — and counterproductive — American education's approach to credentials is in the first place.

After World War II, reformers saw credentials as a way to create prestige and respect for educators. An elaborate state-based and now quasi-national credentialing regime sprang up as a result. New York's rules about who can lead a school district are not unusual. Today's educators are obsessed with education degrees and credentials, regardless of the evidence about how useful they are in creating effective teachers or leaders.

Numerous studies as well as data from multiple states make clear that aside from people with absolutely no training at all, there is no appreciable difference in the classroom effectiveness of teachers entering the field through traditional and those entering via alternative routes. Despite the fetishizing of credentials, past classroom performance of

teachers is actually the best predictor of future performance. Yet not only do most teachers still complete elaborate multiyear training, but also, the ones who choose more efficient routes — and thus do not have the "right" credentials — are barred from seeking jobs in most places.

This week, in what could serve as a catalyst for reform, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, the body that accredits teacher-preparation programs, released a report (from a commission that I served on) calling for sweeping changes to how teachers are trained, including a greater focus on actual classroom experience over education-school courses. The report, which went so far as to call today's teacher-prep system "broken," could put a dent in this notoriously hidebound and outcomes-averse field. Right now, very few states even look at the classroom effectiveness of teachers produced by various state-approved preparation programs.

The record of school leaders who enter education from other fields is mixed. But the same is obviously true of school leaders from within education — these jobs require a blend of managerial, political and leadership skills, and not just anyone can succeed in these roles. However, as with teaching, there is no evidence that school leadership-preparation programs or the elaborate credentialing requirements for school leaders have any impact on quality.

In a 2005 report, former Columbia University Teachers College dean Arthur Levine cataloged the problems with leadership-preparation programs and called for a thorough overhaul. The report's chapters included "An Irrelevant Curriculum," "Low Admission and Graduation Standards," "Inadequate Clinical Instruction," "Inappropriate Degrees" and "Poor Research." Despite leading large and successful for-profit and nonprofit ventures, Black lacks the experience to address them.

One popular source of executive talent for school districts is the armed services. Yet in my admittedly unscientific sample of about a dozen former military leaders, their success or failure seems to have less to do with the rank they attained than what they actually did in the service. For instance, those who implemented big changes or captained a new kind of ship seemed to have an easier go of it than those who oversaw already established processes.

Whether Cathie Black can transfer her considerable talent for change management to the New York City schools remains to be seen, but she's probably as safe a bet as other leaders at that level — education insiders or not. And in such a complicated human-driven organization, no credential lessens the risk in a high-stakes leadership role.

It is, of course, worth noting that outgoing chancellor Joel Klein needed the same waiver Black does when he arrived in New York in 2002. And despite the controversy attendant to the kind of broad reforms he has undertaken, you'd be hard-pressed to find an objective analyst who doesn't think the city's schools are markedly better than a decade ago — not only in terms of student outcomes but in basic operational and management issues as well. Meanwhile, like highly paid migrant workers, some of the big names in education

merely move from one lousy school system to the next, leaving little improvement in their wake. At this level, leadership can't be boiled down to obvious boxes to check.

That's why questioning education's relentless focus on certifications is not the same as arguing that anyone can teach or lead a school. Though education is frequently compared to medicine, it is in fact more akin to journalism or business (or policy analysis), in which a blend of credentials and past performance informs high-stakes hiring decisions. That's imperfect too, but a better fit for an industry like education than today's slavish devotion to credentials.

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The Washington Post

Teacher training should emphasize the practical, panel urges

By Michael Birnbaum

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Programs that train teachers need to be radically revised, according to a panel composed of some of the country's top educators, and eight states, including Maryland, have signed on to adopt the recommendations, scheduled to be released Tuesday.

Teacher-training programs have long been criticized for not putting enough emphasis on inside-the-classroom practice, and the recommendations suggest turning programs "upside-down" by putting practical training first and foremost. They advise creating formal mentorship programs for student teachers akin to those at medical schools and suggest that more scrutiny be given to teaching programs.

"This is a seismic moment for teacher education," said Nancy L. Zimpher, chancellor of the State University of New York and co-chairwoman of the panel that wrote the report. The panel also included the heads of several of the country's largest education schools, government officials and the leaders of the country's two main teachers' unions.

Teacher preparation needs "to connect what you know to what you're able to do," Zimpher said. She praised the report for taking a "systematic" approach to improving standards for teacher preparation.

Nationwide, about 150,000 new teachers enter the workforce each year, according to the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, four-fifths from traditional university- or college-based training programs.

But a growing number come from programs such as Teach for America, which bypass traditional education schools, in part because of a perception that the standard routes for teacher preparation have become less useful.

Teach for America argues that the teachers it puts in challenging classrooms after a five-week summer training program are just as ready to teach as their peers who have been through standard teacher-preparation classes. Those assertions have been controversial, but the program has grown in popularity and plans to double in size over the next four years with the help of a \$50 million federal grant it won in August.

But even many educators who are skeptical of Teach for America agree that most teacher-preparation programs don't give their trainees enough practical experience.

In Maryland, the education department signed on to implement the recommendation, although officials say they are already mostly in compliance. California, Colorado,

Louisiana, New York, Ohio, Oregon and Tennessee also have pledged to implement the recommendations.

"We feel we're already implementing much of what's recommended here," said Maryland Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick. "I don't think it's consistent across this country."

She said Maryland has found that teachers who have had extensive in-classroom experience before they start teaching full time tend to stay on the job longer than their peers.

She also said the state planned to use a new system to track student performance back to teachers and to the teaching schools that trained them. For now, she said, it would be "diagnostic," a way to help teaching programs find the areas they need to improve. She said she might be interested in using student performance data in reaccreditation decisions, as Louisiana started to do last year.

The state school system also will try to reduce the number of people receiving training to teach in elementary schools in favor of harder-to-staff areas such as math, science and early childhood, another component of the report, she said.

"Accreditation is being broadly criticized today," said Arthur Levine, former president of Teachers College at Columbia University, who was on the panel. "What we're having now is an education war over the best way to prepare people."

The Washington Post

Experts: How to overhaul teacher ed (and my problem with their report)

By: Valerie Strauss

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URL: <http://voices.washingtonpost.com/answer-sheet/standardized-tests/experts-detail-how-to-overhaul.html>

A big report by a panel of national experts was released Tuesday that calls for overhauling the way teachers are educated in the United States. It says that teacher ed programs should be less academic and based more on classroom experience in the model used by the medical profession.

The report, titled “Transforming Teacher Education Through Clinical Practice: A National Strategy to Prepare Effective Teachers,” makes a number of smart, common-sense recommendations for improving teacher education programs:

- * Admissions and graduation standards for would-be teachers should be strengthened.
- * Accreditation for teacher education programs should be made tougher to weed out weak programs.
- * Student education programs should model themselves on medical training programs that rely heavily on clinical training.
- * Colleges and universities training teachers should work in partnership with school districts and states to change policy that promotes better teacher education.
- * Higher education institutions and school districts should work together to design teacher prep programs, select students and assess their performance, and place them in classrooms.

It’s hard to argue with those recommendations. But it’s not hard to argue with this:

“All programs held to same standards; data-driven accountability based on measures of candidate performance and student achievement, including gains in standardized test scores. Data drives reform and continuous improvement.”

Standardized test scores? It’s not enough that we judge students, schools and teachers with standardized test scores? Now we are supposed to incorporate them into teacher preparation programs?

I may sound like a one-note blogger on this point of standardized tests, but what we do know is that they shouldn’t be used for anything really important. This is the consensus of every expert on assessment. The experience in New York City just showed the danger of relying on test scores: For years Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Joel Klein, the school chancellor who just resigned, trumpeted increases in standardized test scores as evidence of the success of their reform program -- until state officials realized that the tests had become progressively easier and the scores meant nothing.

“Data drives reform and continuous improvement” is code for value-added assessment, the use of standardized tests to evaluate teachers, another bad idea that has gained currency in today’s education reform world.

The Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships for Improved Student Learning that produced the report is nothing but distinguished. It was commissioned by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and includes the leaders of the two biggest teachers unions in the country as well as representatives from higher education, K-12 school districts, state boards of education and working teachers.

Surely these panel members understand the problem with using standardized tests in this fashion, but because these assessments have become so embedded in our education culture and pseudo accountability systems that their use doesn’t get challenged.

The Blue Ribbon Panel does not have enforcement power, but it did persuade officials from eight states -- California, Colorado, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Oregon and Tennessee -- to implement some of the recommendations.

You can read the whole report at the Web site of the National Council for accreditation of Teacher Education.

The panel calls for the overhauling of teacher education. A real overhaul would include an end to our reliance on standardized tests in every aspect of public education.

Education Week

Momentum Builds to Restructure Teacher Education

By: Stephen Sawchuk

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<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/11/17/13teacherprep.h30.html?tkn=ZUMFghGFC5MAvxQIq%2B4vyX0gK1KMw46J3bE8&print=1>

Washington

With conversations about the best ways to evaluate teacher performance already proliferating across the nation, preservice preparation could be the next stop on the teacher-quality continuum to receive a similarly high level of scrutiny.

New models for preparing teachers, such as the yearlong apprenticeship or “residency” model, have received attention from policymakers in recent years.

Now, a report commissioned by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, released yesterday, adds the voices of a diverse array of stakeholders, including representatives from the traditional university-based programs that prepare the majority of the nation’s teachers.

The report’s main recommendation: Supervised, structured work of teacher-candidates in diverse classroom settings must be the foremost component of preservice teacher training, with other aspects like coursework embedded in that training. It draws heavily on the teacher-residency model and a handful of university-based education programs that take such an approach to training new teachers.

“The general message is that teachers have not been prepared well—or enough—and we need to make changes both on the front end, with preparation, and at the back end, with accountability,” said Anissa Listak, the executive director of Urban Teacher Residency United, a Chicago-based network of teacher-residency programs across the nation. “State interest, federal interest [in those reforms], I’m seeing it every day, at every level. I’m seeing funders getting involved in it in a way they haven’t before.”

But if there is general agreement that the quality of student-teaching matters greatly, those in the preparation field are still working through all the implications, teacher-educators and other experts say.

After all, such a change would require education school deans and administrators to confront questions about how they do business—potentially everything from how faculty members are organized to the cost structures now underpinning clinical training.

Recent Developments

The release of the NCATE panel's report comes on the heels of several other events that, taken together, point to increased attention to the preparation of teachers. Among those actions:

- The residency model has gained prominence over the past five years, and has been embraced as a model by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, among other groups.
- The most recent rewrite of the federal Higher Education Act, completed in 2008, added extra reporting requirements for programs that prepare teachers.
- Policy discussions about the format and purpose of teacher evaluations have spawned national interest about how to define and measure good teaching.
- States, prodded by requirements in the federal Race to the Top competition, are moving to track newly minted teachers into P-12 classrooms to determine their success with students.
- The marketplace for teacher education has changed dramatically in the past 30 years. Alternative-certification programs have proliferated, while the number of bachelors' degrees granted in education have fallen since 1970, according to a recent analysis of federal data conducted by the National Center for Alternative Certification, a Washington-based nonprofit group.
- A nationally representative survey commissioned by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, in Washington, found that a majority of teacher-educators see accreditation as a compliance-based process rather than a standard of quality preparation.

Panel Recommendations

A few areas of general consensus flow from such initiatives, and the report by the NCATE panel, which was set up in January, outlines recommendations for how states, universities, and school districts can work together to improve teacher-candidates' student-teaching. (See "NCATE Panel Weighing Fieldwork for Student-Teachers," Jan. 20, 2010.) Among them is the importance of getting districts to take a more active role in the preparation of teachers, by working with training programs to design rich field experiences.

"The whole district has to believe that their future depends on helping us prepare teachers," said Nancy L. Zimpher, chancellor of the State University of New York system and the co-chairwoman of the NCATE panel.

Ms. Zimpher underscored that clinical approaches to teacher preparation can include a variety of methods and ideally knit together several, including the residency model; "rounds" in which teacher-candidates are exposed to a number of school settings; and simulations that allow teacher-candidates to practice their skills on virtual students.

But all programs that prepare teachers need to provide such experiences, she said. They should no longer be confined to a “cottage industry” of best practices located in a handful of initiatives.

Finally, the report notes that there must be more accountability for teacher preparation, with high-quality gauges of candidates’ ability to improve student achievement based on multiple measures.

The report’s thrust won the support of the Obama administration. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan was highly critical of colleges of education in two speeches he gave last fall. (See "Duncan Shares Concerns Over Teacher Prep," October 28, 2009.)

But speaking at a press conference at the National Press Club, in Washington, where the report was unveiled, Mr. Duncan said that the changes embodied in the NCATE report represent “the most sweeping recommendations” for teacher education made in the century-long history of the nation’s education schools.

Big Changes

But do those “sweeping recommendations” have the support needed to be put into place? It is not an insignificant question, given the countless number of reports that have called for changes in the preparation of teachers. One possible lever is an alliance of eight states that say they’ve committed to undertaking such reforms.

Announced at the press-club event, the states—California, Colorado, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Oregon, and Tennessee—will convene panels of stakeholders from higher education, K-12 administrators, teachers’ unions, and others to oversee the work; pilot various approaches in their institutions that prepare teachers; and track the results. For now organized under the auspices of NCATE, the state alliance held its first meeting yesterday.

A second possible lever could be in the accreditation process, which James G. Cibulka, the president of NCATE, and others hope to make more rigorous so that the voluntary process is more synonymous with quality. NCATE and a smaller rival, the Teacher Education Accreditation Council, recently announced plans to merge. (See "Merger Lies Ahead for Accrediting Bodies of Teacher Preparation," November 3, 2010.) Over the next two years, the new accrediting body will put in new, higher standards, Mr. Cibulka said in an interview. And programs that don’t meet such standards, the NCATE report states, should be closed down.

Teacher education experts from across the nation largely praised the thrust of the report, its recommendations, and its vision for the field. But they also brought up a number of implications for teacher preparation.

One issue is that of the cost structure for how teachers are trained. Making classroom-based training the focus of preparation could conceivably mean throwing out the most venerable feature of university-based education, the Carnegie credit-hour-based system.

“The university financial system is based on courses, and courses are based on credits,” said Patricia Wasley, a former dean of the school of education at the University of Washington, in Seattle. “This is a very big issue for higher education institutions. It means a rethinking of how we charge for the work we do with candidates and what form it ought to come in.”

Another sticking point: Traditional education programs, like higher education in general, typically grant teacher-educators tenure for publishing. In practice, that has led to a bifurcation between scholars and those at the institutions who are charged with overseeing student-teaching experiences, said David J. Chard, the dean of the Simmons School of Education at Southern Methodist University, in Dallas.

Ideally, the two areas—scholarship and field-based preparation—should be intimately linked, Mr. Chard said. “We desperately need better knowledge about how to measure teacher-preparation outcomes,” he said.

Morgaen L. Donaldson, an assistant professor at the University of Connecticut’s Neag School of Education, meanwhile, acknowledged that much clinical preparation has been an “afterthought” in teacher preparation. But she worried about the challenges facing universities that will scale up more comprehensive programs.

“A danger in focusing so much on the clinical component is the question of who’s responsible for quality control,” said Ms. Donaldson, who teaches courses both for teacher-candidates and budding education leaders. “We place students all over the place, and that’s a challenge—it’s a challenge to get the right people as clinical supervisors and to ensure that everyone is getting a similar high-quality experience.”

Questions about the political will of higher education to engage in such changes and to put a premium on responding to the needs of local districts, have long concerned people like Ms. Listak, of the Urban Teacher Residency United Group.

“How are we going to know if [these changes] are happening, and how much is it going to cost? Those are important questions to residency programs,” she said, “and they’re important to teacher education, period.”

Cautions Voiced

The director of education policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute, Frederick M. Hess, raised several concerns about the agenda as laid out in the report.

Among them is whether standardization in the preparation of teachers might jeopardize other innovations, such as new state-approved certification approaches run by Teach For America in Connecticut and by the High Tech High School in California.

“The huge challenge is to translate reforms into something that isn’t just a different set of checklists,” Mr. Hess said.

And other observers wondered about the place of alternative routes—both those inside and those outside of education schools—in the conversation about revamped teacher preparation. Though they are supported by the Obama administration and are being courted by NCATE, the report did not discuss their place extensively.

But such routes, said C. Emily Feistritzer, the president of the National Center for Alternative Certification, in Washington, have largely been developed with state and district approval, respond to a particular market need, and offer candidates on-the-job training—though they are typically not supervised in the manner called for by the panel report.

“More and more colleges and universities have seen the light and created clinically based programs,” Ms. Feistritzer said. “They’re called alternate routes.”

Education Week

NCATE's "Transformative" Vision...Not So Much

By: Rick Hess

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Also Ran On: EducationNext.org

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http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/rick_hess_straight_up/2010/11/ncates_transformative_visionnot_so_much.html

NCATE's big report "Transforming Teacher Education Through Clinical Practice" is out today, and is likely to get the predictable hosannas. It's scheduled for a morning event at the National Press Club (I'm doing a bit of discussant duty), where the Blue Ribbon Panel's call for "radically" revising teacher prep to focus on practical training and residencies will be hailed as a transformative moment. SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher, a co-chair, said, "This is a seismic moment for teacher education." I'm not sold.

Now, don't get me wrong. I've got enormous respect for NCATE honcho Jim Cibulka and for the co-chairs of the Blue Ribbon Panel--Colorado's all-star state chief Dwight Jones (about to become supe of Clark County, Nevada) and Zimpher. But this panel of twenty-some members, including both NEA chief Dennis van Roekel and AFT chief Randi Weingarten, did about what I would've expected--they embraced the conventional wisdom of the moment and called for stuff that's perfectly nice (and that can be termed "radical") but that won't amount to much at the end of the day.

The report declares that teacher education needs to be "turned upside down," with training shifting from a focus on academic preparation and course work and towards clinical practice that's "interwoven with academic content and professional courses." Those are swell sentiments. They sound reasonable to me. And I'm all in favor of teacher preparation finding cost-effective ways to do less mediocre course work and more quality clinical training. My own teacher prep experience at Harvard Ed would've benefited enormously from that kind of shift.

But, the truth is, I didn't see much evidence in this report of seismic thinking. I couldn't find anything in the report acknowledging that, if clinical preparation is the key, it may make sense to increasingly cut colleges or universities out of the preparation equation--and allow sites to deal them in on an as-needed basis. After all, the "normal school" and programs of teacher preparation are 19th century innovations; isn't it possible that a "radical" 21st century rethinking might not want to presuppose that we rely on that machinery?

The panel does usefully note the value of creating new roles when it comes to mentoring and supporting faculty, but it seems to envision the same-old, same-old so far as every teacher being a jack of all trades. So, while the report is a useful, if modest, step forward for thinking more creatively about staffing, it stops far short of seismic. Indeed, the only reference to technology is as a means for supporting teacher preparation; there's not any

recognition that the residency model might be poorly suited for those engaging in online instruction, working in hybrid environments, or for supporting and meeting the needs of emerging school models.

I saw nothing acknowledging that teacher preparation for virtual instructors, online tutors, or Citizens Schools-style "citizen-teachers" might require new notions of specializations or efforts to shift away from one-size-fits-all preparation. Instead, I see a call for a new "one best" approach to teacher preparation, one ill-suited for serving educators in new kinds of roles or for supporting more agile, cost-effective staffing models.

Meanwhile, "implementation" challenges--like recruiting enough good classroom mentors, finding sufficiently qualified university supervisors, or handling the logistical issues--go unaddressed. The report doesn't explain how to ensure that large-scale clinical programs aren't merely diluted versions of today's boutique efforts, bringing to mind far too many previous "seismic" edu-reforms that proved to be little more than fads. As someone who spent five years supervising student teachers, I've seen a whole lot of pretty awful practice-oriented teacher preparation. It's not clear to me from this report how preparation programs can be counted on to guard against that or keep their "clinical" training from simply meaning that their students are wasting time in K-12 schools instead of on the college campus.

Finally, illustrating the ways in which the new budget picture still hasn't sunk in, the report ducks like crazy when it comes to "hard choices and cost implications." In the worst tradition of mealy-mouthed reportese, the Panel says its vision "will require reallocation of resources and making hard choices about institutional priorities." The Panel acknowledges that "clinically based programs may cost more per candidate than current programs" but then simply asserts that they "will be more cost-effective by yielding educators who enter the field ready to teach." The evidence for this assertion is, to be generous, lacking. In the current fiscal climate, to call for new outlays without proposing offsetting savings--or even giving some broad estimates of the anticipated costs--shows a troubling tone-deafness to the fiscal situation.

I'm going to be real curious to see how the eight states that signed onto the NCATE proposal--California, Colorado, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Oregon, and Tennessee--move forward. And, I hope that this well-intentioned effort proves more transformative than I suspect. But that's not the way I'd bet.

Education Week

The Teacher Residency Question

By Rick Hess

17 November 2010

URL:

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/rick_hess_straight_up/2010/11/the_teacher_residency_question.html

I've gotten a number of questions and comments regarding NCATE's big Blue Ribbon Panel report, both after my remarks at the National Press Club and in response to yesterday's post. Thought it worth taking a couple moments to expand and explain a bit, especially because teacher residencies are one of our current "everybody loves 'em" enthusiasms.

First, let's be clear. I dig the idea of clinical residencies. Something like the Boston Teacher Residency (BTR), or the approach employed in Long Beach, makes all kinds of sense--for those programs, districts, and teachers. I'm all for high-quality clinical residencies when they're done smartly, cost-effectively, and so forth. So, none of my concerns should be taken as pooh-poohing the central idea (though, as I said yesterday, it's not clear to me why colleges or universities ought to necessarily be invited to the clinical residency dance--as most bring little more than hefty cost structures, hard-to-change routines, and faculty of dubious clinical expertise).

But, let's just stipulate that clinical experience is, broadly speaking, a cool idea. At that point, there are four big questions worth asking.

First, even if today's boutique efforts are found to "work," how confident can we be that large-scale imitation will deliver similar benefits? One point that was brought up repeatedly at the report launch yesterday, without any apparent irony, is how important it is that programs like the Boston Teacher Residency are highly selective. That's terrific. But it also poses a huge challenge when one talks of scaling up these programs. To the extent that the secret in such programs is that--unlike most teacher preparation programs--they are careful about who they enroll and graduate, many of the apparent benefits of their expensive programs may be due to nothing more than candidate quality. The problem is that this is hard to sustain if lots of programs are competing for the same pool of folks, and I'm completely unconvinced that the miraculous enthusiasm for clinical residencies would spur the nation's 1,300+ teacher preparation programs to suddenly become much more selective--or to have much more success attracting high-quality candidates.

Far more likely, I think, is the too-familiar routine in which promising boutique programs (which benefit from selection effects, enormous enthusiasm, philanthropic support, and a sharply honed sense of mission) become one more disappointing fad when adopted by a slew of district and university officials eager to sign on for the best practice of the moment but who don't ultimately have any stomach for the wrenching changes needed to

do it right. The likely result: an amped-up serving of mediocre student teaching now relabeled "clinical residencies," hampered by too few promising candidates, too few skilled higher education faculty, too few rewarding placements, too little program support, and too few top-shelf classroom mentors.

Second, who exactly does the residency model make sense for? For teachers going into challenging environments where they are going to work intensively with kids who need a high level of "high-touch" adult interaction, then the residency model makes a ton of sense. If the aspiring teachers expect to work in a particular district, school, or school model for a number of years, then the upfront costs can look like a smart investment. For these teachers, I think it's more useful to ask whether staffing models can be reshaped so they take on roles commensurate with their abilities (hello surgical teams, with exquisitely trained surgeons working hand-in-glove with less intensively trained team members). However, if teachers are instructing students who require less intensive teacher engagement or are more likely to bounce across very different school models, then I'm less confident in the payoff.

Third, how can the residency model be pursued without stifling alternative forms of instructional provision? One Blue Ribbon Panel member told me that he didn't really understand my concern about stifling online learning. After all, he said, "We're just talking about partnerships--Florida Virtual could design a training partnership to serve their needs." Well, maybe. Except that, given that the report explicitly celebrates teacher "residencies," flags only models like the Boston Teacher Residency, talks explicitly of "instructional rounds," and so forth, the near-certainty is that higher education and state education agencies which run with the NCATE agenda will do so with BTR as the model. This risks stacking unnecessary costs and burdens on models that don't require all teachers to have that kind of experience. This might include online instruction, programs like Citizen Schools that explore alternatives to the conventional full-time teacher, or models like the high-performing, cost-shaving Rocketship Academies (built around an Oracle-like model of empowering young employees and using technology and specialization to make their roles more manageable). We've a century or more of cautionary history suggesting that well-intentioned policies designed to strengthen teacher preparation by embracing the residency presumption can all too easily stifle creative efforts to boost quality, meet particular needs, or boost cost-effectiveness by using technology or staff in unconventional ways.

Finally, why do residency models seem to envision the deal as a one-size-fits-all proposition? When I eyeball today's teacher residencies, I see a solitary notion of what it means to be a "teacher." I'd have a lot more faith if I were confident that the NCATE panel was pushing for an array of clinical residencies, with an eye to developing less onerous, customized, "just-in-time" preparation for part-time tutors or online instructors. Unfortunately, I see no evidence of such thinking in the NCATE effort.

The intuition here is simple, and can be lifted directly from medicine, where the clinical residency for a cardiovascular surgeon is different from that for a general practitioner. Both are trained rather differently than are RNs or EMTs. And all of these are trained

differently than the guy who is going to read X-rays. (Remember, also, that for all the attention paid to medical residencies, doctors account for less than 10 percent of American medical personnel. So the famous, expensive medical residency is really intended for a specialized population and not for every employee who sets foot in a clinic or hospital.) If states and colleges casually wind up embracing notions of a one-size-fits-all residency, it'll be tough sledding to go back and unwind them in a way that facilitates this specialization. After all, this current effort is focused in large part on undoing the legacy of licensure and preparation decisions made more than a half-century ago.

So, again, high-quality residency programs are swell. But, before the eight states that have signed onto the NCATE vision get too far ahead of themselves, and before districts, colleges, or the U.S. Department of Education start jumping on this bandwagon, I sure hope everyone will take a deep breath and make sure they've got a vision to for making sure this well-intentioned effort has a happy ending.

Education Week

Panel: Teacher Prep. Needs Major Restructuring

By: Stephen Sawchuk

16 November 2010

URL:

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/teacherbeat/2010/11/panel_make_clinical_student_te.html

Teacher preparation needs to be organized in such a way that student-teaching and other "clinical" experiences in schools are prioritized, with coursework and other requirements embedded in and supplementing the on-the-job work, according to a report issued this morning by a high-powered panel of teacher-educators, teacher-quality experts, policymakers, and practitioners.

Such "sweeping changes," the report says, means the whole field of teacher education needs nothing less than a top-to-bottom restructuring, the report says.

The panel was convened earlier this year by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, a group that accredits about half the nation's ed. schools.

Among its recommendations, the report says that school districts need to be much more involved in teacher preparation, investing in partnership with local education schools to design programs that prepare teachers in response to the district's circumstances and with an eye on student learning.

In its recommendations, the report touches on a lot of hot-button issues. It says, for instance, that increased accountability for programs that prepare teachers should include consideration of test scores among other factors. That's been the subject of intense debate and controversy with respect to teacher evaluations.

Obliquely, the report also raises the question of whether the incentive system in higher education works at cross-purposes to close supervision of teacher-candidates in schools. That's an important consideration, because presumably, a leaner, more slimmed-down amount of coursework would require institutions to rethink what they value from their teacher-educators. That could be a big lift indeed, especially at research universities where publishing is given the lion's share of attention come tenure time.

As the report states, higher ed. institutions "will need to shift their reward structure to value work in schools by including clinical faculty lines in promotion and tenure requirements."

According to the group, eight states—Calif., Colo., La., Md., N.Y., Ohio, Ore., and Tenn.—have signed "letters of intent" to move to this kind of preparation model. They'll

be working as part of an alliance to scale up these approaches. It's not clear, though, what such a commitment actually entails at this point.

In the meantime, some programs have already put a heavy emphasis on student-teaching. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education profiled some of them earlier this year in a volume. But the report released this morning acknowledges that such programming is "not the norm" in schools of education.

Teacher Beat's final thought: There have been an awful lot of these kinds of reports in the past. The million-dollar question for NCATE, and for all the panelists engaged in this work, is to prove that this is really going to gain traction in the teacher-prep world as a whole. The obstacles are many; Higher ed. institutions, (not just their colleges of education), are generally notoriously change-adverse. We'll be watching the fallout with interest.

Stay tuned for a longer story shortly at edweek.org.

The Chronicle of Higher Education

Teacher Training Should Be More Practical and Measured Better, Report Says

By: Kevin Kiley

November 16, 2010

URL: <http://chronicle.com/article/Teacher-Training-Should-Be/125407/>

Washington

Teacher-training programs need to be revamped to focus more on hands-on, clinical instruction, similar to how doctors are trained, a panel of education experts recommend in a report released on Tuesday by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

The report, created over the last 10 months by a panel that included teachers, educators of teachers, state-government administrators, and union representatives, calls for sweeping changes in teacher-training programs that would affect almost all aspects of teacher education, including accreditors, education schools, and individual teachers.

It finds the current model of teaching, which relies heavily on classroom instruction and course work, inadequate. It outlines a new system of teacher training and education-school accreditation that borrows from the approach taken by medical schools, including their emphasis on hands-on training.

"We have a model from medicine, and we ought to use it," said Nancy L. Zimpher, chancellor of the State University of New York and one of the panel's co-chairmen. Ms. Zimpher, who spoke here at a presentation of the report, is a strong proponent of the clinical-instruction model, calling for it to be adopted throughout the SUNY system.

A Shift to Practical Training

The report calls for a fundamental redesign of education schools that would integrate extensive hands-on preparation with the theory and content currently taught in education schools. That structure would bring in and reward experienced teachers to serve as mentors and clinical instructors for aspiring teachers. Coupled with that redesign would be more-rigorous accountability measures for education schools; better recruitment of potential teachers based on academic performance and the attributes that make good teachers; better placement based on school districts' needs; strengthened partnerships among teacher-training programs, local governments, and school districts; and the accumulation of better knowledge about which programs work.

The major change proposed in the report would shift teacher instruction away from lectures and toward more-practical training, in which aspiring teachers would be expected to perform in front of a classroom from the day they walked into the program.

Most aspiring teachers already are placed in student-teaching positions for 10 to 12 weeks toward the end of their education. But the panel's recommendations call for a more

immersive environment in which future teachers would spend significant time in front of a classroom throughout their training and receive more feedback from experienced educators.

That type of change would require partnerships with local school districts to provide the classroom environment as well as experienced teachers to help train the student-teachers and provide feedback. It would also require better tracking of student and teacher performance on a variety of measures, the report says. That would help instructors and researchers better establish what works and what doesn't.

Eight states have already signed letters stating that they intend to add a clinical element to their teacher-training programs.

Some universities already have such elements in place, but they are not widely used.

"There's great potential in this report to increase what we know about what works," said Donna Wiseman, dean of the College of Education at the University of Maryland at College Park and one of the panel members.

Increased Scrutiny

Teacher-preparation programs have come under increased scrutiny in recent years as reports have shown that the biggest in-school determinant of student achievement in elementary and secondary education is teacher quality.

The report also calls for raising admissions, performance, and graduation standards for aspiring teachers. Critics of teacher-training programs often cite studies showing that students who enter such programs often have lower grades and standardized-test scores than students who head for other professions.

Teacher and education-school quality and accountability are likely to be the subject of policy debates when Congress takes up legislation to renew the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which is expected to be considered next year.

The U.S. secretary of education, Arne Duncan, who spoke at the panel's presentation, said the report made him optimistic about the changes under way in teacher-training programs. But he recognized that it will take resources and partnerships to make changes and that local, state, and federal governments must play a role in improving teacher-certification standards.

"This transformation cannot be accomplished by reforming teacher-preparation programs alone," he said.

The panel received criticism from some policy analysts, including Rick M. Hess, director of education-policy studies for the American Enterprise Institute, a Washington-based policy group. Mr. Hess said a flaw in the report was its "one-best-model" view of teacher training. He said that there might be different models of instruction that work equally

well for different people. He suggested differentiating training programs based on teaching styles, subjects, or population served, similar to how medical students train in various specialties.

He also said the report fails to consider fiscal realities and what would have to be eliminated to make the proposed changes possible. It also does not delve deeply into how technology is changing the educational process, he said.

James G. Cibulka, president of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, said it would work over the next two years to overhaul its accreditation standards, to bring them in line with the report's recommendations.

A longtime criticism of the accreditation system, Mr. Cibulka said, is that standards are set too low and underperforming schools are allowed to slide by. He said he hoped this report and the ensuing changes would remedy that pattern.

"We must raise the bar," he said, "for new teachers and the programs that prepare them."

Inside Higher Ed

Going Clinical

By: Allie Grasgreen

16 November 2010

URL: <http://www.insidehighered.com/layout/set/print/news/2010/11/16/teachers>

Teacher preparation programs are taking a page out of medical education's book.

In an effort to alter the debate about teacher preparation, a comprehensive report being issued today will demand significant changes of colleges, school districts and policy makers. The emphasis will be on the clinical preparation of teachers who are more equipped to instruct in the 21st century.

While many colleges have taken steps of various sizes in that direction, this report aims to streamline them. To do that, the report panel says, will require nothing less than turning teacher training "upside down" by implementing a long-term, clinically based approach, similar to the model used in doctor education.

"The way in which we once prepared teachers, from primarily an academic classroom-based model, no longer suits the diversity of today's student body," said James G. Cibulka, president of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, which commissioned the report prepared by a panel of various education stakeholders. "We do know what needs to be done. It's a question of creating the political will to make the kinds of transformations that will really make a difference in the overall quality of the teaching force that we prepare for classrooms today."

At the report's core is the assertion that for teachers to be effective, they need educations grounded in immersion and clinical practice. The report calls for more rigorous accountability; strengthening candidate selection and placement; revamping curriculums, incentives and staffing; and identifying what works and supporting continuous improvement. Some of the clinical principles identified in the report include making student learning the focus; using technology to enhance productivity and collaboration; preparing teachers who not only have content expertise but can also teach it, innovate, collaborate and problem-solve; and – this is a big one – building strategic partnerships between preparation programs, school districts, teacher unions and state policy makers.

While teacher candidates have long held student-teaching positions toward the end of their educations, the system being called for would make real-school experiences central to teacher education from the time someone first enrolls and as part of every curricular decision.

That means teacher preparation programs and the P-12 school districts the teachers-in-training will go on to work at will join forces to identify the needs of all students. Future teachers will be immersed in classrooms before they begin their careers, and will have obtained both practical knowledge and academic knowledge. Evidence will suggest how

to develop teacher preparation programs that work – and everyone will know when they don't because they'll actually be held accountable.

It may sound daunting, but it's not a new concept, nor an unexplored one. "I think a lot of it is in response to the criticism of teacher education, and especially the criticism which says that particularly programs in higher education are not changing, they're not responsive to the needs of the schools. That sort of chatter has been going on for a while," said Donna Wiseman, a report panelist and chair-elect of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. "This is an effort to really give us some guidelines on how to make changes and how to work together as a profession."

Eight states have already signed letters of intent to implement a clinical training agenda in teacher preparation, as sort of pilot programs to begin gathering data that will – in theory – prove that this agenda produces better teachers.

As dean of the College of Education at the University of Maryland at College Park, in a state that has committed to this project, Wiseman is all too familiar with the difficulties of aligning preparation processes across campuses. "It's hard to maintain it across all the programs, even though we really try to do that," she said.

That's why Cibulka and the Blue Ribbon Panel wanted to develop this report. And they're confident it will lead to more streamlined programs and better teachers. They may be met with concern about funding to support the necessary infrastructure of individuals to carry out this work, but Cibulka and other panelists say initial steps can be taken without cost, and later on, there's room for a reallocation of resources.

"I think it's an urgent matter," Cibulka said. "We are not finding that student achievement or student engagement is at the level it needs to be for our nation to prosper. We also know from growing research evidence that strong clinical programs are effective in preparing teachers. So the time to act is now."

One very public proponent of clinically based teacher education is Nancy Zimpher, chancellor of the State University of New York and co-chair of the report panel. As head of a system that produces 5,000 future teachers a year, she has already made clinical training part of SUNY's new strategic plan, which took effect in April of last year.

Yet SUNY is another system that exercises a few elements of clinical training – virtual classrooms, case literature, internship programs – but as of now has no consistency across programs. "This is really a turning point," Zimpher said. "This is knitting a profession together that is really quite fragmented right now."

The report panel is well-positioned to recommend the way to go about this training revamp. The 40 or so members include stakeholders in higher education, secondary education, teaching associations, unions and accrediting groups. U.S. Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan is expected to speak at the panel's press briefing today in Washington and show political support for a clinical approach.

Now it may just be a matter of time before the panel starts seeing results – especially if accreditors have anything to do with it. NCATE, for one, plans to weave this training approach into its accreditation criteria as soon as possible once it merges with the Teacher Education Accreditation Council, he said, because “accreditation really needs to play its part in responding to the educational needs of our country.”

Regional News:

Atlanta Journal Constitution

Remaking teacher education: Train teachers like doctors

By: Maureen Downey, AJC Get Schooled blog

16 November 2010

URL: <http://blogs.ajc.com/get-schooled-blog/2010/11/16/remaking-teacher-education-train-teachers-like-doctors/#>

A national panel of education leaders, teachers and researchers in Washington today called for turning teacher education “upside down” by shifting focus to clinical practice and creating deeper partnerships with school districts to track teacher performance in the real world.

Holding out the medical school model, a series of experts called for an infusion of clinical practices for prospective teachers from the minute they begin their training. (I listened via conference call to the two-hour panel.)

“That clinical practice has to be infused in every facet of teacher education through dynamic ways, none of this waiting to the end to student teach,” said Nancy Zimpher, chancellor of the State University of New York and panel co-chair.

Zimpher cited pedagogical labs, such as the ped lab at Boston College that simulates the classroom experiences teachers will face in the classroom. No one would consider sending a new pilot into a real cockpit without simulation training at the controls, she said. Teachers need those same simulations, with mentors serving as co-pilots.

Zimpher also cited the grand rounds in medical school residency training in which a team of experienced doctors works with new doctors on challenging clinical problems. Teachers need that intense level of review, guidance and support, she said.

The panel issued a sweeping report that recognizes all school reforms hinge on highly skilled teachers. And the responsibility for those skilled teachers starts with colleges of education, some of which have been collecting students’ tuition for decades but sending them forth without adequate skills to manage classrooms, especially in high-need schools.

The panel called for new accountability measures for schools of education that include how graduates perform in the classroom based on whether students learn.

Too many teacher training programs emphasize theoretical coursework only loosely supported by clinical experience, much of it reflecting uneven quality, said U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan who addressed the gathering. He applauded the intention to emulate a medical school model fully grounded in clinical practice.

Duncan called for an end to university-based programs that don't consider the impact of their graduates on student learning in actual classrooms. "There is little or no accountability for turning out effective teachers," Duncan said. "It is time to start holding teacher preparation programs far more accountable for the impact of their graduates on student learning and achievement.. It is time to make accountability much more rigorous, outcome based."

He cited Georgia's plan to broaden its evaluation of teacher preparation programs to include retention rates and demonstration of content knowledge. "In Georgia, they will be tracking where graduates land teaching positions and whether they stay with them," he said.

Duncan said the United States needs a revolution in how we train teachers, not an evolution or tinkering. He recounted how teachers told him that their preparation failed them in two main ways: They did not get the hands-on training to manage tough classrooms and they were not trained on how to use data to differentiate their teaching.

In his opening comments to the panel, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education president James Cibulka said there was no superman waiting to fix teacher education. "The only cape available for us to meet this challenge is the one that the field itself will create," he said.

He announced the formation of an alliance of eight states willing to adopt the new ambitious agenda for teacher training. (Louisiana, Tennessee and Florida were the only Southern states among the eight. It is interesting that those three states have overtaken Georgia in reputation as incubators for reform in the last few years.)

The experts called for residencies for teachers, such as the Boston Teacher Residency sponsored by the system. That program puts teacher residents with a primary mentor for a full year in a Boston classroom. The residents are assessed every month during the program; they are supported for three years beyond their residency with ongoing help and mentoring. Almost all the graduates are hired by Boston Public Schools.

The panelists considered ongoing mentoring of young teachers by talented peers in schools a critical element of improving education outcomes. They stressed that those mentors must be compensated for their effort.

Teachers on the panel said they and their colleagues wanted to improve; they wanted to learn how to change their approaches; they wanted to see highly effective peers so they could learn how to help struggling students; they wanted to learn how to make better use of data to help their kids.

The Denver Post

Colorado signs on to changes in future teacher education

By: Jeremy P. Meyer

16 November 2010

URL: http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_16622396

Colorado is among eight states that have signed letters of intent, agreeing to change the way colleges and universities prepare future teachers.

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education today releases a report that calls for teacher education to be "turned upside down" to make "clinical practice" the center of teacher preparation.

How those practices will be changed will be described at a news conference today in Washington, D.C., when a report is released from a Blue Ribbon panel convened to look at how to improve the nation's teaching programs.

Colorado Education Commissioner Dwight Jones was co-chair of the panel along with Nancy L. Zimpher, chancellor of State University of New York.

"To prepare effective teachers for 21st century classrooms, teacher education must shift away from a norm which emphasizes academic preparation and course work loosely linked to school-based experiences," the report says.

But at least one group focused on teacher improvement is skeptical about the recommended changes.

"Teacher education is broken in this country; everyone acknowledges that," said Kate Walsh, president of the National Council on Teacher Quality. "I am trying to figure out what is different with this report.

"Are they going to make sure they are better at teaching math or reading?" Walsh wondered.

Walsh, who hadn't seen the report Monday, wondered whether the 600 schools that receive NCATE accreditation will lose that honor if they don't implement specific changes.

Walsh's group is evaluating and grading the nation's education schools.

Colorado officials have signed a letter of intent to implement the new agenda, as have officials from California, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Oregon and Tennessee.

These states will work with national experts "to pilot diverse approaches to implementation, and bring new models of clinical preparation to scale," according to the report.

Some education experts hope investigations and reports on teacher-preparation programs act like the 1910 Flexnor Report, which changed medical schools in the early part of the 20th century. Medical schools raised their admission and graduation standards and began adhering to the protocols of mainstream science in their teaching and research.

The education report says the universities and colleges should strengthen their candidate selection and placement and revamp the curricula and staffing.

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The Oregonian

Oregon among eight states to follow panel's prescription for overhauling teacher education

By: Bill Graves

16 November 2010

URL:

http://www.oregonlive.com/education/index.ssf/2010/11/oregon_among_eight_states_to_f.html

Oregon is among eight states that have agreed to follow the recommendation of a national blue-ribbon panel to turn their approach to educating teachers "upside down" by putting more emphasis on practical classroom experience.

Teacher education programs should shift their emphasis from academic coursework to putting student teachers in the classroom with "effective practitioners, coaches and clinical faculty," says a panel of educators commissioned by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education in a report released today.

The panel compares the new approach to doctors trained through clinical experience in teaching hospitals.

"Candidates will blend practitioner knowledge with academic knowledge as they learn by doing," says the report, called "Transforming Teacher Education Through Clinical Practice: A National Strategy to Prepare Effective Teachers."

Education leaders have been calling for an overhaul of teacher education for decades. That call is gaining urgency not only because of a rising tide of teacher turnover as baby boomers retire, but also because education reform leaders are concluding that better teacher quality is the key to better schools.

The report recommends schools of education become more selective in both faculty and students.

Oregon, California, Colorado, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Ohio and Tennessee will work with national experts to "bring new models of clinical preparation to scale in their states," the report said.

Oregon's Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, which licenses teachers, will be involved in carrying out the changes, said Vickie Chamberlain, executive director.

"It's always a good thing to take a look at best practices," she said. "Here, you have a blue ribbon panel coming up with ways to do things differently. We didn't want to hold back and wait. We like to be on the cutting edge. We wanted to get involved on the front end."

The Oregon overhaul will begin with pilot programs, Chamberlain said.

"We'll likely take volunteer participants from our universities that are preparing teachers and look to a few that have a critical mass of teachers," she said. "Hopefully, the evidence will show that there's been teacher improvement."

Staff writer Kimberly Melton contributed to this report.

The Memphis Commercial-Appeal

Focus placed on teachers as leaders; Tennessee among states in shift of education emphasis

By Richard Morgan

16 November 2010

URL: <http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2010/nov/16/focus-placed-on-teachers-as-leaders/>

Who expects peak performance from a twentysomething doctor or lawyer? It can seem that anyone who has seen "Dead Poets' Society" or "Mr. Holland's Opus" -- parents, principals, politicians and students themselves -- expects every twentysomething teacher to be the Doogie Howser of fourth-grade math, or sixth-grade English.

"We expect teachers to be expert at 22 or 25 and then stay perfect, magically, forever," said Marcy Singer-Gabella, associate chairwoman for the department of teaching and learning at Vanderbilt University's Peabody College. "We have to ask: What's reasonable to expect from a novice?"

To answer that question, a panel of education experts led by U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan will issue a report today announcing a nationwide shift in teacher assessment to give Tennessee and seven other states new tools to separate the educational wheat from the chaff.

The new approach, which is being adopted in baby steps by the University of Memphis, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and Vanderbilt, mimics the residency model that medical students use: In the final two semesters of their undergraduate degrees, students will immerse themselves in one school. Currently, they do student-teacher stints, often at different schools, that last only seven or eight weeks.

This residency will be coupled with more mentorship and more frequent, more standardized evaluations that are harder to game, such as reviewing videotape of classroom activity.

The idea is to focus on what educators call "habits of mind" to create something better than teachers: "teacher-leaders."

"The cost of a revolving door is tremendous in any industry," said Marty Alberg, assistant dean at the U of M's College of Education, "but in education it affects our children and so it affects everything: our culture, our families, our economy, our future. We need teachers who commit."

Among the U of M's 200 or so education students, 62 are working as student-teachers at schools in Shelby and Tipton counties (Memphis City Schools will be added in 2011); 19 of them will graduate in May 2011 and will be able to teach kindergarten through sixth grade, if they also earn recommendations for certification.

Teaching certification is broken into several categories, some of which overlap: preschool through third grade, kindergarten through sixth grade, fourth grade through eighth grade, seventh grade through 12th grade, and special education.

"Immersion gets these candidate teachers involved in the life of their school deeper and quicker," said Alberg.

Education debates have been hampered, these experts said, by a popular notion that quality teaching relies almost wholly on book smarts; the logic of "those who can, do, and those who can't, teach" implied that failed chemical engineers or failed historians could, as a fallback plan, at least coast by as chemistry or history teachers, respectively.

"The game-changer here is that it affects all students," said James Cibulka, president of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, a Washington-based nonprofit group that organized the panel that made the report. "You used to be called a successful teacher if you focused on the top 10 or top 20 percent. That no longer suffices for the nation's needs."

The Albany Times-Union

Future teachers to learn by doing

By Scott Waldman

17 November 2010

URL: <http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/Future-teachers-to-learn-by-doing-817701.php>

The education degree of the future will require aspiring teachers to put in a lot more time in front of children and less time in front of professors.

The way teachers are trained needs to undergo a profound transformation, according to a report released Tuesday by a national panel of education experts led by State University of New York Chancellor Nancy Zimpher. The recommendations of the panel -- convened by The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and including teachers, administrators, union officials and education analysts -- will be implemented in eight states, including New York.

"SUNY produces more teachers than any other institution in New York state, nearly 5,000 each year, and so we have both a responsibility and a tremendous capacity to move the dial on teacher preparation," Zimpher said in a statement. "These recommendations provide us with a powerful road map to give all students what they need most in order to succeed, and that is excellent teachers."

One of the primary changes will be to increase the amount of time future teachers spend in actual classrooms while reducing the theory classes that now dominate the course load for education degrees. The clinical experience for education students now averages just 10 to 14 weeks, according to the report. The new recommendations call on teacher preparation programs to become more like medical schools -- teacher interns would work closely with resident teachers in a classroom setting.

School districts will become closer partners with institutions of higher education and will share student performance data to tailor teacher training to the needs of actual students. Oversight of education programs will be improved, and incentives will be given to schools that increase the number of teachers entering math and science fields, where demand is strongest.

The changes come at a time at which the federal government is doubling the amount of money it spends on teacher training to \$235 million next year, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said in a conference call with reporters on Tuesday. Duncan said one-third of the nation's teachers will retire in the next few years and that a million new educators will be needed to fill their spots, especially in fields like math and science.

"Teaching has never been more difficult, it has never been more important," he said. Duncan said teacher preparation programs need to be held more accountable. He said he

wanted to make it more difficult to become a teacher and to eliminate the 100 percent passage rate at some schools.

About 150,000 new teachers are hired nationally every year, and 80 percent of them are from university-based programs, according to the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

Zimpher called the report a "seismic" moment because it will turn the way teachers are prepared "upside down." She said SUNY would immediately begin implementing the reforms.

But critics also blasted the report's failure to address some important questions, like how to pay for the changes. Education schools must move away from a one-size-fits-all approach to teacher preparation and embrace more cost-effective models that certify teachers outside of the university, according to Frederick Hess, an education policy analyst at the American Enterprise Institute, a Washington-based conservative think tank. He said it also failed to take into account online instruction or classrooms of the future that will be shaped by technology.

"The report doesn't explain how to ensure that large-scale clinical programs aren't merely diluted versions of today's boutique efforts, bringing to mind far too many previous 'seismic' edu-reforms that proved to be little more than fads," he wrote on his blog after the report was released.

Some schools, including The Sage Colleges, already have begun to make the suggested changes, Education Dean Lori Quigley said. The new recommendations will benefit education schools by strengthening the connection between academic facilities and the field, Quigley said. She spent Tuesday touring Troy district schools to find sites where a group of Sage students will work alongside teachers.

She said the panel's changes will put the focus again on children, by better preparing teachers to meet their needs. "They begin to understand children at a different level and the culture from where the children come," she said. "They get a deeper understanding."

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Times Herald-Record (Middletown, NY)

Panel promotes upgrades for teacher education

By Jeremiah Horrigan

17 November 2010

URL:

<http://www.recordonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20101117/NEWS/11170357>

NEW PALTZ — A blue-ribbon panel of national education experts and leaders has recommended that teacher training start following a "medical model" to prepare college students for careers as teachers.

"Teaching, like medicine, is a profession of practice," SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher told the panel, which included federal Education Secretary Arne Duncan.

The panel and an accompanying report sponsored by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education invoked the language of the medical profession to describe programs aimed at "turning teacher training upside down."

Those recommendations said:

--College training programs and school districts should cooperate more in designing teacher prep programs.

-- Online and video demonstrations should be expanded.

--Teaching candidates should work more directly with P-12 students to "try out solutions and gain feedback."

New York is one of eight states that has signed on to implement the changes, which are not mandatory.

The region's largest teacher-education department, with 1,600 undergraduate and graduate students, is already implementing many of the panel's recommendations, according to Robert Michael, dean of the SUNY New Paltz School of Education.

"We already work closely with several school districts in the region, including Pine Bush, New Paltz, Monroe and Goshen," he said.

Michael said involving school districts is difficult and demanding for teachers and administrators who already have a lot on their plates, and who receive no financial compensation for their efforts.

SUNY New Paltz — not to mention local school districts — are bracing for multimillion dollar budget deficits.

"That is the real question — whether the (financial) resources will follow all these recommendations."

The Connecticut Post

In Our Schools

Teacher prep programs must change

By Eileen FitzGerald

17 November 2010

URL: <http://www.ctpost.com/news/article/Eileen-FitzGerald-In-Our-Schools-Teacher-prep-819049.php>

"There are more students with greater learning needs than ever before; rigorous new standards for students with higher expectations for student achievement; and the need to turn around low-performing schools, to name just a few of the unsolved challenges present today."

That's what James G. Cibulka, president of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, said about why his group created a blue ribbon panel to address how to overhaul university degree programs that teach teachers.

"These unmet needs press education stakeholders at large to make bold, simultaneous systemic changes," he said.

Clinical Preparation and Partnerships for Improved Student Learning, available online at www.ncate.org, was released Tuesday, accompanied by a two-hour conference call.

The heart of the report is to make the clinical work the focus of training. It calls for getting the best college students possible to train to become teachers, put them in K-12 classrooms as soon as possible to watch and work with excellent veteran teachers, ensure their professors are accomplished teachers, and for colleges and school districts to create ongoing partnerships.

In education, most now realize just how crucial teachers will be to reduce the achievement gap between rich and poor and minority and white students and to ensure all children get the best education possible.

"The higher education system and the school system must share the responsibility to prepare teachers and continue to train teachers, and we need a new structure that is not there now," Donna Wiseman, dean of the College of Education at the University of Maryland, said during the conference call.

Jesse Solomon, executive director of the well-regarded Boston Teacher Residency program, explained the goal of his program is to bring together the theory learned in the college classroom and the practical work that goes on in a K-12 classroom.

The future teachers spend four days a week full time in the classroom, have a mentor and an assignment.

"Teachers want the best teachers to work alongside them, and they see the gap in the traditional education prep system," said Kathy Wiebke, who is executive director of the K-12 Center at Northern Arizona University.

"Candidates who are becoming teachers have to develop a repertoire of classroom strategies to deal with traditional and non traditional classrooms and standards needed to be imbedded in teachers preparation," she said.

Of all the civil rights issues of the last 5,000 years, the right to learn is the most fundamental, said Rebecca Pringle, secretary/treasurer of the National Education Association, the largest teachers' union in the United States with 3.2 million members.

"To put clinical preparation at the core is new thinking," she said. "As a union, we're very excited. It will take the will of the entire field to be successful."

There are successes now, she said, like the Connecticut program that links districts with the University of Connecticut students.

"If nothing changes, up to 50 percent of poor and minority students will drop out of school and that is not acceptable," she said.

The new approach will involve significant policy and procedural changes, but it's essential.

"Making clinical preparation the centerpiece of teacher education will transform the way we prepare teachers," Nancy Zimpher, chancellor of the State University of New York and co-chair of the panel, said.

Contact Eileen FitzGerald at eileenf@newstimes.com

The Telegraph (Hudson, NH)

Reforms urged in teaching teachers

By: Michael Brindley

18 November 2010

URL: <http://www.nashuatelegraph.com/news/899928-196/reforms-urged-in-teaching-teachers.html>

A call was made this week for teacher education programs to be “turned upside down.”

Here’s a taste of what was said.

“To prepare effective teachers for 21st century classrooms, teacher education must shift away from a norm which emphasizes academic preparation and course work loosely linked to school-based experiences,” reads the 40-page report issued Tuesday by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. “Rather, it must move to programs that are fully grounded in clinical practice and interwoven with academic content and professional courses.”

The recommendations were applauded by those working in New Hampshire’s teacher education programs, who said they are already doing much of what is being pushed by the group. Many of the goals outlined in the report are precisely what prospective teachers get out of the training program at Plymouth State University, said education professor Marianne True.

“We expose our students to the public school experience year one, and it just intensifies as they continue,” said True, who coordinates the childhood studies program. Part of the university’s responsibility is to make sure the curriculum adapts to what is being done in public schools, she said.

“We’re preparing teachers to work in schools that are very different from the schools they were in 10 years ago,” True said.

In a speech Tuesday, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan supported the findings of the panel. Duncan said ideal teacher education programs must emulate the model of medical education. Too many programs now emphasize theoretical coursework, with only a limited focus on putting their ideas to the test in a real-world classroom setting, he said.

True said the medical school model of “rounds” is much like what students in her childhood studies program get. When they are using lessons designed in their class in a real classroom setting, students are being observed by two public school professionals: the cooperating public school teacher and an on-site supervisor from the university.

“They get feedback from two practicing professionals for every lesson they teach,” True said.

There is also a strong emphasis on instructional strategies to improve learning, she said. Students learn how to reach different types of learners, work with sample assessments and spend time studying many of the same types of curriculum being used in public schools, she said.

Michael Middleton, associate professor of education at the University of New Hampshire, said the school's teacher education program puts a strong emphasis on in-classroom training. In their first course, students get 65 hours of experience with a teacher, he said. The university has partnerships with many surrounding school districts to make sure students are working directly with professional teachers, Middleton said.

The program commences with a year-long student teaching internship, he said.

"That helps them develop skills as a teacher and helps them develop more confidence," Middleton said.

Another recommendation of the report was tougher admission and graduation standards, along with schools being held accountable for the quality of educators they are producing. Duncan said there should be "rigorous evidence of the impact that graduates have on student learning in the classroom. For decades, teacher preparation programs have had little to no accountability for turning out effective teachers."

Eight states – California, Colorado, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Oregon and Tennessee – have committed to implementing the teacher education reform ideas called for in the report. The goal is to make teacher preparation a shared responsibility between K-12 public school districts and colleges and universities.

Some of the pilot states have agreed to start using data on student learning to show which programs are producing the most effective educators. Mary McNeil, head of the education program at Rivier College in Nashua, said that while that sounds good in theory, that could be problematic when teachers are spread out into different types of communities.

"When it comes down to practice, all classrooms are not equal," she said.

McNeil said Rivier considers itself a rigorous program, requiring students to maintain a 3.0 GPA. The school also looks for students who want to make a difference in the areas where students can be difficult to reach.

"Just yesterday, I was meeting with a young man who requested he be placed for teaching in Nashua, Manchester or Lowell, in a school with students with some difficult challenges," she said. "That's the kind of spirit we're looking for."

Middleton said the university tries to hold itself accountable by conducting surveys of principals where students have found jobs to make sure graduates were well-prepared for

the job. An effective education program should give students the opportunity to see whether teaching is something they want to commit to, Middleton said.

“Part of what we’re committed to doing is getting the right people into the pipeline,” he said.

Nashua Superintendent Mark Conrad agreed the more time education students spend in the classroom, the better prepared they will be. He likened it to his experience working toward his degree in social work, when he was thrown into the field in his first year of studies.

“There was value in that. It very quickly raised questions of practice and how practice translates into reality,” Conrad said. “The sooner you can have students begin to get into the classrooms, either to observe or to participate, the better.”

While teachers entering the system are typically well-prepared, Conrad said more could be done to ensure future teachers are getting trained in areas that Nashua and other districts are focusing on, such as encouraging collaboration among teachers.

“Education is a rapidly changing field, and often colleges aren’t at the forefront of that,” Conrad said.

The Learning Curve appears Thursdays in The Telegraph. Michael Brindley can be reached at 594-6426 or mbrindley@nashuatelegraph.com.

Des Moines Register

(Blog) Are teacher prep programs listening?

By Linda Lantor Fandel

17 November 2010

URL: <http://blogs.desmoinesregister.com/dmr/index.php/2010/11/17/are-teacher-prep-programs-listening/>

A proposed overhaul of the nation's teacher education programs is promising. It calls for teacher training programs to work more like medical schools, including more time teaching in the classroom before future teachers are licensed. Now if teacher education programs will only listen. Especially to critics who call for higher admissions standards. In Iowa, a C average will get you in.

This is the case, despite the importance of a great teacher in every classroom.

To read the report, please click here.

Other:

Fox Business News

Study: Teachers Learning Like Doctors

18 November 2010

Video link: <http://video.foxbusiness.com/v/4425054>

NPR: Marketplace

Recruiting the right people to teach

By Amy Scott

18 November 2010

AUDIO:

http://marketplace.publicradio.org/www_publicradio/tools/media_player/popup.php?name=marketplace/pm/2010/11/18/marketplace_cast2_20101118_64&starttime=00:20:31.0&endtime=00:26:18.0

URL: <http://marketplace.publicradio.org/display/web/2010/11/18/pm-improving-louisianas-schools-starting-with-teachers/>

TEXT OF STORY

Kai Ryssdal: For all the conversations we have in this country about education -- how to pay for it, how to raise kids' test scores, how to make the U.S. more competitive -- there's one big chunk of the education ecosystem that doesn't get a whole lot of attention: How teachers are taught.

This week, a panel set up by the group that accredits teacher training programs in this country said we ought to chuck the whole thing and start over again. They said teachers should be trained more like doctors, with more time spent learning on the job with actual kids. Louisiana's already signed on to those recommendations.

Marketplace's Amy Scott reports from the Education Desk at WYPR, that Louisiana has already had a head start at education reinvention.

Amy Scott: There was something wrong in Louisiana. In the late 1990s, on pretty much every national measure, the state's public school students lagged behind most of the country. And students weren't the only ones paying the price.

Brigitte Nieland: It has impacted every quality of life indicator -- our ability to recruit business, high-paying jobs, health care. All the lists that get published every year, Louisiana tends to be on the bottom.

Brigitte Nieland was part of a state commission set up to get at the roots of the problem. She surveyed hundreds of teachers. Nearly all of those who had graduated from one of the state's colleges of education said the same thing: They felt unprepared to teach. Nieland says a third of new teachers didn't last beyond three years.

Nieland: This pipeline was leaking at every level. The standards to get into colleges of education were low. Scores on national certification exams were low. The student teaching experience was generally not realistic. It was broken. There was no doubt. It was broken.

The state finally told its colleges and universities to fix their teacher training programs or shut them down. One of the schools that got that message is the University of Louisiana at Monroe.

Sounds of football players and coaches shouting

It was Homecoming week when I visited those are the Warhawks you hear practicing for the big game. ULM is a small university in the northeastern part of the state. It turned out nearly 150 new teachers last year.

Luke Thomas was dean of the College of Education when the order came down to shape up or shut down. ULM had just finished its own redesign.

Luke Thomas: So we basically, starting around 2002-2003, had to redesign the redesign. There weren't too many happy people in our college at that time.

But Thomas and his colleagues went along with it. They raised admissions standards; made students take more courses in the subjects they'd be teaching, like science; and tripled the amount of time they spent in the classroom -- not the university classroom, with its lectures and theory, but in the schools.

Sound of children talking

At Cypress Point Elementary School, fifth graders sit at their desks in clusters of three or four. Each cluster also includes a college student from ULM, dressed in black hospital scrubs. A word about the scrubs: All the teachers wear them; education can get messy.

Today, these future teachers are helping kids learn about word choice. Junior Mindy Beach tries to get her group talking about other choices they make.

Mindy Beach: What kind of good choices affect your future?

Students: Eating right, and getting and staying in school...

Beach isn't cutting it. The professor, Beth Ricks, swoops in to give her a lesson in how to grab a fifth graders' attention -- Enthusiasm.

Beth Ricks: What's another way to say it's a good choice, it's a what kind of choice?

Student: Excellent choice.

Ricks: Excellent! Ooh, I love that word. Nice word.

Right after class, Beach and 30 or so other teachers-in-training debrief with Professor Ricks in the elementary school's library.

Ricks: It's been five to six weeks that we've been working with the traits, right? So I want you to think about...

The aim is to bring the university classroom into the field, so students can put what they learn right into practice. Senior Samantha Whitlock says the transition from lecture hall to public school classroom wasn't easy.

Samantha Whitlock: It's very overwhelming to go from just sittin' in a classroom all day long, takin' notes and then expected just to take a test, to goin' into the classrooms and workin' with the kids. It was something totally different than I ever expected.

By the time Whitlock becomes an official student teacher next year, she will have spent almost 200 hours working directly with children in the schools. That's 200 hours before she begins student teaching. Some states require as few as 15 classroom hours.

That's the kind of experience Christella Dawson is looking for. She's assistant principal at Neville High School, across town. She's seen her share of new teachers trained the old way.

Christella Dawson: They were gung-ho about teaching, but then they'd get into the classroom with the regular students on a day-to-day basis and would not know how to maintain control of the classroom.

Today, she says, candidates come in prepared, but are Louisiana's kids any better off? They've made progress, but the state still ranks close to the bottom on national scores.

Thomas: The problem with education is that you don't see the benefits immediately.

Luke Thomas, the former dean who led ULM's redesign says it'll be years before we know if it worked. And with this week's national report calling for teacher education to be turned upside down, it may not be long before the university has to rethink how it trains teachers all over again.

In Monroe, La., I'm Amy Scott for Marketplace.

Ryssdal: Tomorrow in part two of her story, Amy's going to tell us how other approaches to training new teachers might stack up.

NPR: AirTalk

National panel of education experts calls for overhaul of teacher training programs
17 November 2010

Audio: <http://www.scpr.org/programs/airtalk/2010/11/17/teacher-training-panned/>

Teacher training programs got a scathing report card Tuesday from The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. The panel criticized most teacher prep programs in the U.S. as insufficiently rigorous because they consist mostly of lecture time and only include 12 weeks or so of teaching practice. The sweeping recommendations call for more hands-on experience and data-driven evaluation to determine whether potential teachers are actually helping students learn. They also said there should be higher standards for applicants being accepted into training programs and tougher requirements for teacher certification. The question of how to evaluate teachers already in the classroom has been hotly debated lately. It makes sense that reform earlier in the process might create real change. But how realistic are these recommendations? And how could they be implemented here in California?

Guest:

James Cibulka, President, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

Karen Gallagher, Dean of USC Rossier School of Education

Eduwonk.com

A Clinic

By: Andrew Rotherham

17 November 2010

URL: <http://www.eduwonk.com/2010/11/a-clinic.html>

Yesterday's rollout of the new NCATE report occasioned a mostly predictable reaction. Skeptics were skeptical, ed schools mostly silent, and Washington Post's Valerie Strauss focused laser-like on the key accountability language in the entire report – and said that was bad news! Notable exception and smart take from Fordham's Daniela Fairchild.

Please. Let's be honest. We spend billions on teacher preparation in this country when you total it all up and the results are, overall, horrendous. The result of an enormous preparation, regulatory, and advocacy structure is that overall teachers going through the full-service programs don't perform appreciably differently than those coming through non-traditional and more efficient routes. The only folks who systematically underperform are those coming through routes for emergency credentials with absolutely no training. This is less of an indictment of the idea of teacher training per se than it is a poor reflection on how it's done today. Still, "the data show we're better than warm bodies" really isn't much of a rallying cry. The data are clear on this across multiple geographies and the only people still fighting about it are the advocates. From a qualitative standpoint I can tell you that as a former state board of education member the process of oversight for teacher preparation is a bad joke that borders on racketeering. And, sadly, only a few states look at actual outcomes, meaning how well the people these programs prepare actually do in the classroom.

So that's why NCATE's move yesterday was important, they want to substantially change how it's done today. They called for ambitious change, tethered their credibility to it, and while the report includes a lot of the buzzwords that drive ed school critics bonkers, it has some important ideas in it. In particular the idea that new teachers need more hands-on training, one-size doesn't fit all, and that wherever possible outcomes should inform program accountability and approval. That's a big deal. Whether they can pull it off remains to be seen. This is a change-averse and often evidence-impervious community and, as I alluded to above, the regulatory capture is simply beyond belief. But they deserve credit for pushing the issue.

If I were Rick Hess here's where I'd insert a half-dozen fawning adjectives to describe NCATE's president, Jim Cilibulka. I'll just say he's chosen a harder path than he had to and we should wish him success. That's why I agreed to serve on the panel he convened to develop the report. Something has to change, Cilibulka gets that and has decided to lean into it.

Education Gadfly

NCATE: Re-arranging deck chairs on the ed school Titanic

By Mike Petrilli

16 November 2010

URL: <http://www.educationgadfly.net/flypaper/index.php/2010/11/ncate-re-arranging-deck-chairs-on-the-ed-school-titanic/>

For at least a week now, I've been receiving breathless emails from the folks promoting NCATE's new report that calls for teacher education to be "turned upside down." The message was clear: this is a big deal, a turning point, a "seismic moment." Unfortunately, as my friend Rick Hess so aptly put it, not so much.

The report's main argument—that teacher preparation needs to be based in practice, in "clinical experience"—is surely compelling. It's long been thought that teachers learn most of their skills on-the-job, and find their ed school courses to have little lasting value. In fact, even ed school profs acknowledge the limits of university-based instruction, according to our recent survey (Cracks in the Ivory Tower?). To wit, seventy-three percent of those surveyed felt that most professors of education need to spend more time in K-12 classrooms.

But as Rick points out, if you truly believe that teachers develop most effectively by spending time in schools, learning from mentors and reflecting on their practice, then you start to question where universities fit into the picture at all. What can an ed school offer an aspiring high school teacher (like myself, 15 years ago) that couldn't better be provided by a school district or a non-profit? (The situation might be different for an aspiring kindergarten teacher, as there actually is some science to be learned in terms of how to instruct kids in reading. Not that you'd actually find that science in most ed schools. But I digress.)

Right now ed schools benefit from a bizarre economic model: Young people who want to get a college degree take their parents' tuition dollars, and their student loans, and sign up for ed school. They even end up paying for "student teaching"—free money for the university if there ever was one. And at the end, the students get a college degree and a teaching certificate, school districts get trained teachers that come to them "free," and universities pocket a lot of cash. Blowing up that economic model is going to take more than exhortations from "blue ribbon panels." Honestly, I'm not sure what it's going to take. But if we want teachers to learn on-the-job, the last place to start is with a report from a bunch of ed school types.

-Mike Petrilli

Education Gadfly

Plain (N)CATE and bonny (N)CATE and sometimes (N)CATE the cursed

By: Daniela Fairchild

17 November 2010

URL: <http://www.educationgadfly.net/flypaper/index.php/2010/11/plain-ncate-and-bonny-ncate-and-sometimes-ncate-the-cursed/>

While Mike has quickly filed the National Council for Accreditation of Teachers' report issued yesterday in the Unimpressive folder, I'm not so eager to negatively judge. Maybe I'm star-struck after attending the blue-ribbon panel's press briefing yesterday morning—and hearing Arne Duncan praise the report and cite our own Cracks in the Ivory Tower in the same breath. But maybe, it's just that the commission has taken a giant leap toward a more productive model of teacher training. And when something that sedentary shifts, the reverberation felt actually is seismic.

Now, I haven't supped the NCATE Kool-Aid here. There are definitely a lot of questions left unanswered in the report. One insightful audience member during yesterday's briefing, for example, pointed out that it strongly stresses collaboration between district, state, higher education, and union leaders. But, it also fails to address on even a basic level how these partnerships can be cultivated within the constructs of current state statutes and collective bargaining agreements. (When faced with a question to this effect, the panel offered no more than a generic answer about how "these things take time.")

Rick Hess, a discussant at the briefing, went four steps further in bashing the report. (For a good run-down of Rick's points, check out his blog post from yesterday.) His thoughts on the scalability and cost-effectiveness of NCATE's ideas, especially, are worth considering.

But, in the end, we have a group not typically on the forefront of education reform stirring up some pretty big waves. The teacher training paradigm shift to clinical preparation is noble, as is its push toward measuring outcomes to determine accreditation, rather than inputs. The report—a mere thirty pages—might have some policy gaps to fill in and it might not be earth shattering to those already knee-deep in education reform. But, on the whole, it provides a solid starting-off point, from a group that I for one am excited to have on my side of the teacher-quality debate.

What will come of all this, of course, is a completely different monster. Let's see if NCATE can't do something productive with this momentum they've created—or if I'll end up eating my words.

—Daniela Fairchild

eSchool News

New effort aims to turn teacher education ‘upside down’

19 November 2010

URL: <http://www.eschoolnews.com/2010/11/19/new-effort-aims-to-turn-teacher-education-upside-down/>?

Eight states are beginning a national pilot program to transform teacher education and preparation to emphasize far more in-field, intensive training—as is common practice in medical schools.

“Teaching, like medicine, is a profession of practice,” said State University of New York Chancellor Nancy Zimpher, who is co-chairwoman of the expert panel that released a report on the recommended changes Nov. 16 in Washington, D.C. “Making clinical preparation the centerpiece of teacher education will transform the way we prepare teachers.”

The pilot program—developed by K-12 and higher-education officials, along with teachers unions, to improve instruction—is being rolled out in California, Colorado, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Oregon, and Tennessee. The states agreed to implement the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships for Improved Student Learning, created by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

Instead of exposing student teachers to varied classroom experiences at the end of their academic pursuit, the new system would put student teachers into classrooms earlier and more often. It could include rounds, similar to the system used in teaching hospitals in which mentors provide constant critiques to students in real-life situations.

U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan told the Nov. 16 gathering, which was webcast nationally, that too many colleges stress theory with too little classroom time.

“There is little or no accountability for turning out effective teachers,” Duncan said, calling for “outcome-based” reviews of teacher education programs. “It is time to start holding teacher preparation programs far more accountable for the impact of their graduates on student learning and achievement.”

The expert panel also recommends more online and video demonstrations, as well as case-study analysis by teachers. Video evaluations of teachers-in-training already are being tested in 19 states.

“This is huge, a real turning point,” Zimpher told the Associated Press.

She said the new model will “turn teacher education upside down” and could be in colleges within two years. And in states with pilot programs, the first elements likely will be in place beginning in the fall 2011 semester.

States with pilot programs will work with school districts and their regional teacher colleges, with an emphasis on improving instruction in high-need, low-income urban and rural districts.

The reform would make teacher education and continuing education a shared responsibility of schools and universities.

“NCATE’s call for prospective teachers to receive more clinical experience is a smart first step in a profession that sees nearly half of teachers exit in their first five years of teaching,” said Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers.

“The recommendation that teacher education programs work more collaboratively with school districts will help ensure that teacher preparation and hiring are more closely aligned to the needs of communities. Other recommendations—from establishing new research standards to revamping higher-education staffing and instruction—also will help upgrade and update teacher education programs.”

In yet another sign of shakeup in the teacher education process, NCATE and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) last month said they’re in the process of consolidating to form a new accrediting body: the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

CAEP’s goals include raising the quality of teaching in the nation’s K-12 schools, as well as creating high accountability standards for teacher colleges.

A 14-member Joint Design Team, composed of equal numbers of NCATE and TEAC leaders, met frequently during the past two years to develop the groups’ consolidation plan. During a two-year transition period, the Joint Design Team will function as the interim CAEP board of directors. The president of TEAC, Frank B. Murray, will chair this board; the president of NCATE, James G. Cibulka, will become CAEP’s president and CEO.

The interim CAEP board will select the initial CAEP board when consolidation is complete, but the chair and president will remain in office.

“We have not approached our task as merely unifying NCATE and TEAC with the least possible change to two accrediting systems that are already quite similar,” says a joint statement by Cibulka and Murray. “Rather, we have set a much more ambitious goal: to create a model unified accreditation system” for ensuring high-quality teacher education.

Education News Colorado

Study: Turn teacher prep “upside down”

By Todd Engdahl

16 November 2010

URL: <http://www.ednewscolorado.org/2010/11/16/10535-study-turn-teacher-prep-upside-down>

Those conclusions are part of a report by the Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships for Improved Student Learning, a project of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

The report repeatedly invokes the example of medical education in urging change in the way the nation’s education students are prepared for the classroom.

“We have a model from medicine, and we ought to use it,” said panel co-chair Nancy Zimpher, chancellor of the State University of New York. Outgoing Colorado Education Commissioner Dwight Jones was the other co-chair of the 29-member group.

“To prepare effective teachers for 21st century classrooms, teacher education must shift away from a norm which emphasizes academic preparation and course work loosely linked to school-based experiences. . . . Candidates will blend practitioner knowledge with academic knowledge as they learn by doing.

“Teacher education has too often been segmented with subject-matter preparation, theory, and pedagogy taught in isolated intervals and too far removed from clinical practice. But teaching, like medicine, is a profession of practice, and prospective teachers must be prepared to become expert practitioners. . . . In order to achieve this we must place practice at the center of teaching preparation,” the report argues.

Lorrie Shepard, dean of the School of Education at the University of Colorado-Boulder, also was a member of the panel, which included state officials, P-12 and higher education leaders, teachers, teacher educators, union leaders and critics of teacher education.

Eight states, including Colorado, have agreed to develop strategies for implementing the report’s recommendations. The others are California, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Oregon and Tennessee.

“These states will work with national experts, pilot diverse approaches to implementation, and bring new models of clinical preparation to scale in their states,” the report says.

Formal announcement of the study was made during a two-hour event at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. Jones, whose last day as commissioner is Dec. 13 before he becomes superintendent of the Clark County, Nev., schools, participated in the unveiling.

“Change certainly needs to occur in higher education programs, and a clinical emphasis has to happen,” Jones told the gathering, calling such an emphasis “A cost-effective front-end investment that will reduce turnover and increase productivity.”

Also attending were Rico Munn, director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education, and Robert Hammond, interim commissioner of education.

U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan spoke to the session for about 10 minutes, saying, “This has been extraordinary work ... I wholeheartedly support the direction,” of the report. “We here in the United States need to urgently elevate the quality of the teaching profession.”

The only really cautionary note was sounded by Rick Hess of the American Enterprise Institute, who said the report has “a lot of value” but expressed concerns that it emphasizes “one best model” only for teacher prep and doesn’t address cost issues “in an era of constrained resources.”

A look at the study

Among key recommendations of the report are:

- An intense focus on development of teaching practice and student learning and “making clinical practice the centerpiece of the curriculum and interweaving opportunities for teaching experience with academic content and professional courses.” The report also calls for expanded use of online and video demonstrations and of “case-study analysis and additional approaches widely used in other professional fields.”
- Shared accountability and responsibility for higher education and school districts, “with P-12 schools playing a more significant role in designing preparation programs, selecting candidates, assessing candidate performance and progress, and placing them in clinical experiences.”
- Increased efforts to attract academically better prepared and more diverse students to teacher preparation programs.
- Shifting the reward structure in both higher education and schools to value learning to teach, “and to support placing clinical practice at the center of teacher preparation.” Specifically, the report concludes “Schools need to adopt a new staffing model patterned after medical preparation, in which teachers, mentors and coaches, and teacher interns and residents work together as part of teams.”
- Increased scrutiny of preparation programs by states and accreditation agencies, “and preparation programs must become more accountable for meeting school needs and improving P-12 student learning.”

- State use of disincentives for education schools that prepare teachers for specialties that are not in demand.
- Federal support of research on the impact of clinical preparation practices on teacher effectiveness.

The report concludes, “Implementing this agenda is difficult but doable. It will require reallocation of resources and making hard choices about institutional priorities, changing selection criteria, and restructuring staffing patterns in P-12 schools. Clinically based programs may cost more per candidate than current programs but will be more cost-effective by yielding educators who enter the field ready to teach, which will increase productivity and reduce costs associated with staff development and turnover.”

Colorado teacher prep

There are 19 approved teacher preparation programs at colleges and universities in Colorado, producing about 3,000 teachers a year, and 43 approved alternative teacher prep programs, with about 800 graduates, according to the state Department of Education. About a third of Colorado teachers were trained in other states.

CDE and DHE have joint review over teacher preparation programs, with the State Board of Education having the final word on program approval. (Get more information on state review of teacher prep programs and see the list of state-approved educator prep programs.)

Robert Reichardt, director of the Center for Education Policy Analysis at the University of Colorado-Denver, noted in an interview that Colorado already requires teaching graduates to have 800 hours of classroom time, “one of the highest in the country.”

He also noted that alternative training programs are by definition “on the job training.”

“The fundamental problem with teacher preparation is there’s this disconnect between the producers, universities, and the consumers, school districts. They don’t have a way to communicate with each other,” said Reichardt, who has studied teacher prep extensively.

He also noted that “We don’t have any idea which route [university or alternative] is better or worse” because “We don’t have any data.”

In the last three years Colorado has launched an extensive program of education reform, including educator identifiers, new content standards and statewide tests, greater alignment between K-12 and higher education, a new system for accrediting districts and schools and an educator effectiveness law, which ties evaluations to student academic growth.

Much of that program remains to be designed, funded and implemented, and there hasn’t been a major emphasis on teacher preparation. A 2010 law does require CDE, starting in

July 2011, to produce an annual report on how the academic growth of students in new teachers' classrooms, plus teacher placement, mobility and retention, correlate to the colleges or alternative programs where they were trained.

Accreditation background

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education accredits more than 700 schools of education with more than 10,000 educator preparation programs. The group recently announced it is consolidating with another major accreditation agency, the Teacher Education Accreditation Council, to form a new Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation.

James G. Cibulka, president of NCATE, said Tuesday, "The accreditation body will develop higher standards within two years and implement them as soon as possible."

Colorado teacher prep programs accredited by NCATE include those at Mesa State, Metro State, all three CU campuses and the University of Northern Colorado.

Programs at Adams State, Fort Lewis, both Colorado State University campuses and Regis University are accredited by TEAC.

District Administration

Panel Calls for Turning Teacher Education "Upside Down"

17 November 2010

URL: <http://districtadministration.com/newssummary.aspx?news=yes&postid=56098>

A national expert panel composed of education experts and critics today called for teacher education to be "turned upside down" by revamping programs to place clinical practice at the center of teacher preparation. This new vision of preparation also will require the development of partnerships with school districts in which teacher education becomes a shared responsibility between P-12 schools and higher education.

Those and other sweeping recommendations are part of a report by the Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships for Improved Student Learning, convened by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) to improve student learning.

The new approaches will involve significant policy and procedural changes in both the state higher education and P-12 education systems and entail revamping longstanding policies and practices that are no longer suited to today's needs. The changes called for will require state higher education officials, governors, and state P-12 commissioner leadership working together to remove policy barriers and create policy supports for the new vision of teacher education.

NCATE president James G. Cibulka talked about why NCATE convened the panel: "There are more students with greater learning needs than ever before; rigorous new standards for students with higher expectations for student achievement; and the need to turn around low-performing schools, to name just a few of the unsolved challenges present today. These unmet needs press education stakeholders at large to make bold, simultaneous systemic changes."

"The nation needs a system of high-performing preparation programs – not a cottage industry of path breaking initiatives," Cibulka said.

NEA Today

Blue Ribbon Panel Urges Overhaul of Teacher Education Programs

By Tim Walker

November 16, 2010

URL: <http://neatoday.org/2010/11/16/blue-ribbon-panel-urges-overhaul-of-teacher-education-programs/>

A national panel of education experts gathered at the National Press Club in Washington D.C. on Tuesday to call for teacher preparation to be “turned upside down” by a roster of innovative changes to teacher education programs.

The sweeping recommendations are part of a new report by a Blue Ribbon Panel convened by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) to improve student learning.

“We need a system of high-performing preparation programs,” NCATE President James Cibulka said, “not the cottage industry of path-breaking initiatives.”

National Education Association Secretary-Treasurer Becky Pringle is a member of the Blue Ribbon panel and enthusiastically endorsed its recommendations today. Other key stakeholders on the panel include policymakers, superintendents and members of academia, all united in their commitment to end the status quo.

In order to transform teacher education, the report urges a shift away from the segmented approach of theory, pedagogy and subject-matter preparation and places clinical practice front and center. Coursework is crucial, but because it has not been properly integrated with practice, its effectiveness has been, and will continue to be, limited. This means giving teacher candidates opportunities to study and develop their practice and benefitting from the expertise of mentors.

“The path to the classroom must include practical clinical opportunities, strengthened mentoring and induction programs and continuous professional development and education opportunities,” said Pringle. “We would never leave a first year medical or law student to their own devices and expect them to operate on a patient or try an important case. Yet we expect new teachers to be able to perform at the highest standards on the first day. We need to apply the same rigorous training, support and joint accountability standards to the profession of teaching.”

Speaking to the panel today, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan praised the recommendations and announced that federal funding for teacher preparation programs will be doubled in 2011.

“Teaching has never been more difficult,” said Duncan. “All of us have a responsibility to help recruit and train and support our teachers. This report takes our students, our schools and our national in a direction where we need to be.”

The report is already triggering action across the nation. Seven states – California, Colorado, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Ohio, and Oregon have already agreed to implement the panel’s recommendations. As part of the NCATE Alliance for Clinical Teacher Preparation, these states will be working national experts to pilot innovative approaches to build models for other states to potentially follow.

Without the sustained commitment and participation of the stakeholders represented on the panel, NCATE President Cibulka cautioned, success will be short-lived.

“There are more students with greater learning needs than ever before. This and other unmet needs press all of us to make bold, simultaneous systemic changes.”

““NEA is committed to continuing our partnerships,” Pringle added, “working across the board with districts, schools of education and policymakers to expand practical clinical opportunities, strengthen licensure requirements, encourage mentoring and induction programs and emphasize staff development and evaluation. We applaud NCATE and the panel for stepping forward with the call for a national strategy and we stand ready to do all that we can to see it come to fruition.”

Montana Associate Technology Roundtable

Teacher Training Is Panned - Panel Recommends More Classroom Practice, Higher Standards for Applicants

16 November 2010

Republished: Wall Street Journal

URL: <http://www.matr.net/article-41801.html>

"We need large, bold, systemic changes. As a nation, we are expecting all of our students to perform at high levels, so it follows that we need to expect more of our teachers as they enter the classroom." James Cibulka, president of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education

A panel of education experts has called for an overhaul of U.S. teacher-preparation programs, including a greater emphasis on classroom training as well as tougher admission and graduation standards for those hoping to teach in elementary and secondary classrooms.

By STEPHANIE BANCHERO

Full Story: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB1000>

EdNews Parent Colorado

Colo. schools chief leads push to overhaul teacher prep programs

19 November 2010

URL: <http://www.ednewsparent.org/teaching-learning/2333-week-of-111510-teaching-learning-tidbits>

A national panel composed of education experts and critics today called for teacher education to be “turned upside down” by revamping programs to place clinical practice at the center of teacher preparation, not unlike the medical profession.

Those and other sweeping recommendations are being released by a Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships for Improved Student Learning, convened by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

The panel is co-chaired by Colorado Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones and Nancy Zimpher, chancellor of the State University of New York.

SmartBrief

Report: How to improve teacher education, preparation
17 November 2010

URL: <http://www.smartbrief.com/news/nbpts/storyDetails.jsp?issueid=BAF00C6B-7CBB-495A-A8FA-2B3AF68CBCF2©id=9B0E6495-7A84-45E7-98E8-7CFA50B9977C>

Teacher candidates must go through intensive classroom training similar to how medical students are prepared and prove they are ready to teach, according to a report from a panel of experts commissioned by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. The panel said teacher-training programs need to improve their admissions standards, and it also called for a more rigorous accreditation process for teaching colleges. Eight states have agreed to pilot such changes.

Education Week (premium article access compliments of EdWeek.org) | 11/17

ASCD SmartBrief

The next steps for teacher training

17 November 2010

URL: <http://www.smartbrief.com/news/ascd/storyDetails.jsp?issueid=EBA53CA9-300A-4612-B685-B8D3176F5AAD©id=CCEFE408-B542-4A78-94B4-CF2CBB0F3FEA>

Teacher-candidates must go through more intensive classroom training -- similar to how medical students are prepared -- and prove they are ready to teach, according to a report from a panel of experts commissioned by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. The panel said teacher-training programs need to improve their admissions standards, and it also called for a more rigorous accreditation process for teaching colleges. Eight states have agreed to pilot such changes. The Wall Street Journal (11/16) , San Jose Mercury News (Calif.)/The Associated Press (free registration) (11/16) Education Week (premium article access compliments of EdWeek.org) (11/17).

Public Agenda: Email Newsletter

Teaching The Teachers

18 November 2010

URL: <http://www.publicagenda.org/blogs/training-the-teachers>

A major new report this week calls for turning teacher-education programs "upside down," inspired by medical schools to focus more on "clinical" experience in the classroom. Eight states have already agreed to adopt the recommendations from the panel, set up by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education.

But what do new teachers themselves think about how well they're prepared for that first day of school? Based on research by Public Agenda and Learning Point Associates, there may be a major gap between the way reformers and teachers see teacher education. Our survey of first-year teachers showed that most feel they're well prepared for the classroom - but there's a significant difference depending on the kind of classroom they face.

In our Lessons Learned series of surveys of new teachers, eight in 10 said they felt "very prepared" (42 percent) or at least "somewhat prepared" for the classroom. Almost all said their coursework included classes on children's development, and roughly half said those courses helped "a lot" in the classroom. Nearly seven in 10 said their training in direct instruction helped "a lot."

Where their training failed them most, however, was in dealing with ethnically and racially diverse classrooms. Only 39 percent of new teachers thought their training helped "a lot" there. (One of the recommendations is more structured training in diverse settings).

There's also a notable difference between elementary and secondary teachers. More than half of high school and middle school teachers (53 percent) say their training was too theoretical, compared to just 4 in 10 elementary teachers. High school and middle school teachers were also less confident their students were responding to their efforts.

So as we overhaul teacher training to focus more on the classroom, there may need to be more dialogue with teachers on the need for change and new approaches and more thinking from experts on how to help teachers be effective in the classroom situations they find most challenging.

Title I E-News

NCATE report galvanizes clinical teacher training
17 November 2010

(URL unavailable)

Today's Stories:

A blue-ribbon panel commissioned by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education endorsed Nov. 16 the offering of in-field teaching experiences before new teachers earn their credentials.

California, Colorado, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Oregon , and Tennessee are the first states to join the NCATE Alliance for Clinical Teacher Preparation, whose goal is to ensure district-teacher preparation partnerships provide teachers and university professors with experience in actual classrooms. The report captures a trend that education groups have been moving toward. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, which was represented on the panel, earlier in the year issued its own issue brief endorsing a clinical component in teacher preparation.

The eight participating states, according to the NCATE report, will pilot various clinical preparation models and ultimately scale them in their states.

Education Secretary Arne Duncan lauded the panel as "an example of courage in action," adding, "I urge you all to persist in your efforts" to tie teacher preparation to student learning and raise the bar for what teachers should be able to do upon graduation.

TeachMoore Blog

Turning Teacher Prep Upside Down

By Renee Moore

17 November 2010

URL: <http://teacherleaders.typepad.com/teachmoore/2010/11/turning-teacher-prep-upside-down.html>

Yesterday, at the National Press Club, an education panel (of which I was a part) released our recommendations for a radical change in the way our nation prepares its teachers. The full report: *Transforming Teacher Education Through Clinical Practice: A National Strategy to Prepare Effective Teachers* is the result of months of hard work and honest conversations among friends and critics of teacher education.

Sponsored by NCATE, the Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships for Improved Student Learning brought together teachers, superintendents, deans of education, state and federal policymakers, education researchers, teacher union leaders, and other key stakeholders to develop a set of recommendations and an action plan that "call for teacher education to be turned upside down by revamping programs to prioritize clinical practice and partnerships with school districts" (press release).

Co-chaired by Nancy Zimpher, Chancellor, of SUNY and Dwight Jones, Colorado Commissioner of Education, the panel included a wide range of views and responsibilities related to preparation of teachers. I was impressed with the sincerity and the tenacity of this group. At our face-to-face meetings, we had over 90% attendance (100% at some), and these were long, working sessions. We asked hard questions and struggled with some very real problems. But when the smoke cleared, we had reached consensus on ten principles and a general plan to help make move teacher education toward a more clinical (in real school settings) based, a model similar to that used to train doctors.

It's important to note that there has been a good deal of redesign work going on for some time in teacher education programs around the country. Sharon Robinson of AACTE (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education) and the several deans of education around the table reminded us of these notable efforts, and that this was not the first attempt to improve teacher education as Marilyn Cochran-Smith, distinguished teacher educator and former editor of the *Journal of Teacher Education* noted. The panel analyzed varied examples of innovative and effective teacher preparation such as the Boston Teacher Residency Program (its Executive Director, Jesse Solomon was also part of the Panel), and that of St. Cloud State University.

While recognizing the efforts teacher education has made, however, the Panel tackled the fact that these pockets of improvement would not by themselves meet the nation's need for highly effective teachers, particularly in our most challenging schools. "The nation needs an entire system of excellent programs, not a cottage industry of pathbreaking initiatives" (5).

The Panel agreed on ten principles that should drive the design of effective teacher preparation, and made 17 recommendations addressed to NCATE, lawmakers, preparation programs, states, and school districts. The recommendations include:

- * Remove barriers to preparation program/district collaboration and provide incentives for meeting district needs.
- * Establish new staffing models to support clinical preparation in schools.
- * Hold all [teacher preparation] programs to the same standards.

My major contribution on the Panel was to bring the voices of my teacher colleagues into these important deliberations. With the help of Center for Teaching Quality, a focus group of 15 members of the Teacher Leader Network, including newer and veteran teachers, lent our ideas and experiences to the Panel's work. Those discussions were captured in a briefing paper that accompanies the main report, along with a separate report by CTQ Director, Barnett Berry. One of the final recommendations that grew directly out of the teacher's input was the need for the classroom and school level partners to share in determining which candidates have satisfactorily met qualifications for certification, not just the higher ed faculty.

NCATE (soon to be CAEP after its merger with TEAC the other major accreditation organization), has already taken up the challenges the Panel directed at its role in the preparation process by launching a pilot of eight states in which to create demonstration sites for these new clinical models.

The entire process and the steps being taken so far, leave me hopeful that we will see a productive approach to this important piece of education reform; a welcome relief from the destructive and distracting policies and proclamations of recent months.

Here's a link to the webcast of the panel discussion at National Press Club.

Linking and Thinking on Education (Blog)

Transforming teacher prep

By Joanne Jacobs

17 November 2010

URL: <http://www.joannejacobs.com/2010/11/transforming-teacher-prep/>

Teacher education should be “turned upside down” to prioritize teaching internships over academic coursework concludes “Transforming Teacher Education Through Clinical Practice,” a report by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). This is a seismic moment for teacher education,” said SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher, a co-chair of the blue ribbon panel that wrote the report.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Oregon, and Tennessee – have agreed to implement the panel’s recommendations.

The earth did not move for Rick Hess. He likes the shift to practice teaching “interwoven with academic content and professional courses.” But he doesn’t see radical new thinking.

If the training is happening in K-12 schools, do we need colleges of education? Should every teacher be a jack of all trades? Do internships work for online teachers or tutors? What about emerging school models?

Instead, I see a call for a new “one best” approach to teacher preparation, one ill-suited for serving educators in new kinds of roles or for supporting more agile, cost-effective staffing models.

Past “seismic” edu-reforms proved to be little more than fads, Hess writes.

As someone who spent five years supervising student teachers, I’ve seen a whole lot of pretty awful practice-oriented teacher preparation. It’s not clear to me from this report how preparation programs can be counted on to guard against that or keep their “clinical” training from simply meaning that their students are wasting time in K-12 schools instead of on the college campus.

Teacher internships will cost more, but the report mentions no offsetting savings — or proof that clinically trained teachers will “enter the field ready to teach.” Hess follows up here.

Teacher Beat, who’s seen many reports and little change, has more on the recommendations.

Miller McCune

November 26, 2010

Teacher Training Too Academic, Not Practical

In examining what's ailing American teaching, a blue-ribbon panel decided that teachers should be trained the same way we train doctors — through clinical practice.

By [Emily Badger](#)



Experts suggest that teacher training has become disconnected from the experience in K-12 classrooms. (The Desktop Studio/istockphoto)

Much of the furor over how to fix local education systems has focused on teacher evaluation. How do we hold teachers accountable and reward them for student achievement? Should they be paid according to how well their students perform on standardized tests? And is it fair game to publish any metric that evaluates them that way — teacher names and all — in, say, [the Los Angeles Times](#)?

The [National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education](#) is floating another idea, one that looks not at how teachers are evaluated in the classroom, but the way they're taught before they get there. What if, at colleges and universities all across the country, teachers were instead prepared the same way future doctors are: through clinical practice?

“We think we ought to look to fields like medicine, nursing, architecture, clinical psychology,” said [James Cibulka](#), president of NCATE. “Teaching is a profession of practice, like these other professions.”

[Cibulka corralled a panel](#) to study the idea nearly a year ago, and last week the group released its full [report](#) in Washington, calling for a total revamp of the way American teachers are, well, taught to teach.

“We're determined that this is not a report that's going to sit on a shelf and collect dust,” Cibulka said. “It is ambitious, and transforming an enterprise is never an easy thing. But I

think it's become so evident to a variety of stakeholders that the nation's needs make it imperative that we move forward in this way, that we believe that this report is potentially historic. It's a game-changer."

The report, "Transforming Teacher Education through Clinical Practice," was co-chaired by [Nancy Zimpher](#), chancellor of the State University of New York, and [Dwight Jones](#), Colorado's commissioner of education. The full panel similarly reflects an array of state officials, university leaders, teachers, union representatives and critics of teacher education.

THE IDEA LOBBY

Miller-McCune's Washington correspondent Emily Badger follows the ideas informing, explaining and influencing government, from the local think tank circuit to academic research that shapes D.C. policy from afar.

Their central concern is that teacher training has become disconnected from the experience in K-12 classrooms. And it is because of this gap, Cibulka believes, that many teachers in their first few years abandon the profession.

It would be unthinkable, on the other hand, to train doctors and nurses exclusively at the blackboard and then expect them to thrive in a working, chaotic hospital. Many would-be educators do a semester of student teaching, but that program is typically offered as an add-on to the main curriculum and not a recurring thread throughout it.

"It is time," the panel concludes, "to fundamentally redesign preparation programs to support the close coupling of practice, content, theory and pedagogy."

This does not mean, Cibulka stresses, "an old apprenticeship model where you go and watch what a teacher does."

Preparing teachers to work with children through clinical practice and case studies seems almost common sense. So why aren't we already doing this?

"From an historical perspective," Cibulka explained, "what happened when the normal schools became state colleges, and the state colleges became universities, the preparation of teachers became more academic in the traditional sense of the delivery of courses and credit hours."

The price of this evolution has been that growing gap between reality in the school system and theory in education departments. Now, to change that, the NCATE must simultaneously seed its ideas in local school districts and on college campuses. Eight states, including California, Ohio and Tennessee, have signed on to pursue the plan. This week, Cibulka was preaching it at a [conference of university presidents](#), and last week he was visiting a [national organization of state school officers](#).

The idea comes with some unknowns — clinical education would be more expensive than the existing model, although the report adds that it would also be more cost-effective in the long run (reducing, for instance, teacher drop-out rates and the need for teacher retraining). But it's unclear if any of this added cost would be passed on to the aspiring teachers themselves who — unlike doctors — aren't expected to make the kind of money that can pay off pricey clinical tuition.

Pilot targets new teacher preparation

By **WILL SENTELL**

Advocate Capitol News Bureau

Baton Rouge, LA

Published: Nov 26, 2010

Louisiana is one of eight states taking part in a pilot project that could mean drastic changes in how public school teachers are prepared for the classroom.

“The education of teachers in the United States needs to be turned upside down,” said a report prepared by educators, that is fueling the push.

The goals include:

- A big increase in how much time student candidates spend in classrooms teaching and observing before they enter the profession.
- Tougher standards and accountability in overseeing teacher candidates and the schools that train them.
- New steps to ensure that both public and private teachers are effective in improving student achievement.

The recommendations came from a panel convened by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, called NCATE, to improve student achievement.

Teachers, teacher educators, union representatives and teacher critics studied the issue for 10 months.

Education officials in Louisiana were approached because of the state's push since 2003 to revamp teacher training, said Jeanne Burns, associate commissioner for teacher and leadership initiatives for the state Board of Regents.

“I met with all of our College of Education deans to see if they were willing to take part,” Burns said. “And they agreed to do so.”

The state has already redesigned all of its undergraduate, alternate and graduate teacher preparation programs provided by both public and private universities.

“I don’t think many people are aware of this,” Burns said, adding that those and other changes put Louisiana ahead of many other states when it comes to any overhaul in teacher training.

Student teaching rules for undergraduates ranged from 270 to 600 “clock” hours — not semester hours — at Louisiana universities in 2008-09, Burns said.

But one of the key aims of the pilot project is finding ways to get teacher candidates in front of students a lot more.

In other words, the study says, teacher candidates need more practical experience and less instruction in education theory.

“It is very definitely an emphasis on providing teacher candidates with real-life experience,” Burns said of the recommendations.

“It is not only increased time spent in school, but increasing the quality of the experiences that they are having while they are in the schools,” she said.

Elizabeth Shaw, executive director of the Office of Human Capital in the state Department of Education, said the pilot project gives Louisiana a chance to promote education innovation.

“The model hasn’t been finalized yet,” Shaw said. “But the idea is really to do a variety of things to get teachers into the classroom for more time.”

Other changes envisioned by the panel would mean a bigger role for school districts in designing and implementing teacher education programs and evaluating teacher candidates.

Student teachers would also be supervised and mentored by effective teachers.

“It is critically important that they are observing good practitioners, not just going in and observing a teacher,” Burns said.

Other key aims of the overhaul are:

- New steps to measure student teacher effectiveness, including Louisiana's new law that links a teacher's job status in part with the growth of student achievement.
- Better links between the type of teachers produced by colleges and staffing needs of schools.
- Tougher academic standards for students who enter teaching programs.

The other states in the pilot project are Tennessee, California, Colorado, Maryland, New York, Ohio and Oregon.

[Teaching Teachers a Better Way](#)

Huffington Post

Math teacher, Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellow

Posted: November 23, 2010 04:48 PM

While a lot of focus here in Washington is on the new Congress, there is also a whole lot going on in American education. Just last week, Education Secretary Arne Duncan talked about the need to turn "the education of teachers in the United States... upside down" in a speech here. He was highlighting the findings of a report by a blue ribbon panel on teacher training put together by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

As a classroom teacher -- and long time union member -- I found the most intriguing suggestions focused around modeling teaching training after medical education. School districts would partner with colleges and universities similar to the way a teaching hospital works.

You get it. Envision *Scrubs* with teachers, not J.D. and Turk.

"Clinical faculty, mentors, coaches, teacher interns and residents (would) work together to better educate students and prospective teachers as part of clinical practice teams," the report concluded.

Teachers would be placed in collaborative programs much in the way medical interns and residents are placed in hospitals. These "teaching residencies" would be filled through organized "match programs."

The key would be to for universities and school districts to jointly fund these programs, which would make it, the report suggested, more likely they would work together.

Why is an overhaul of how teachers are trained needed?

Recounting conversations with teachers throughout the country, Duncan said he was told "that their teacher-preparation programs failed them." According to Duncan, aspiring teachers said they "were not getting the hands-on, practical training about managing the classroom that they needed, especially with high-need schools and high-need students."

Too much of clinical teacher training -- I like the simpler term student teaching -- is done in relative isolation. I spent only 10-weeks as a student teacher, but I had a great "master" teacher, willing to take on the extra work of dealing with a neophyte. But not everyone has my good experience.

Today in some states, students can still become certified teachers with just 10-weeks of student teaching. To make matters worse, some cooperating teachers have little or no preparation for their role as teacher educators. Can you imagine the quality of America's teachers, if as part of their certification or licensing requirements, they were to go through a process as rigorous as medical residencies -- both in the amount of time and the quality of supervision?

As important as the training, the focus on strengthening candidate selection and placement is equally important. An aging baby boomer teacher population means, Duncan estimated, that a third of the teachers and principals in the nation will retire in the next five years.

"That means up to 1 million new teaching positions will be filled by new teachers as we move ahead. And I'm convinced that our ability to attract, to prepare and to retain great teacher talent can transform public education in our country for the next 25 to 30 years. It is truly a once-in-a-generation opportunity," Duncan said.

He went on to say that the goal for American teachers "over the next five years is to take a giant step forwards towards developing the finest, most diverse teacher force in the world, especially in high-needs schools and high-need subject areas."

A recent McKinsey study said it best: "The quality of an educational system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers."

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