



Monterey Bay Educational Consortium in partnership with the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning

Teacher Workforce Initiative: A Fully Prepared and Effective Teacher in Every Classroom

November 2003

As educational leaders of the Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties we recognize that the single most important ingredient for student learning in our schools is the quality of the classroom teacher. Our belief in the importance of teacher quality is consistent with the conclusions of a wide variety of researchers who have studied schools and the classroom teachers' impact on student achievement. What we know is that teacher quality matters.

If we want student achievement to improve significantly, and we do, we must do a better job of preparing and recruiting high quality teachers for our schools and providing the best possible professional development to the teachers already working in our three county region.

Similar to the rest of California, we face challenges in ensuring an adequate pool of teachers that spans all teaching assignments in the workforce. Our demand for new teachers far exceeds the current capacity of our local teacher preparation programs, especially in high needs areas of mathematics, science, and special education with an emphasis on teachers with CLAD/BCLAD in order to increase achievement of English Learners. In the region, we have nearly 870 teachers (over 13 percent of our 6,500) who do not meet the state's qualifications for a preliminary credential. Far too few veteran teachers have had sufficient professional development to hone their skills and ensure that their students will achieve California's rigorous academic standards.

Furthermore, the distribution of underprepared teachers is uneven. Some districts have few underprepared teachers and some have many. Within districts, there is a similarly uneven distribution of underprepared teachers, with some schools having few if any and others having more than a quarter of their teachers who lack the proper credentials. Poor, minority, and English language learning students attending low-performing schools are far more likely to face teachers who are underprepared and inexperienced. In the tri-county region, schools in the highest achievement quartile have an average of 6 percent underprepared teachers, while schools in the lowest achievement quartile average 18 percent.

We have an aging teacher workforce. While teachers 50 years of age and older make up 37.4 percent of California's workforce, the tri-county region is significantly higher at 44 percent. Approximately one in four teachers is 55 years or older and will retire within the next few years.

Exacerbating the problem is our high cost of housing, creating a formidable barrier for the recruitment of teachers. In terms of retention, many of our new teachers leave after only a few years when home ownership becomes clearly out of their reach on a teacher's salary.

We know that many of the issues we face are regional in nature, and we are committed to finding and implementing locally-based solutions. Our goal is to make sure that every student has a qualified and effective teacher in school everyday. Therefore, we need to work collaboratively across county boundaries and across multiple agencies, including business and industry, to attract and keep teachers in this region. We need to work collaboratively to do a better job of equipping teachers with the skills they need to be effective in the classroom.

The good news is that we are committed to such an effort. With assistance and support from the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning and SRI International, our goal is to develop a sustainable K-18 data-driven decision making system that will allow us to gather current, relevant data and research to help illuminate teacher workforce issues. Utilizing this system, we will develop and monitor regional strategies to address the dynamics of teacher supply and demand and teacher workforce quality and effectiveness.

In order to succeed, school districts, county offices of education, community colleges, institutions of higher education, both private and public, and faculty unions must work together. The following individuals support the tri-county Teacher Workforce Initiative for cultivating, preparing and sustaining a high quality teacher workforce for the tri-county region.

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