

EDUCATION DAILY®

The education community's independent daily news service

TEACHER QUALITY

Experts: Improve teacher pool with selectivity

By Wangui Njuguna

Teach for America follows the same successful recruiting formula adhered to by the nation's top charter schools: Cull prospective teachers from the most selective colleges in the country and get them into the highest-need communities. Yet in the long run, teaching experts warn that strategy won't be sustainable for thousands of schools searching for high-quality teachers.

President Obama and Education Secretary Arne Duncan alike have touted the charter school and TFA recruiting strategy and called for districts to scale up similar models through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Yet experts at a recent American Enterprise Institute forum on education worried that those programs are inherently unscalable, and said districts may be better off seeking specific teacher characteristics than depending on even the best teacher colleges.

TFA and charter schools tend to hire teachers from Ivy League and other highly selective universities, yet only 9.5 percent of the 1.5 million students who graduated in 2006 went to these elite schools, said Steven Wilson, founder and president of Ascend Learning, a charter school management organization in New York City.

In his report, *Success at Scale in Charter Schooling*, Wilson doubted widespread implementation of charters can address the human capital problem because the number of teachers produced by top schools would not even supply a third of the teachers needed for the Council of the Great City Schools.

Instead, he urged districts to establish "an army of great teachers" in all schools by understanding and seeking out prospective hires with the character traits found in teachers who work in successful charter schools — that means people who are willing to take personal responsibility and do whatever it takes to produce student achievement.

Moreover, school redesign "trumps" teacher supply issues, according to Katherine Merseeth, director of Harvard University's Teacher Education

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Today's Highlights

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EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

States encouraged to adopt extended learning time

Extended time may help states meet ARRA criteria, officials say

By Frank Wolfe

Education Secretary Arne Duncan is encouraging states and localities to move toward extended learning time as one way to help states improve student achievement and secure stimulus funding.

School districts and other organizations that have undertaken ELT innovations will likely receive awards from the \$5 billion "Race to the Top" Fund, said Sandra Abrevaya, an Education Department spokeswoman.

In addition, to be eligible to receive the first half of \$32.5 billion in State Fiscal Stabilization Funds, states must provide assurances to ED that they will track and report data on four criteria for improving student achievement that are included in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the America COMPETES Act: raising standards; establishing better data systems for tracking student achievement over time; improving teacher effectiveness; and supporting effective interventions for the lowest-performing schools.

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Capitol Hill Watch

Legislation introduced in the House and Senate could pump needed funds into early-college high school courses and give low-income students a better chance at postsecondary success. (March 23)

In addition to the stimulus package, which boosted Justice Department funding for Community Oriented Policing Services, bills supporting school safety were among the first to be introduced in the 111th Congress. (March 24)

Education Secretary Arne Duncan is determined to use federal education monies to not only patch local budget gaps, but also fund effective, large-scale improvement strategies for failing schools. (March 25)

Long-awaited federal guidance that could clear up questions about how the education portion of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act State Fiscal Stabilization Fund will be disbursed could come as soon as Tuesday. (March 26)

In a budget resolution proposal released Wednesday, House Budget Committee Democrats proposed a \$4.4 billion increase in funding for education, health and social services in FY 2010. (March 26)

As the congressional budget committees completed work on their versions of the FY 2010 Budget Resolution, the chairmen of both committees said House and Senate floor action is expected this week. (March 27)

The Senate approved Thursday a sweeping reauthorization of the nation's service laws, which would give young people more opportunities to make learning and service an integral part of their lives and education. (March 27)

Other News

The Supreme Court is set to hear arguments in April on a controversial Arizona suit over how states can count federal funding into calculations to court-ordered equity programs for limited-English proficient students. (March 23)

Two key federal programs for school improvement will expand exponentially in the next year, while federal focus on school improvement will laser in on individual classroom instruction. (March 24)

While states look for the next literacy program to replace Reading First, the National Governors Association is reminding policymakers not to forget the importance of adolescent-literacy programs. (March 24)

A \$100 million grant program that is part of the ARRA will provide funds for school nutrition programs to replace old food service equipment. (March 25)

In a new policy paper, the Alliance for Excellent Education outlined several strategies the Education Department and Congress can take to move the country toward reforms driven by international standards. (March 26)

A team of top education experts warns that the Obama administration's plans to overhaul the nation's schools and workforce must take English-language learners into account. (March 26)

Even with the infusion of about \$100 billion in education funding included in ARRA, the results of a new survey show school districts nationwide still must bridge large holes in their budgets. (March 27)

Experts say the next iteration of NCLB may include far more aggressive parent involvement provisions than expected. (March 27)

THE WEEK AHEAD

Today-Tuesday: The U.S. Conference of Mayors will hold its National Forum on Education at the Capital Hilton Hotel 1001 16th Street N.W., Washington, D.C.

Today-Wednesday: The National Council on Disability quarterly meeting will be held at the Academy for Educational Development Conference Center, 1825 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C.



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Group urges student input in education technology decisions

By Erin Uy

According to a recent Project Tomorrow report, education leaders interested in investing stimulus monies in education technology resources and programs should take into strong account the needs and insights of those receiving the products: the students.

Speak Up, a national survey that includes input from more than 280,000 K-12 students, underscores ongoing concerns that administrators and teachers remain behind and disconnected from their students regarding best uses of technology as an education tool. Data from the annual national survey “is more important than ever before,” particularly given recent access to an historic education stimulus funding pot, according to Project Tomorrow, a California nonprofit education group.

While educators have several avenues to access funds for technology resources in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, \$650 million of the \$100 billion in education funding is dedicated for the Title I Enhancing Education Through Technology program. EETT has been flat-funded in recent years and survived Bush administration funding requests, which said schools had adequate technology resources, to zero the program.

“When it comes to how to invest the stimulus dollars, our recommendation is that we listen to the stakeholders with the most skin in the game — the students themselves — or as we refer to them, our nation’s ‘Digital Advance Team,’” said Julie Evans, president and CEO for Project Tomorrow.

The survey, which included input from 21,000 parents and 3,000 administrators, was conducted between October 2008 and December 2008 and

identified stakeholders’ interest in and perception of technology used in schools.

For instance, administrators install Internet content filters in schools to protect students from inappropriate Web sites, but students and teachers said the filters also block access to valuable educational information.

Further, policies that limit the types of technological devices students may use in school hinder their educational opportunities, students said. About one-third of the third- through 12th-grade students surveyed said their inability to use their own mobile devices such as laptops, cell phones, and MP3 players while at school is a significant obstacle in their learning lives.

While education leaders may view the devices as a classroom distraction, they are actually tools students use “to fine-tune their skills in communicating, collaborating, creating, and contributing in ways that are never approached during the school day,” according to the report.

Understanding how technology can effectively engage students is also a critical factor when investing in technology, according to Project Tomorrow. Students surveyed expressed significant interest in a type of online textbook or curriculum to supplement resources.

Costly, heavy textbooks are generally outdated resources, and “for many students, the idea of using a hard-copy textbook that is out of date as soon as it is printed is as archaic in today’s world as the abacus in a math class,” according to the report.

For more information, see www.tomorrow.org/speakup/speakup_your_data.html.

TEACHER QUALITY

SELECTIVITY (continued from page 1)

Program. Before administrators can decide whether a teacher fits the school culture, the school must decide on a specific and well-defined school mission.

“It’s not so much a question of, ‘Where did you go to college?’ as much as it is a question of, ‘Do you get what we’re trying to do here?’” she said.

Unambiguous objectives

District of Columbia Public Schools Deputy Chancellor Kaya Henderson agreed that a structured curriculum that clarifies what teachers and students are expected to accomplish lays the foundation for effective classroom practices.

Henderson, a former TFA fellow who also served as its director of admissions, said that although DCPS has relied on its DC Teaching Fellows and has hired many TFA fellows, recruitment is not enough to bring about a cultural change in school districts that have preexisting modes of operation.

Building a culture found in these so-called “no excuses” schools requires everybody to be on the same page, the experts said. In high-performing charters, that typically means working long hours, during the weekend, and even during the summer. Selecting people who seem to have an inclination for “doing what it takes” is critical to ensure everyone moves in the same direction, the experts said.

Holding prep programs accountable

A propensity for change and accountability should not be expected just from teachers, the experts said. Administrators should ensure the types of training offered by preparation programs help graduates effectively deliver solid content instruction.

The experts cited the teaching residency model as having the potential to impact teacher education while adding elements that could hold preparation programs accountable for their graduates.

Success at Scale in Charter Schooling is available at www.aei.org/futureofeducation.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The budget season began in earnest in Congress last week, as the House and Senate Budget Committees approved their respective versions of the FY 2010 Budget Resolution. The House proposal includes nearly \$88.7 billion in discretionary funding for Function 500, which includes education, health and social services spending. Floor action in both chambers is expected this week.

In other action, the Senate passed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, H.R. 1388, on a vote of 78-20 after adopting by voice vote a substitute amendment that included language in a Senate version of the bill, S. 277, sponsored by Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee Chairman Edward Kennedy, D-Mass. President Obama spoke of the importance of the legislation, which would create a cadre of volunteers to teach in U.S. schools, during his first address to Congress. House approval of the legislation is expected on March 30, and Obama is expected to sign the bill.

RECENT ACTION

House

H.RES. 182: [NO TITLE]

Rep. Patrick J. Kennedy, D-R.I.

Introduced: Feb. 23

Referred to: Education and Labor Committee

The resolution expresses support for designation of the week of March 1 through March 8, 2009, as "School Social Work Week."

The House unanimously agreed to the resolution March 24.

Senate

H.R. 1388: EDWARD M. KENNEDY SERVE AMERICA ACT (FORMERLY THE GENERATIONS INVIGORATING VOLUNTEERISM AND EDUCATION ACT)

Related Bill: S. 277

Rep. Carolyn McCarthy, D-N.Y.

Introduced: March 9

Referred to: House

The bill would reauthorize and reform the national service laws.

The House passed the bill March 18 on a vote of 321-105. The Senate passed an amended version of the bill March 26 on a vote of 79-19. A change of title was also approved for the measure. The bill now heads to the House for final approval before it can be sent to the president for signature.

JUST INTRODUCED

House

H.R. 1758: EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY AND EQUITY COMMISSION ACT

Rep. Mike Honda, D-Calif.

Introduced: March 26

Referred to: Education and Labor Committee

The bill would provide for the establishment of a commission to stimulate and engage in an informed, national, and public dialogue about how to ensure that each student in the U.S. receives an equitable education that enables the student to achieve his or her maximum academic potential.

H.R. 1755: RURAL EARLY EDUCATION ACCESS ACT

Rep. Philip Hare, D-Ill.

Introduced: March 26

Referred to: Education and Labor Committee

The bill would award grants to states to establish, enhance or expand high-quality preschool programs for children ages 3 through 5 in rural areas.

H.R. 1717: ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS LEAD US TO SUCCESS (A PLUS) ACT

Rep. Peter Hoekstra, R-Mich.

Introduced: March 25

Referred to: Education and Labor Committee

The bill would allow a state to submit a declaration of intent to the education secretary to combine certain funds to improve the academic achievement of students.

H.R. 1710: [NO TITLE]

Rep. Mark Souder, R-Ind.

Introduced: March 25

Referred to: Education and Labor Committee

The bill would provide for the inclusion of family therapists on the list of professionals recognized to provide public school mental health services under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

H.R. 1709: STEM EDUCATION COORDINATION ACT

Rep. Bart Gordon, D-Tenn.

Introduced: March 25

Referred to: Education and Labor Committee

The bill would establish a committee under the National Science and Technology Council with the responsibility to coordinate science, technology, engineering and mathematics education activities and programs of all federal agencies.

H.R. 1685: CHILD CARE FACILITIES FINANCING ACT

Rep. Carolyn McCarthy, D-N.Y.

Introduced: March 24

Referred to: Education and Labor Committee

The bill would provide for the acquisition, construction, and improvement of child care facilities.

H.RES. 275: [NO TITLE]

Rep. Chris Murphy, D-Conn.

Introduced: March 23

Referred to: Education and Labor Committee

The resolution expresses the sense of the House that all public elementary schools and public secondary schools should display a copy of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.

H.R. 1662: ANTHONY DEJUAN BOATWRIGHT ACT

Rep. John Barrow, D-Ga.

Introduced: March 23

Referred to: Education and Labor Committee

The bill would amend the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 to require child care providers to provide to parents information regarding whether such providers carry current liability insurance.

Senate

S. 706: [NO TITLE]

Sen. Bob Menendez, D-N.J.

Introduced: March 25

Referred to: Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

The bill would increase housing, awareness, and navigation demonstration services (HANDS) for individuals with autism spectrum disorders.

S. 694: BEST BUDDIES EMPOWERMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES ACT

Sen. Chris Dodd, D-Conn.

Introduced: March 25

Referred to: Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

The bill would provide assistance to Best Buddies to support the expansion and development of mentoring programs.

S. 682: MENTAL HEALTH ON CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT ACT

Related Bill: H.R. 1704

Sen. Richard Durbin, D-Ill.

Introduced: March 24

Referred to: Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

The bill would amend the Public Health Service Act to improve mental and behavioral health services on college campuses.

IN THE WINGS

House

H.R. 1649: HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION ACT

Rep. Kendrick Meek, D-Fla.

Introduced: March 19

Referred to: Education and Labor Committee

The bill would authorize the education secretary to make grants to reduce the size of core curriculum classes in public elementary and secondary schools, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1621: PLEDGE LANGUAGE IS ENGLISH DECLARATION AND GOVERNMENT ENDORSEMENT (PLEDGE) ACT

Rep. Paul Broun, R-Ga.

Introduced: March 19

Referred to: Education and Labor Committee

The bill would withhold Federal funds from schools that permit or require the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance or the national anthem in a language other than English.

H.R. 1612: PUBLIC LANDS SERVICE CORPS ACT

Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva, D-Ariz.

Introduced: March 19

Referred to: Education and Labor, Agriculture, and Natural Resources committees

The bill would amend the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 to expand the authorization of the secretaries of Agriculture, Commerce, and the Interior to provide service-learning opportunities on public lands, help restore the nation's natural, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, and scenic resources, train a new generation of public land managers and enthusiasts, and promote the value of public service.

H.R. 1589: BULLYING AND GANG REDUCTION FOR IMPROVED EDUCATION ACT

Rep. Linda Sánchez, D-Calif.

Introduced: March 18

Referred to: Education and Labor Committee

The bill would amend the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act to authorize the use of grant funds for gang prevention.

H.R. 1585: FITNESS INTEGRATED WITH TEACHING (FIT) KIDS ACT

Related Bill: S. 634

Rep. Ron Kind, D-Wis.

Introduced: March 18

Referred to: Education and Labor Committee

The bill would amend ESEA to improve standards for physical education.

H.R. 1578: FAST TRACK TO COLLEGE ACT

Related Bill: S. 627

Rep. Dale E. Kildee, D-Mich.

Introduced: March 18

Referred to: Education and Labor Committee

The bill would authorize the education secretary to make grants to support early college high schools and other dual enrollment programs.

H.R. 1444: CONGRESSIONAL COMMISSION ON CIVIC SERVICE ACT

Rep. Jim McDermott, D-Wash.

Introduced: March 11

Referred to: Education and Labor Committee

The bill would establish the Congressional Commission on Civic Service to study methods of improving and promoting volunteerism and national service.

H.R. 1405: [NO TITLE]

Rep. Charlie Wilson, D-Ohio

Introduced: March 10

Referred to: Ways and Means Committee

The bill would amend the tax code to allow Head Start teachers the same above-the-line deduction for supplies as is allowed to elementary and secondary school teachers.

Senate

S. 659: [NO TITLE]

Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn.

Introduced: March 19

Referred to: Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

The bill would improve the teaching and learning of American history and civics.

S. 627: FAST TRACK TO COLLEGE ACT

Related Bill: H.R. 1578

Sen. Herb Kohl, D-Wis.

Introduced: March 18

Referred to: Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

The bill would authorize the education secretary to make grants to support early college high schools and other dual enrollment programs.

S. 618: EVERY STUDENT COUNTS ACT

Related Bill: H.R. 1569

Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa

Introduced: March 17

Referred to: Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

The bill would improve the calculation of, the reporting of, and the accountability for, secondary graduation rates.

S. 545: MENTORING FOR ALL ACT

Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass.

Introduced: March 9

Referred to: Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

The bill would develop capacity and infrastructure for mentoring programs.

S. 473: SENATOR PAUL SIMON STUDY ABROAD FOUNDATION ACT

Sen. Richard Durbin, D-Ill.

Introduced: Feb. 25

Referred to: Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

The bill would establish the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation.

S. 471: HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS INFORMATION COLLECTION ACT

Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine

Introduced: Feb. 25

Referred to: Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

The bill would amend the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 to require the Statistics Commissioner to collect information from coeducational secondary schools on such schools' athletic programs, and for other purposes.

S. 456: FOOD ALLERGY AND ANAPHYLAXIS MANAGEMENT ACT

Sen. Chris Dodd, D-Conn.

Introduced: Feb. 23

Referred to: Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

The bill would direct the health and human services secretary, in consultation with the education secretary, to develop guidelines to be used on a voluntary basis to develop plans to manage the risk of food allergy and anaphylaxis in schools and early childhood education programs, and to establish school-based food allergy management grants.

S. 413: GRADUATE FOR A BETTER FUTURE ACT

Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C.

Introduced: Feb. 11

Referred to: Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

The bill would establish a grant program to improve high school graduation rates and prepare students for college and work.

H.R. 911: STOP CHILD ABUSE IN RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS FOR TEENS ACT

Rep. George Miller, D-Calif.

Introduced: Feb. 9

Referred to: Senate

The bill would require certain standards and enforcement provisions to prevent child abuse and neglect in residential treatment programs.

Education Department

OCR weighs in on impact of ADAAMA on Section 504

The Education Department's OCR published a revised Q&A document Friday incorporating information about the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, which took effect Jan. 1.

The new law amends the meaning of "disability" in both the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, of which Section 504 is a part. As such, it affects the meaning of disability in Section 504.

This revised document may not be OCR's final word on the impact the ADAAMA plays on Section 504. But it provides some straight answers to questions you may have concerning the expanded list of major life activi-

ties under the ADAAMA, as it applies to schools, and the mitigating measures provision in the new law.

The ADAAMA "does not require [the Education Department] to amend its Section 504 regulations," the agency writes. "ED's Section 504 regulations as currently written are valid, and OCR is enforcing them" consistent with the ADAAMA.

What's more, OCR reiterated a statement it made in *In re: Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008*, 108 LRP 68606 (OCR 2008), that the agency "is currently evaluating the impact of the Amendments Act on OCR's enforcement responsibilities under Section 504 and Title II of the ADA, including whether any changes in regulations, guidance, or other publications are appropriate."

To see the Q&A in its entirety, go to www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

EXTENDED (continued from page 1)

To get the second half, "states must submit proposals that show how they plan on taking that data and using it to drive reform, and if they don't show they're using the money to drive reform, they could be denied the second half of the funds," Abrevaya said, adding that ELT "is a key way in which states can take the data and use it to drive reform."

More time, more money?

ED's incentives for ELT come as states face seemingly unrelenting pressure to cut K-12 budgets as a result of the economic downturn. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act contains about \$100 billion for education, including \$10 billion for Title I, about \$40 billion to stabilize state education budgets, and a \$5 billion Race to the Top Fund to fund innovation efforts nationwide.

"We're putting out a ton of Title I money, a ton of stimulus money; we're putting out Race to the Top money, and saying we need more time with kids," Duncan said. "So we want people to think creatively about, 'What are we doing to extend time?' You have some districts out there doing really innovative things. You have other districts who, largely due to budget constraints, are talking about doing less time, which I think is a real problem. I'm hoping at a minimum, with the stimulus money, they can stave off some of those Draconian moves."

Summer reading loss for low-income children is also major area of concern for many educators and for Duncan. Extending school during the summer is not necessarily a panacea, Duncan said, adding that creative methods, such as student visits to college campuses, may also help improve academic achievement.

While cognizant of the many budget challenges facing states and school districts, Duncan cautioned them against using the stimulus package solely to fill budget gaps and doing more of the same.

"Despite the tremendous financial pressure that

Extended learning time initiatives

As Education Secretary Arne Duncan makes the case for extended learning time as a potential stimulus-funded school reform, some school districts have already started developing such programs.

At the forefront of the ELT movement is Massachusetts, which created the Massachusetts 2020 public-private partnership to expand learning time for the state's neediest students and increase partnerships with after-school service providers.

Massachusetts 2020 also served as the template for the Time for Innovation Matters in Education Act, S. 3431, introduced in the 110th Congress by Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee Chairman Edward Kennedy, D-Mass. While that legislation never made it out of committee, ELT proponents hope it will be reintroduced this term.

Meanwhile, Dallas Independent School District may be a good example of the both the promise and challenges of ELT.

Dallas Independent School District Superintendent Michael Hinojosa recently approached his school board with the idea of increasing the school year by up to five extra weeks at six to eight of the district's lowest-performing high schools.

However, funding to lure high-quality teachers and pay for the extra time remains in question.

In addition, some parents have said that many students will not be able to attend the extra school sessions because of work and family commitments.

But Duncan said Dallas could provide an example for districts nationwide. "Dallas is one place," he said, with "a set of schools that are dramatically expanding the amount of time they spend with kids."

states and districts are under — and that is real, and it is devastating — but despite that, we can't just be satisfied with filling budget holes," he said. "We have to use this money to try to leverage change, to push a reform agenda and try to get dramatically better."