

A Primer On the Current Educational Reform Landscape

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Agenda

MONEY MATTERS

- Within-district fiscal equity

TEACHERS MATTER

- Performance evaluation and peer review
- Diversity of the teacher workforce

Within-district fiscal equity

- Districts allocate teacher positions to schools, not dollars, but teachers are paid primarily based on experience
- Highly experienced teachers are under-represented in high-poverty schools
- Hard looks at actual expenditures in high-poverty schools reveals inequity

Within-district fiscal equity

- A loophole in federal law condones this inequity
- Many membership groups (NEA) and reform-oriented organizations (TFA) support closing the so-called *comparability loophole* in Title I of ESEA (NCLB)
- Community demand for information about ACTUAL expenditures at the school-level sends the right signal to policymakers

Performance evaluation and peer review

- Traditional performance evaluation systems rate virtually all teachers the same
- Current reform dynamics are dominated by the issue of folding student achievement information into the mix, far less attention is paid to the question of who conducts evaluations
- Historically, the burden fell to principals, and much current policy hasn't move past this

Performance evaluation and peer review

- But maybe the teaching profession would be strengthened if teachers took the lead in performance evaluation of their peers
- The 2011 NEA Commission on Effective Teachers and Teaching report embraced this idea
- Communities need to engage teachers and school boards on the issue of peer review, which is a bit counterintuitive

Diversity of the teacher workforce

- We need a diverse teacher workforce
- Many sets of policies (e.g., compensation, licensure) shape the workforce, but they generally can't promote diversity directly
- But how policies are seen from the perspectives of groups representing dimensions of diversity has to matter
- Teach For America offers lessons here

Diversity of the teacher workforce

- 2012 Teach For America corps comprised 35% people of color (10% Latino) compared to roughly 17% (7%) for teachers at large
- Research shows that Latina/o corps members are more likely to stay beyond the initial commitment
- And they're driven by a social-justice goal: to improve educational opportunity in communities like the ones they come from

Diversity of the teacher workforce

- This means that policy should allow for selective alternate certification routes into teaching, an efficient way for diverse candidates to pursue their social justice goals
- The real trick is for policymakers to bring attention to selectivity and student outcomes into the teacher preparation picture

One day, all children will attain an excellent education.

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