

TEACHER CERTIFICATION

1. Adopt a national standardized subject-matter teacher certification test.
2. Eliminate all other certification requirements and alternatives.
3. Prohibit classroom assignment of unqualified teachers.
4. Eliminate state oversight and certification of college teacher preparation programs.

“The nation’s leading teacher educators... concede that there is... little empirical evidence to support the methods used to prepare the nation’s teachers.”

Kate Walsh, President
National Council on Teacher Quality

“It seems hard to know who is going to be effective in the classroom until they are actually in the classroom.”

Thomas Kane
Professor of Education and Economics
Harvard University

CERTIFICATION

The current system of teacher preparation and certification is fundamentally flawed, with “little empirical evidence to support the methods used to prepare the nation’s teachers.”

Appropriate performance on a national test (e.g., Praxis) should be the only standard for basic teacher certification, exclusive of pedagogical skills and other matters unrelated to the command of subject matter. The use of advanced “endorsement” tests developed by the state should be limited to instructional assignments for which there are no acceptable national tests.

Local districts should retain the right to impose additional employment requirements, including pedagogical courses of instruction and knowledge. Evaluations of pedagogical skills should be separated from certification and based on student academic performance and classroom evaluations conducted by supervisors who have appropriate training and financial incentives.

Evaluations should be conducted in conjunction with periods of probationary employment or during provisional or pre-employment internships. School districts should be authorized to administer internship programs directly or enter into contracts for support services. Internships should be subject to the same employer rights and responsibilities associated with existing student-teacher programs and should be authorized for periods not to exceed one year.

Teachers lacking appropriate certifications should be prohibited from teaching classes requiring those certifications.

COLLEGE PROGRAMS

According to Columbia Teachers College Dean Emeritus Arthur Levine, “[Colleges] treat teacher-preparation programs as cash cows, leading them to set low admission and graduation standards for their students.” A review of spending practices is likely to reveal our state colleges spend less per student on teacher preparation programs than they receive from the state to provide those programs.

As with existing state policy, certification should not require enrollment in or completion of any accredited or other teacher preparation program. Colleges with the best record of preparing successful teachers will thrive; others will be forced to improve or cease operations.

All state involvement in the accreditation and management of teacher preparation programs should be eliminated.