

COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION POLICY, RESEARCH & IMPROVEMENT

Florida Teachers and the Teaching Profession *Florida Master Plan for K-20 Education*

2005 Progress Report

2003 Policy Recommendations

2004- 2005 Action

Teacher Preparation	
<p>1. University and community college teacher education programs are critical to the mission and success of Florida's education system. Colleges and departments of education, as well as other providers of teacher training, must become a peak priority of the Legislature, the State Board of Education and each institution's board of trustees and administration in order to strengthen the status, quality, resources provided to and effectiveness of their programs.</p>	<p>In January 2005, The State Board of Education adopted Increasing the Supply of Highly Qualified K-12 Instructors as its first Strategic Imperative for obtaining the goal of Highest Student Achievement in Florida's seamless education system.</p> <p>In June 2005, The Board of Governors (BOG) adopted a Strategic Plan 2005-2013 that set four strategic goals for the State University System to meet by the year 2013. One of the goals, "meeting statewide professional and workforce needs" includes increasing degree production in Education and eight other targeted programs identified as critical for development of the state's economy. Each of the 11 state universities is charged by the Board with establishing parallel goals that reflect each institution's level of participation in achieving the statewide plan. SUS institutions submitted degree production plans in June 2004 for each year between 2003-04 and 2012-13. Recent independent analyses comparing BOG goals and those of the institutions concluded that degree production in some targeted areas (including education at the B.A. and M.A. levels) will</p>

fall short of BOG goals. System wide, a deficit of 793 bachelor degrees in Education is projected based on current calculations. On October 3, 2005, each university will submit new degree production plans for meeting targeted degree goals to the Board of Governors. The Board will support institutional efforts and provide leadership when progress toward goals requires funding, state-level policies, or collaboration with other agencies.

As part of its 2006-07 legislative budget request for the State University System, the Board of Governors included a group of issues entitled NET Gain: Producing More Nurses, Engineers and Teachers to address the statewide critical need in those areas. Specifically, the BOG is requesting \$11,361,859 for increased teacher production in critical shortage areas such as math, science, and special education. SUS colleges of education will take a two-pronged approach to increase the numbers of graduates by (1) developing accelerated programs such as Educator Preparation Institutes and Master's of Arts in Teaching programs, and (2) enhancing current teacher education programs. Enhancements to current programs will include marketing funds, employing recruiters, and paying stipends to support students to complete programs. The outcome of the increased dollars will lead to 977 additional completers (20% increase above normal growth) in 2006-07, and approximately 1,000 more completers a above normal growth each year thereafter.

The Strategic Plan of the Florida Community College System stated that the System will work with the SUS to "ensure that the colleges' component of teacher preparation is appropriate and content rigorous."

<p>2. Florida Education statutes, rules, policies and procedures that impede innovation and flexibility in the preparation, certification and employment of high quality teachers must be amended or repealed.</p>	<p>The 2005 Florida Legislature created the 2005 SUCCEED Grant Program to increase the capacity of new or expanding programs in Nursing Education, Teacher Education and to plan and implement Career Academies. The first recipients of the grants include 27 teaching grants that totaled \$5 million dollars. The purpose of the grants is to increase the capacity of teacher certification programs at public and private postsecondary institutions.</p> <p>The 2004 Legislature authorized the creation of Educator Preparation Institutes (EPIs) at accredited postsecondary institutions to provide professional development for teachers for classroom improvement and for recertification purposes, training for substitute teachers, paraprofessional instruction and competency-based instruction for non-education Bachelor's Degree holders leading to temporary and full-teacher certification.</p> <p>In August 2005, ten community colleges received approval by the DOE to establish EPIs. Fifteen other community colleges and two public universities are currently in the approval process. EPI programs at community colleges must meet the same standards and the same educator accomplished practices as any 4-year teacher education program. Colleges will partner with school districts and/or private institutions to provide the classroom experiences teacher candidates need. A collaborative effort has been undertaken by the Bureau of Teacher Recruitment, Public Schools, Division of Community Colleges, Workforce Education and the Board of Governors.</p> <p>In 2001, the Legislature granted community colleges the authority to</p>
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	<p>develop proposals to deliver specified baccalaureate degree programs to meet local workforce needs. In August 2005, the State Board of Education approved revised procedures for approving community college baccalaureate proposals. The revised process supports the Department of Education's Strategic Imperative 5: Increasing the Quantity and Improving the Quality of Education Options. Currently, three community colleges, Miami-Dade, Chipola, and St. Petersburg, offer BS degrees in teacher education. Three additional community colleges offer, or will soon offer, baccalaureate programs in other disciplines.</p>
<p>3. All educational programs in Florida that prepare individuals to teach should require candidates to demonstrate the effective teaching of Florida's subject matter content standards and the professional competencies and skills identified in Florida's educator accomplished practices.</p>	<p>The 2003 Legislature directed that each teacher preparation program must guarantee that its graduates demonstrate core skills and must provide additional training, at no cost, to any educator who fails to demonstrate those skills.</p> <p>Florida's educator accomplished practices and subject area competencies are well integrated with course syllabi in the state-approved teacher preparation programs and students are currently required to achieve the content described in state requirements for program approval.</p> <p>A significant majority of graduates of state-approved teacher preparation programs employed in Florida schools continue to receive extremely high evaluation by principals.</p>

	<p>In 2005 the Florida Teacher Certification Rule was amended to adopt the tenth edition of the Competencies and Skills for Teacher Certification in Florida.</p>
<p>4. The Dale Hickam Excellent Teaching Program, which supports national board certification for Florida teachers, should be expanded by the Legislature.</p>	<p>The Dale Hickam Excellent Teaching Program continues to provide financial incentives for teachers to seek certification by the prestigious National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). In addition, the program provides salary bonuses for teachers who are board certified and share their expertise with other teachers. The 2005 Legislature appropriated \$84 million to support the program, an increase of 25 percent over the previous year. The number of board certified teachers in Florida has grown by over 100 percent in five years.</p>
<p>5. A comprehensive, statewide plan for the recruitment of teachers must be established by the Department of Education and the school districts to attract individuals, particularly secondary school students, to the teaching profession.</p>	<p>The Department of Education maintains a comprehensive website for “one-stop” information on teaching careers in Florida that serves teacher candidates, employers, educators and students. Information on job openings, certification, recertification, alternative certification, mentoring, professional development standards, teacher salaries as well as links to other educator recruitment, development and retention websites are provided at http://www.teachinflorida.com In September 2005, over 15,000 active resumes are posted by teacher candidates while 1,725 vacancies are currently posted.</p> <p>The 2004 Legislature directed the DOE to establish an Educator Appreciation Week. That date has been set for the 3rd week in May 2006.</p>
<p>6. A strategic plan that provides financial assistance programs that will most effectively attract and retain high quality teachers must be enacted by the Legislature.</p>	<p>No new financial assistance programs to attract and retain high quality teachers were enacted by the 2005 Legislature, although grant programs (SUCCEED and EPI noted above) were created to expand teacher education programs.</p>

	<p>Funds to support the Minority Teacher Scholarship Program and the Critical Teacher Shortage Tuition Reimbursement Program have remained constant for the last four years.</p>
<p>7. A minimum salary level for all Florida teachers should be established by the Legislature.</p>	<p>An effort to establish a minimum salary level for all teachers (included in SB 2480) was not adopted by the 2005 Legislature.</p> <p>Teacher compensation levels are set at the local school district level through a series of negotiations between the districts and their local unions. Most districts use an entry-level salary for beginning teachers. Each district's relative cost of living remains a key variable in teacher compensation levels.</p>
<p>8. Florida's system of teacher compensation must be redesigned so meritorious teachers are rewarded for demonstrated competence, outstanding performance and student achievement and a career advancement structure is in place for all teachers.</p>	<p>The 2003 Legislature (s. 1012.231 F.S.) established a Better Educated Students and Teachers (BEST) program to develop a teacher compensation model based on prescribed performance criteria and not length of service. This legislation required that all school boards establish career ladders and compensation plans for four categories of classroom teachers (associate, professional, lead and mentor).</p> <p>The 2004 Legislature delayed the implementation of the salary career ladder (BEST) for classroom teachers until the 2005-06 academic year and appropriated no funds for this program.</p> <p>The 2005 Legislature abolished the BEST program (SB 388).</p> <p>S. 1012.22 F.S (adopted by the 2002 Legislature) directs the school districts to adopt a performance-pay policy for school administrators and instructional personnel who demonstrate outstanding performance as measured by assessment criteria established in s. 1012.34 F.S. That statute is still in effect.</p>

	<p>The Dale Hickam Excellent Teaching Program is one method by which meritorious teachers are rewarded through incentives and bonuses. Recipients of the award, who must be certified by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) are eligible for an annual bonus of 10 percent of the prior year's average statewide classroom teacher's salary. Recipients must provide the equivalent of 12 workdays a year of mentoring services to other teachers.</p>
<p>9. A comprehensive plan must be established by the Department of Education and funded by the Legislature to ensure that school districts and schools have the resources needed to employ and retain high quality, experienced teachers in low performing or hard-to-staff schools.</p>	<p>Most state-approved colleges of education are working with school districts in their region to provide outreach training programs for teachers and administrators in low performing schools. These programs typically focus on strategies to improve classroom instruction and leadership development programs that target principals as instructional leaders.</p> <p>Some school districts use financial incentives to encourage highly qualified teachers to teach and remain at low performing schools. Statewide teacher shortages and budgetary constraints have discouraged the development of such a comprehensive plan.</p>
<p>10. A formal teacher induction program should be implemented in every school and should be supported by the Legislature through a targeted incentive funding program.</p>	<p>The 2003 Legislature directed DOE to establish a Teacher Lifeline Network to provide on-line support to beginning teachers and those needing assistance. The 2004 Legislature further directed the department to create guidelines and identify best practices for mentors of first-time teachers and for new teacher-support programs. DOE has established those legislative requirements through its comprehensive website www.teachinflorida.com</p> <p>The Florida Department of Education and Microsoft's U.S. Partners in Learning have completed phase 1 of a five-year project to provide teachers with a new learning and teaching environment tool called</p>

	<p>“Sunshine Connections.” The on-line program will provide teachers with immediate and interactive access to classroom management tools, student performance data, collaborative and communication abilities with other teachers, curricular materials and professional development opportunities. In addition, teachers and principals will have immediate feedback about individual students.</p>
<p>11. Florida Retirement System policies, particularly the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP), should be reviewed by the Department of Management Services and the Department of Education in order to establish and/or modify policies to increase the retention of high quality teachers.</p>	<p>In 2003, the Legislature extended the Deferred Retirement Option Program from five to eight years for K-12 instructional personnel. District School Boards were also authorized to re-employ retired FRS members as full-time instructional personnel on an annual contractual basis after he or she has been retired for one calendar month. In addition, the legislation permits instructional personnel to participate in DROP for an additional three years subject to approval by the district school superintendent.</p> <p>Many school personnel have identified the need for the same DROP policies for school administrators as classroom teachers and support the inclusion of non-instructional school and district personnel in the program.</p>

10/19/05