

# PRELIMINARY REPORT - STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

## EDUCATOR PIPELINE WORKGROUP UPDATE

### **Introduction**

As part of the Governor's Task Force for Improving Education (2013) and the subsequent work done by the State Board of Education (Board) in implementing the recommendations regarding tiered certification and a teacher pay "Career Ladder" some discrepancies were found in the certification requirements. At the August 2015 Board meeting the Board discussed possible solutions for these issues and reports from school districts regarding the difficulty to fill certain positions. It was determined that in order to accomplish this it would be necessary to fully understand the scope of the issues and the barriers school districts face in filling positions with highly qualified and effective teachers. The Board received an initial report on the health of our K-12 teacher pipeline at the December 2015 Board meeting and discussed additional areas of data that they would like to see included. In August of 2016, the Board received an update on the data available and work done thus far to quantify areas of focus. Based upon that report, Board staff were directed to pull together a broad group of education stakeholders and to bring back recommendations to the Board for consideration on ways to increase and strengthen the educator pipeline, including but not limited to recruiting and retaining students in our teacher preparation program, recruiting individuals into the profession (through traditional, non-traditional, and alternate pathways), incentivizing/attracting educators into our rural or underserved areas as well as hard to fill subject areas (including special education).

The first meeting of the workgroup was held at Boise State University on February 8, 2017. Members included school administrators and teachers as well as representatives from higher education, the State Department of Education, Idaho School Boards Association, Idaho Education Association, Idaho Association of School Administrators, Career Technical Education, and members of the State Board of Education. A full list of members can be found in Appendix A. Prior to the first meeting, a selection of current research was sent to all members of the group, and each was asked to read the articles to predetermine an area in which to focus their expertise. Drawing from group feedback, three subcommittees were formed – *Attract and Recruit*, *Prepare and Certify*, and *Retain* - with each member receiving additional subject specific research and resources to read in preparation for the first meeting.

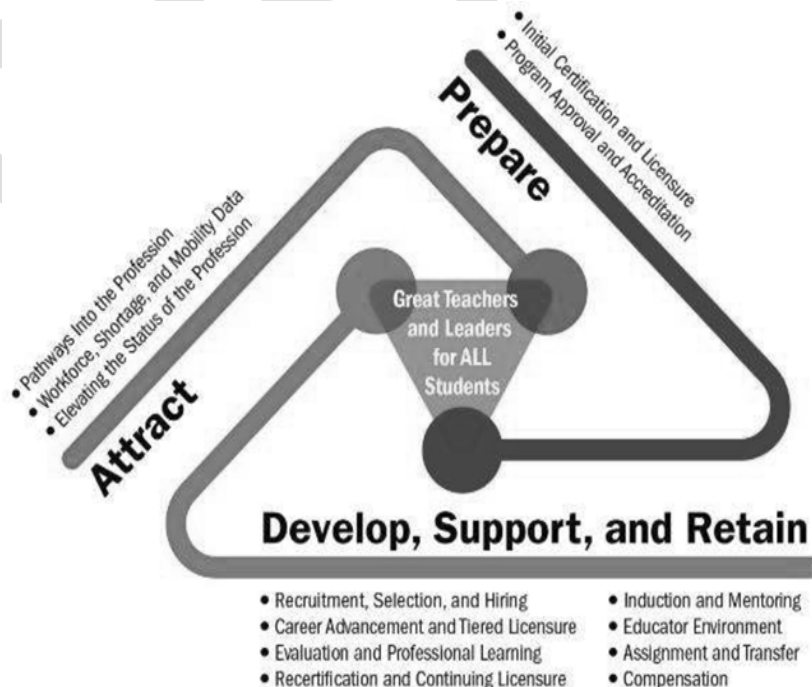
### **Discussion**

While the workgroup will ultimately address all areas of educator shortage in Idaho (pupil service staff, administrators) the focus of the first meeting was specific to K-12 teachers. To address all potential areas of Idaho's educator pipeline will require a multi-year effort with prioritized actions. The work group will first address efforts that have been identified as most viable; those which can be undertaken quickly and effectively as part of a wider range of solutions.

Information was presented to the workgroup, primarily based upon the most recent American Institutes of Research (AIR) report *Creating Coherence in the Teacher Shortage Debate: What Policymakers Should Know and Do* (Behrstock-Sherratt, 2016) and *Teacher Shortages: What We Know* (Education Commission of the States, Aragon, 2016). Points of discussion included the following:

- Does a national teacher shortage actually exist? Conflicting reports in the media
- Do we have a common definition of “teacher shortage” in Idaho?
- Best practices in state reporting and forecasting; where are the data gaps in Idaho?
- Exploring policy strategies across states to remedy teacher shortages

The workgroup discussed the current Idaho Educator Pipeline report, and compared it to an exemplary report produced by Minnesota. The group discussed data points that could be collected, and may already exist, to begin forming ideas on how a more robust and useful report might be constructed for the future. For the largest part of the meeting, subcommittee groups focused on discussing research-based practices that could prove relevant and feasible in Idaho. Members were directed to reflect on their specific research area, and ultimately propose implementation of at least two strategies. (Many of the strategies successfully implemented in other states do not fit neatly within a single topic. For example, a “Grow Your Own” program falls into the category of **Attract** - as it addresses creating a new pathway, **Prepare** - as the rigor of state certification must be a primary concern, and **Retain** -as this pathway requires deep mentor support and accurate evaluation for ongoing growth.) To keep conversations focused and consistent, even as policy strategies blur from one area to another, the group was also presented with a model to frame conversations and organize reporting. The *Talent Development Systems* graphic below, produced by AIR, illustrates a three-pronged approach to addressing teacher shortages that will guide the work of our full committee.



## Proposed Strategies for Further Review and Discussion

The following represents the strategies proposed for further exploration by the workgroup Subcommittees:

**Attract/Recruit:** Attracting talent and creating incentives to teach

- Strategy: *Openly promote teaching as a profession to boost public perception*
- Possible Measure: *Increased enrollment in teacher preparation pathways*
  
- Strategy: *Continue to support higher salaries and compensation packages*
- Possible Measure: *Decline in attrition rates and requests for Alternate Authorizations, decline in teacher families qualifying for Free and Reduced Lunch, increased enrollment in teacher preparation pathways, positive results on statewide teacher satisfaction survey*

**Prepare/Certify:** Alternate routes and “Grow Your Own” strategies

- Strategy: *Remove certification barriers to include: “Mastery-based” preparation programs that account for experiential credit, resulting in lower costs and shorter preparation time; closer alignment between secondary and postsecondary education to expedite preparation for high school students interested in teaching*
- Possible Measure: *Increased enrollment in teacher preparation pathways*
  
- Strategy: *Create a “Grow Your Own” pathway specifically for current paraprofessionals in good standing with their district*
- Possible Measure: *Decline in requests for Alternate Authorizations, decline in “out of field” teaching assignments, decline in long-term substitute positions*

**Retain:** Development and support including induction programs, evaluation feedback, and teacher leadership

- Strategy: *Strengthen mentoring and support for teachers over the course of their careers; leveraging all of the work Idaho did in late 2000 with the New Teacher Center*
- Possible Measure: *Decreased attrition, especially in the first five years*
  
- Strategy: *Shift focus from evaluation for accountability to evaluation for professional growth and measurable outcomes. Measuring individual professional growth and competency could result in a “badging” system, and more objective measures of teacher leadership*
- Possible Measure: *Increased satisfaction on climate surveys and evidence of distributed leadership in districts. Decline in attrition rates and requests for Alternative Authorizations*

## **Preliminary Recommendations**

### **1. Pursue further exploration of all Educator Pipeline Workgroup proposals outlined above, engaging teachers and stakeholders broadly in developing detailed strategies.**

Over the next three months, further pursue identification of successful practice taking place in other states, develop detailed measures for identifying successful strategies, and set target outcomes. Proposals for further exploration include:

- *Public service campaign promoting teaching as a meaningful and desirable profession*
- *Develop “grow your own” in-service programs and “mastery-based” preparation programs that account for experiential credit, resulting in lower costs and shorter preparation time*
- *Strengthen mentoring and support for teachers over the course of their careers, emphasizing supervision and evaluation as a means to increase professional growth*

### **2. Develop an Idaho Teacher Supply and Demand Report that Consists of Multiple Data Points**

Strengthening teacher shortage data and reporting is critical, and identifying the appropriate indicators for Idaho’s context may take time. Reports are only available in about half of the states, and are not usually used to undergird policy discussions. By using the exemplary *Teacher Supply and Demand* report developed by Minnesota, Board staff will create a report to begin defining relevant research questions and identifying indicators that will ultimately result in a comprehensive description of teacher supply and demand in Idaho. Using available data collected over the last three academic years, in addition to perception data from two new surveys, the report will be built upon the following data points:

- School Staffing Report
- Alternate Authorizations Approval Report
- Teacher certification database
- Student enrollment database
- Student Enrollment Projections Report
- Title II Teacher Preparation Report
- Survey of district supply and demand
- Survey of teacher preparation institutions

Information from the School Staffing Report, Alternate Authorizations Approval Report and teacher certification database will provide insight into which specific positions/content areas are the hardest to fill, and how geography impacts supply and demand. The report will include data on administrative, academic and CTE staff across the state. Information from the student enrollment database and Student Enrollment Projections Report, as well as the survey of district supply and demand, will provide information on trends and allow for projecting

future gaps in school personnel. The Title II Teacher Preparation Report and survey of teacher preparation institutions, which include candidate demographics, will also inform trends in future supply of teachers. Using data from these sources, we intend to answer the following five research questions:

- What are the three-year trends in teacher staffing? Do these trends vary by teacher race/ethnicity? What are the license areas of shortage and surplus? Do these trends vary by region of the state?
- Are there differences in the teacher shortage areas in charter schools, rural schools, and urban schools?
- What barriers do district staff perceive as impairing their ability to hire effective teachers?
- What factors do teacher preparation institutions cite as influencing their ability to prepare effective teachers now and during the next 10 years?
- What K–12 public school enrollment trends are expected for the next three to five years?

Depending upon the conclusions from this baseline report, work will continue to build consensus around the most meaningful and relevant indicators for Idaho, and precisely characterize each indicator and define what we expect to learn from them. Other data points to consider for future reports may include school climate data and/or teacher exit surveys.

### **3. Begin Developing a Coherent Policy Dialogue**

Guiding strategies and short and long-term objectives can be accomplished statewide through the development of coherent and consistent policy goals. Steps toward this process include:

- Defining and promoting shared terminology
- Building consensus on the targets for the indicators used. For example, with teacher attrition estimated at 8% nationally, what teacher attrition levels are acceptable in Idaho? What is an acceptable number of applicants per vacancy, unfilled vacancies at the start of the school year, and student-teacher ratios?
- Defining and implementing a system-wide talent development system to address recruitment, hiring, professional learning, leadership and school climate.

### **Conclusion**

Though this workgroup is only in early stages of fully understanding the scope of the problem, drawing from current research on best practices across multiple states the committee believes they will be able to provide further guidance and more detailed recommendations to be proposed prior to the 2018 Legislative session. A critical first step will be to establish a clear and credible Supply and Demand Report. While it is undeniable that rural areas of the state are experiencing difficulty in finding and placing teachers, and even the most populated regions are experiencing shortages of qualified content teachers in math, science, and special education, it cannot yet be concluded that Idaho is in the midst of a statewide crisis. The long term goals of this group are:

- To accurately identify and annually report on the geographic challenges and content specific needs associated with the current teacher shortage;
- to further reinforce the initiatives that support teacher retention, continuous improvement and increased accessibility to both traditional and non-traditional educator preparation programs;
- to promote a coherent policy and common understanding of Idaho's needs, desired outcomes, and methods for implementing a state-wide talent development system for educators; and
- removing barriers to placing highly effective and qualified teachers in the classroom while at the same time maintaining high standards.

## References

Aragon, S. (2016). Teacher Shortages: What We Know. Teacher Shortage Series. *Education Commission of the States*.

Behrstock-Sherratt, E. (2016). Creating coherence in the teacher shortage debate: What policy leaders should know and do. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. Retrieved from <http://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/Creating-Coherence-Teacher-Shortage-Debate-June-2016.pdf>