

# Teaching for America's Future: A Challenge to the Nation



## Setting the Agenda on Teaching Quality

For more than a decade, NCTAF has been a leading voice on what matters most for student learning: quality teaching in schools organized for success. To close the student achievement gap, we must close the teaching quality gap in high-priority schools and disciplines. NCTAF calls on policymakers and education leaders to provide every child in America with 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching.

## NCTAF Pledge to Organize Schools for Success

Preparing today's students to participate in a global, knowledge-based economy is a demanding challenge that no teacher should be expected to do alone. It is time to replace regulatory, prescriptive and market-based approaches with strategies that empower educators to develop genuine learning organizations. NCTAF invites national leaders to join our pledge:

### *Create schools that are Genuine Learning Organizations*

Quality teaching is not an individual accomplishment. We must support the collaborative efforts of teachers who join forces to improve performance and who sustain their continuous growth through embedded professional development.

### *Close the Gap Between Teacher Preparation and Teaching Practice*

It is time to re-invent teacher preparation. As a nation, we must support models like "Teaching Residencies" that embed teacher preparation and continuous professional development in schools that are continually evolving to meet the needs of today's students.

### *Engage Teachers in Careers that Reward Collaboration and Expertise*

We must build new professional pathways for educators that include new roles and responsibilities for teachers that can grow as their expertise deepens. 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching encompasses multiple career paths with pay systems that recognize accomplished teaching and reward effective performance.

### *Develop Authentic Teaching Standards and Assessments*

It is time to support educators who hold themselves collectively accountable for improving student achievement by using assessments that are valued –not because they are linked to consequences, but because they are essential tools for learning.

## NCTAF National Leadership

NCTAF is co-chaired by Richard W. Riley, former U.S. Secretary of Education, and Ted Sanders, past President of the Education Commission of the States. Founded in 1994 at Teachers College (Columbia University), NCTAF became a non-profit research advocacy organization based in Washington, DC in 2002. Thomas G. Carroll, Ph.D. is President of NCTAF.

## Taking Action on NCTAF's Agenda

NCTAF works through partnerships with national organizations, policymakers, state agencies, school districts, business leaders, and the higher education community to raise awareness, mobilize stakeholders, and strengthen policies to improve teaching quality. NCTAF supports quality teaching through

*analysis, advocacy, action, and alliances:*

- **Analysis:** *NCTAF conducts research and synthesizes findings* that answer policy questions and contribute to constructive action steps to improve teaching quality. NCTAF's findings are regularly cited in reports and policy papers of other leading education organizations. The most frequently cited reports include: 1) *What Matters Most*; 2) *No Dream Denied*; 3) *Fifty Years After Brown v. Board of Education*; 4) *Induction into Learning Communities*; 5) *Building a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education System*; and 6) *The Cost of Teacher Turnover* which have been the subject of hundreds of news articles, radio interviews, and news broadcasts.
- **Advocacy:** *NCTAF convenes policy forums, hosts national summits and issues policy papers* that inform, educate and build momentum around effective action strategies for improving teaching quality. NCTAF's positions and recommendations are featured at national and state-level conferences, broadcast in the mass media and are the frequent topic of op-eds, letters to the editor, commentaries and news reports. NCTAF's recommendations have shaped dozens of pieces of federal and state legislation – including early provisions of NCLB and the newly amended Higher Education Act. NCTAF produces a weekly *News Digest* and quarterly Newsletter, distributed electronically to over 3,000 education leaders and policymakers. This digest highlights news articles, research, legislation and policy initiatives that are targeted on teaching quality improvements.
- **Action:** *NCTAF creates demonstration sites* to develop and refine cutting-edge teaching quality initiatives. Working strategically with key partners, NCTAF develops projects that demonstrate new models which can be scaled up and adopted into state policy. Our projects cover a range of topics including teacher preparation, mentoring and induction, learning communities, online learning and more. For a detailed description of projects, see page 3.
- **Alliances:** *NCTAF partners with coalitions* in 25 states and an expanding cluster of school districts. State and local leaders who combine their voice with NCTAF's national advocacy agenda create a strong platform and powerful impetus for teaching quality improvement. NCTAF convenes these partner coalitions at an annual National Symposium, which enables teams of state legislators, Governors' staff, chief state school officers, teacher leaders, leading researchers, high education leaders and K-12 faculty to share best practices, effective policies and lessons learned.

## NCTAF Demonstration Projects

NCTAF implements demonstration projects focused on its four-part action agenda. The following list provides examples of current projects. For complete project information, visit our website.

- **Cost of Teacher Turnover Project.** NCTAF issued a report on the Cost of Teacher Turnover, based on a study of the costs of recruiting, hiring, processing, and training teachers at school and district levels. The findings indicate that the cost of teacher turnover is substantial in all cases. A Teacher Turnover Cost Calculator may be found at [nctaf.org](http://nctaf.org).

*For Teacher Turnover information, contact Tom Carroll: [tcarroll@nctaf.org](mailto:tcarroll@nctaf.org).*

- **Learning Teams.** There is a growing recognition that teaching is better when teachers have the support of colleagues and opportunities for continual reflection, inquiry, problem solving and collaboration. NCTAF engages in initiatives to promote the importance of professional learning communities, including the annual Pearson Learning Teams Award (sponsored by Pearson Achievement Solutions) and the Pearson Learning Teams Fellows (sponsored by the Pearson Foundation).

*For Learning Teams information, contact Hanna Doerr: [hdoerr@nctaf.org](mailto:hdoerr@nctaf.org).*

**NCTAF/Georgia State University Induction Project.** Funded by the Wachovia Foundation, the NCTAF/Georgia State University Induction Project provided support to beginning teachers in low-income, high-minority schools in the Atlanta metropolitan area. The project sought to increase student achievement by improving the effectiveness and retention of new teachers through Cross Career Learning Communities.

*For Georgia Induction information, contact Kathleen Fulton: [kfulton@nctaf.org](mailto:kfulton@nctaf.org).*

- **Partnership with KnowledgeWorks Foundation.** An alliance between NCTAF and KnowledgeWorks Foundation is engaging NCTAF's state coalition in developing initiatives that transform teaching and learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*For more information, contact Karen Smith: [ksmith@nctaf.org](mailto:ksmith@nctaf.org).*

- **STEM Initiatives.** NCTAF, in partnership with WestEd, is conducting a literature synthesis about the impact of professional learning communities on STEM teaching, funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF). This builds upon work that NSF and the Johnson Foundation supported when NCTAF convened two Wingspread conferences focused on the causes of teacher turnover in mathematics and science and the practices that successfully address this problem. NCTAF also convened a roundtable discussion on STEM teaching in February/March 2008 with support from Texas Instruments.

*For STEM initiative information, contact Kathleen Fulton: [kfulton@nctaf.org](mailto:kfulton@nctaf.org).*

- **Teaching Residencies.** NCTAF supports Teaching Residencies that merge teacher preparation with school redesign. Residency approaches are designed to close the gap between teacher preparation and teaching practice in clinical academies where content/coursework is delivered in the K12 setting with new teachers placed in cohorts. For

two years, NCTAF has collaborated with George Washington University and the D.C. Public Schools to build a pilot teacher residency program, which began in the Fall of 2008.

*For Teaching Academy information, contact Kathleen Fulton: [kfulton@nctaf.org](mailto:kfulton@nctaf.org).*

- **Teachers Learning in Networked Communities Project (TLINC).** With a planning grant from the AT&T Foundation, pilot funding from Microsoft Partners in Learning (PiL), and an implementation grant from the Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), NCTAF developed an online strategy for addressing needs of new teachers who feel isolated in sink-or-swim placements. Using an online platform, school leaders are able to provide strong teacher induction and professional development programs while novice teachers can collaborate with experienced veterans in professional learning teams. NCTAF has also formed an exclusive partnership with Pearson to create a new online platform designed to support teacher candidates and novice teachers, and to connect colleges of education with their K-12 district partners.

*For TLINC information, contact Hanna Doerr: [hdoerr@nctaf.org](mailto:hdoerr@nctaf.org).*

- **MetLife Forum Series on the Future of Teaching.** With a grant from MetLife Foundation, NCTAF has been holding a series of forums to raise awareness on the need to move the teaching profession into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Through 2008-09, NCTAF will work with MetLife Foundation to promote greater awareness of the demographic realities confronting schools and teaching by connecting effective policy and practice through state-led initiatives.

*For more information, contact Amanda Stanley: [astanley@nctaf.org](mailto:astanley@nctaf.org).*

### **NCTAF State Coalitions**

NCTAF works with state-level coalitions to implement policies and programs that ensure every student has access to quality teaching. This growing network includes: Alabama, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

### **NCTAF Strategic Partners**

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