



NATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE CENTER  
FOR **TEACHER QUALITY**

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# Recruiting and Retaining Highly Effective Teachers: What Works and How Do You Know?

Laura Goe, Ph.D.

Principal Investigator

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# Laura Goe, Ph.D.

- Former teacher in rural & urban schools
  - Special education (7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade, Tunica, MS)
  - Language arts (7<sup>th</sup> grade, Memphis, TN)
- Graduate of UC Berkeley's Policy, Organizations, Measurement & Evaluation doctoral program
- Principal Investigator for the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality
- Research Scientist in the Performance Research Group at ETS

# National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (TQ Center)

A federally-funded partnership whose mission is to help states carry out the teacher quality mandates of ESEA

- Vanderbilt University
    - Students with special needs, at-risk students
  - American Institutes for Research (& LPA)
    - Technical assistance, research, dissemination
  - Educational Testing Service
    - Technical assistance, research, dissemination
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# Topics

- What we can learn from the research
  - Collecting data on teacher recruitment & retention: A primer
  - Incentives and programs to influence recruitment and retention
  - What to do with less effective teachers
  - Alternatively certified teachers
  - The new generation of teachers
  - Where do we go from here?
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# The “real” goal

- The goal is NOT to recruit and retain effective teachers!
- **The “real” goal is to improve student learning and educational opportunities**
- Recruiting and retaining effective teachers is seen as a potential means to that end

# The Research



# The problem

- Each year, close to 200,000 teachers leave the profession, with another 200,000 transferring schools.
- This teacher turnover costs our public school system about \$5 billion annually (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005).

# Highly qualified and experienced vs. “effective” teachers

- Little evidence of a link between teacher qualifications and student achievement
- Many studies report a link between teacher experience and student achievement; effectiveness improves in first 5 years (Goe, 2007)
- “Effectiveness” is defined in various ways but usually focuses on teachers’ contributions to student learning growth



# What we know...(many studies)

- There is more teacher turnover in high-poverty, high-minority schools
- Research suggests that these teachers are likely to move to schools that are closer to their homes
- Teachers are also more likely to move to schools that have
  - Fewer minority and poor kids
  - Higher achievement

# Current assignment patterns

- High-poverty schools and high-minority schools have a larger percentage of beginning teachers than low-poverty schools and low-minority schools, and
- High-poverty schools and high-minority schools have a smaller percentage of teachers with master's degrees than low-poverty schools and low-minority schools (Tennessee Department of Education, 2007)

# Are those who leave more effective?

- Recent research suggests that those who leave (whether the school, the district, or the profession) tend to be *less effective* than those who stay in schools
- The exception is first year teachers who leave—they tend to be *more effective* than those who stay (Hanushek and Rivkin, 2010)

# Impact of incentives on teacher turnover

- Evaluators found that the probability of teacher turnover fell as the magnitude of the TEEG bonus award increased, while the probability of teacher turnover increased sharply among teachers receiving no bonus award, or a relatively small award.
  - “...a \$3,000 award reduced turnover for beginning teachers by roughly 23 percentage points”
  - “...awards of \$3,000 reduced turnover rates to less than a quarter of what the turnover rate was prior to implementation of a TEEG performance pay plan.” (National Center on Performance Incentives, 2009)

# Teacher distribution/transfer

- New teachers are placed with students who are academically behind those of more experienced teachers
- High value-added math teachers are more likely to stay in teaching in the district
  - They are not more or less likely to transfer schools
  - This pattern does not hold for reading teachers (Fullerton, 2010)

# “Fit” between person and organization

- “...characteristics that predict individual effectiveness may not predict organization effectiveness, even if the assumptions about individual predictors are valid” (Harris & Rutledge, 2010, pg 923)
- Person-Organization fit matters more when the organization has a “distinctive culture, the career ladder is lengthy, the interaction among organization members is great, and work flexibility is high.” (ibid, pg 924)

# Match between teachers & schools

- Investigated the contribution of “match between teachers and schools” to student achievement
- Showed that teacher effectiveness is higher *after* a move to a different school
- 25% of what is typically considered to be a teacher effect may actually be a teacher-school (match) effect (Jackson, 2010)

# Teacher/student race matching

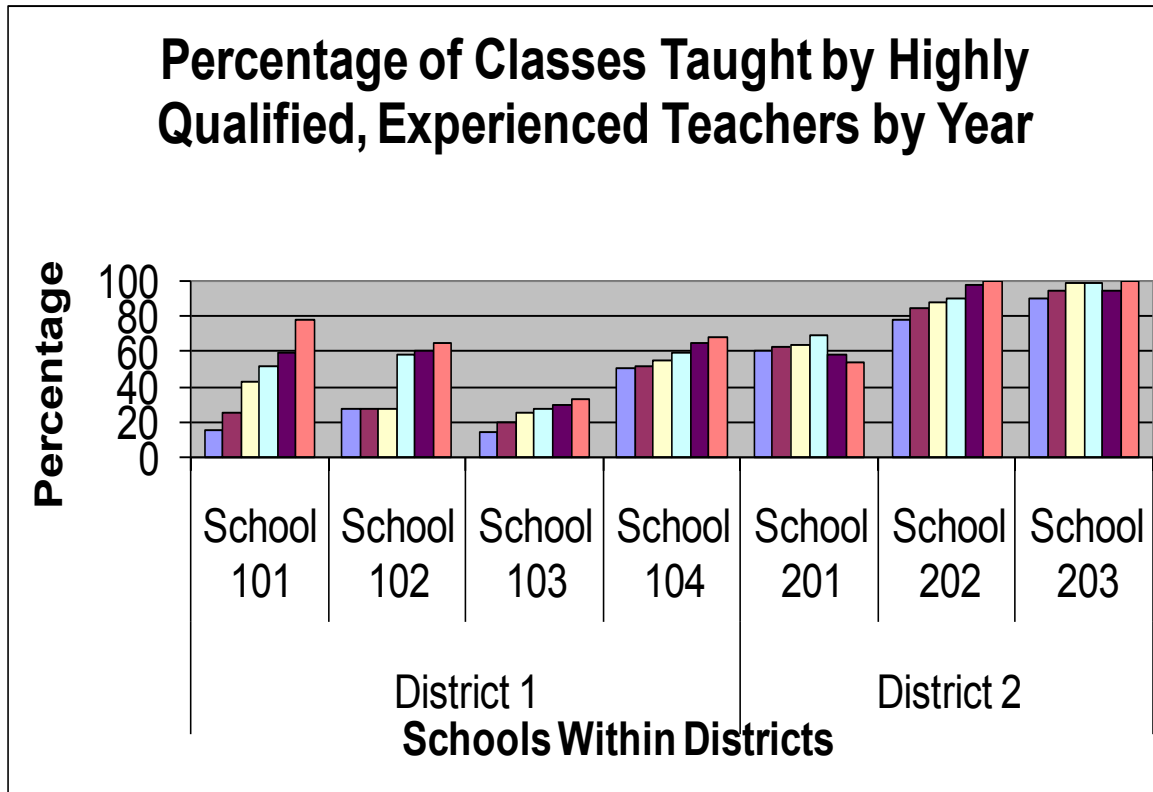
- “...Black teachers have more consistent success than White teachers in teaching minority students, and this matching effect is greatest in magnitude for Black teachers at the lower end of the [Praxis] licensure performance distribution” (Goldhaber & Hansen, 2010, pg 244)



# Qualifications matched to context

- Successful teachers are more likely to stay in their placements
- Ensuring success starts with the “match” between teachers’ knowledge, skills, and attitudes and the population they will teach
  - Teacher self-efficacy
  - Speak students’ “home language”
  - Understand culture, strengths, and traditions of students and their families

# Collecting (and learning from) data



# Understanding teacher mobility

- Standard “exit interviews” to better understand why teachers move/leave
  - Key question: Is there anything that would have persuaded you to stay at this school?
- Results can be aggregated to give a clearer picture of patterns
  - Within district: school-to-school
  - Within regions: urban, suburban, rural
  - By teacher experience, other characteristics

# Documenting teacher mobility

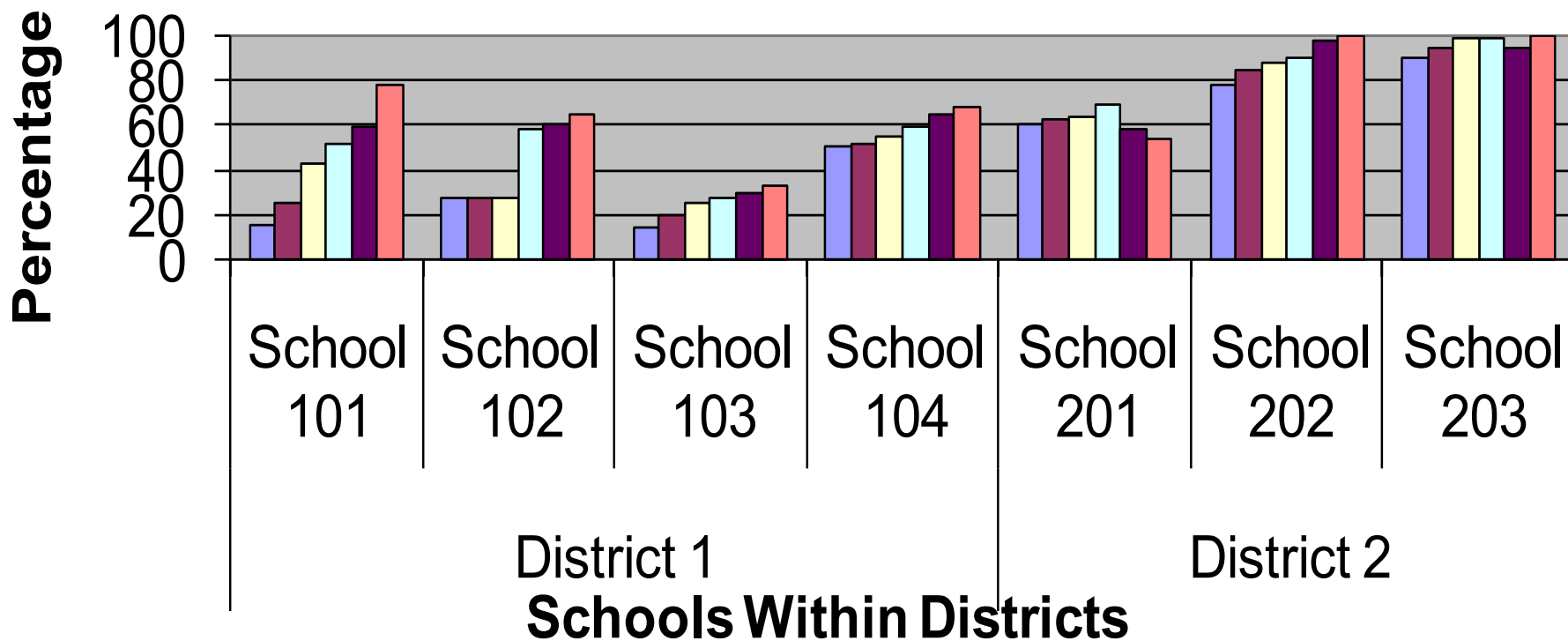
- Many states have the *capability* to follow teachers' movements but don't track them
- Develop a database that allows you to track teachers' movements from school to school as well as exiting and reentering the profession
- Such a database will make it possible to quickly identify schools with highest/lowest turnover

# Documenting changes in teacher mobility

- Many states are able to document the *current* distribution of highly qualified, experienced teachers by the percentage of poor and minority students in the school.
  - The challenge is to document change over time and *relate changes to specific policies or incentives*
  - To do this, you need complete and accurate data about teachers' participation in incentives, programs, etc.
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# Tracking change: An Illustration

## Percentage of Classes Taught by Highly Qualified, Experienced Teachers by Year



# Dummy Variables

- How will you know if a policy or incentive (local or state level) is having an impact on teacher distribution?
  - For each teacher, include a dummy variable with “1” for “yes” and “0” for “no” to document which incentives or policies applied to the teacher
- Then it will be possible to correlate changes in teacher distribution with the use of various policies and incentives

# Other Useful Information to Collect

- In teacher database, include the following
  - Name of credential-granting institution of higher education (IHE)
  - Type of credential (alternative/traditional)
  - Subject-matter & specialized certification
  - Name of degree-granting IHE
  - Professional development or additional content-specific coursework
  - Additional certifications (e.g., bilingual or special education beyond regular teaching credential)
  - Languages spoken



# Recruitment & retention strategies



# Goals for improving recruitment practices

- Make urban and rural districts and schools more competitive when it comes to recruiting the best teachers
- Create incentives to attract and retain highly effective teachers in the neediest schools
- Create a more stable teacher force and collegial environment, benefiting students and teachers

# Tips and cautions

- Consider both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards for teachers when designing recruitment programs and policies
  - Signing bonuses aren't enough to keep teachers in the profession
- Ensure that recruits are the right fit for the school
  - Ensure hires know the student population and demonstrate a passion and commitment to their success

# Recruitment strategies

- Provide incentives and policies to redistribute the teacher workforce
  - Make challenging schools more attractive
- Improve working conditions for teachers in urban and rural schools
  - Ask new teachers what they want/need
- Partner with institutions of higher education to better prepare teachers for urban and rural school settings
  - Create a feedback loop with IHEs

# Recruitment strategies (cont.)

- Develop/support high-quality alternative certification programs
- Grow your own
  - Early school success is key
- Improve hiring practices
- Create partnerships to address out-of-school issues that affect recruitment and retention

# Provide incentives and policies to redistribute the teacher workforce

- Restructure teacher pay to encourage the voluntary redistribution of the teacher workforce
- Provide scholarships and forgivable loans for teachers who teach in geographical shortage areas
- Combine pay incentives with cohort assignments
- Combine pay incentives with improved working conditions

# Improve working conditions for teachers in urban and rural schools

- Provide support to new teachers by ensuring a comprehensive, intensive induction program is in place
- Support school leaders so that they can support teachers
- Create professional learning communities and career ladders for teachers

# Partner with teacher preparation programs

- Work with universities to ensure their teachers are prepared to meet the challenges they will encounter in hard-to-staff schools
- Field experiences in high-needs schools should be extensive and high quality
- Alternative routes to certification allow paraprofessionals, military personnel and others transition to teaching



# Improve Hiring Practices

- Hiring delays can cause districts to lose highly qualified teacher candidates
- Teachers are less likely to wait until July or August for job offers
- Hiring process should be changed to ensure teachers are hired earlier in the season to compete with suburban districts
- Hiring process should be information rich

## Create partnerships to address out-of-school issues that affect recruitment and retention

- Provide housing assistance
- Provide reimbursement for moving expenses
- Promote business partnerships
- Consider “cohort models” like Teach for America (placing a critical mass of teachers together)

# The less effective teachers



# Effectiveness can be improved!

- Most teachers are doing the best they can
  - Help them do better with feedback, support, coaching, and a focus on classroom environment and relationships with students
- Teachers who are discouraged may need to see successful teachers with their kids
- Teachers who are consistently effective should be encouraged to model and teach specific practices to less effective teachers

# Why you should keep them

- With the right instructional strategies, most teachers can improve student outcomes
- By creating and maintaining a better learning environment, students and teachers can collaborate successfully
- The teachers you hire to replace them are not necessarily going to be more effective
- You may not be able to find replacements!

# Where do we go from here?



# Next steps

- Ensure that evaluation systems allow you to differentiate between effective and less effective teachers
  - Focus on improving effectiveness of teachers you already have
  - Develop strategies for retaining effective and potentially effective teachers
  - Recruit effective teachers through multiple, coordinated strategies (not one time bonuses)
  - (YOUR GREAT IDEAS HERE)
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Laura Goe, Ph.D.

E-Mail: [lgoe@ets.org](mailto:lgoe@ets.org)

[www.lauragoe.com](http://www.lauragoe.com)

TQ Center Website: [www.tqsource.org](http://www.tqsource.org)