











California's Teaching Force 2004 Key Issues and Trends

The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning

California State University, Office of the Chancellor Policy Analysis for California Education University of California, Office of the President WestEd

Research conducted by SRI International





Raising the Stakes but Cutting the Pipeline

The stakes for California's schools and students have never been higher. More than 1,600 California schools are now on a statewide "watch list" for failing to meet new federal standards, a number that is expected to triple in less than five years. Many of these schools face federal sanctions or even takeover by the state. This year's high school juniors — members of the class of 2006 — must pass the state exit exam before receiving a diploma. Only about two-thirds have passed so far.

These stakes are now about to be amplified. The settlement of a far-reaching civil rights case, Williams v. California, requires far more public scrutiny of schools, particularly those that are performing poorly.

That is the context in which we offer our annual examination of California's teaching profession. The picture is decidedly mixed.

On the positive side, the state has significantly reduced the number of teachers who are running classrooms without even minimal qualifications — teaching credentials. And the portion of underprepared teachers in poor communities

has been reduced considerably.



On the negative side, however, our projections show this improvement may be short lived. California's poor children are still far more likely than their more advantaged peers to face underprepared teachers. The teacher "pipeline" of recruiting, preparing, placing and supporting teachers has been significantly ruptured through repeated budget cuts. And the state does not have a coherent policy or sufficient resources to ensure that veteran teachers have the knowledge and skills they need to help their students, particularly high school students, meet the state's requirements.

Here, we offer a brief summary and a small set of charts and graphs that provide the most current view of California's teaching force. Also available on our Web site

— www.cftl.org — is a more detailed interim research report. Our goal is to help policymakers and education leaders understand the progress they have made and the challenges they face in delivering a high-quality education to all California students.







A Changing Landscape for Students and Their Teachers

In the mid-1990s, the state reduced the number of students per teacher in elementary schools, a decision that expanded the number of teaching jobs and suddenly increased the number of underprepared teachers. Despite the best of intentions, there were unintended and unfortunate consequences. Schools with large numbers of poor and minority



children and children who speak little or no English
— students most in need of skilled teachers — were
the most likely to have large numbers of untrained
teachers.

For several years, the state put considerable resources into helping those underprepared teachers obtain teaching credentials, recruiting new qualified teachers to the profession and providing veteran teachers with additional professional development. Then the California economy took a sudden and prolonged downturn, and the state's investment in the teacher workforce slowed considerably.

Concurrently, a new federal law — the No Child Left Behind Act — took effect in 2002, ratcheting up the stakes for schools and requiring all teachers to be "highly qualified" by 2006. And, just this summer,

the state settled the Williams lawsuit in a way that will provide additional money for textbooks and school buildings along with much closer examinations of the schools and the teachers who work in them.

State policy, the new federal law and the *Williams* suit are all predicated on the belief that all students can learn and meet high academic standards. We strongly share that belief, while also recognizing that in California the challenges to making this happen are considerable. A quarter of the state's students are English learners, and 10 percent are special education students. In the course of a career, virtually all California teachers will teach students with these substantial learning challenges. Teachers need the knowledge and skills to ensure that all their students succeed.

"The state has significantly reduced the number of teachers who are running classrooms without even minimal qualifications. ... [But] California's poor children are still far more likely than their more advantaged peers to face underprepared teachers."





Fewer Underprepared Teachers

Since we began reporting on California's teaching force in 1999, we have defined underprepared teachers as those who have not yet earned full teaching credentials, which usually means completing their coursework and student teaching and passing key tests.

During the last school year, 2003–04, slightly more than 28,000 teachers — about one in every 11 California teachers — were underprepared and teaching without benefit of the state's minimum qualification. That, however, is considerably better than the previous year when more than one in every eight California teachers — 37,309 — were underprepared (see Fact Sheet 1).

The number of underprepared teachers has declined, and it has done so fastest in schools with considerable poverty or concentrations of minority students. But the gap between schools is still unacceptable — schools with large numbers of minority students still have five times the percentage of underprepared teachers as those schools with few minority students (see Fact Sheet 3).

And although the number of underprepared teachers has declined, the state still issued nearly 20,000 emergency permits, waivers and "pre-intern" certificates last year, far too many of which were to teach classes of special education students. None of these teachers will be considered highly qualified in the school year that begins in 2006.

A disturbing set of projections lie beneath the reductions in the number of underprepared teachers. It appears that the demand for new teachers will soon go back up and continue to rise over the next decade as record numbers of veteran teachers retire. Nearly a third of the state's teachers are older than 50, with an increasing portion eligible to retire. Our projections show that there are likely to be tens of thousands of underprepared teachers



in a decade, just at the point when the federal law will require all students to be "proficient" (see Fact Sheet 2).

It seems clear that California will need to recruit many new entrants to teaching. Four years ago, the state was spending nearly \$150 million a year on such recruitment. Today, most recruitment programs have been eliminated from the budget.

However, at the moment, beyond the overall numbers of teachers, the immediate issue is where teachers teach and what skills they have.



The High School Bulge

When the state reduced class sizes a few years ago, it did so for certain grades in elementary schools. At that time, California was experiencing a significant increase in the numbers of students in the lowest grades. Now those students who benefited from the reduced classes are moving into middle school and high school, where class sizes are increasing. Indeed, the number of teachers in California is declining, while the number of students is increasing. The student growth is occurring in middle schools and high schools, while elementary schools are barely growing or shrinking (see Fact Sheet 4).

And many high school teachers are less than fully prepared. Nearly one-third of physical science teachers in the state are not authorized to teach their subject either because they do not have basic teaching credentials or because they do not have a background in what they are teaching. This also is true for about one-fifth of English teachers and one-fifth of mathematics teachers (see Fact Sheet 4).

The problem also is becoming acute within middle schools just as more students are moving into grades 6, 7 and 8. As California increased its academic standards, it began expecting students to take algebra in 8th grade rather than in high school. But in the middle grades many teachers hold elementary or multiple-subject credentials and are not prepared to teach higher level mathematics, including algebra. The result is telling — the data show there are far more such underprepared teachers in schools where large numbers of students have not passed the math portion of the state exit exam than in schools where higher numbers have passed (see Fact Sheet 3).

Professional Development: A Critical Strategy for Improving the Teaching Force

California has been a national leader in developing support, particularly mentorships, for newly credentialed teachers. To its credit, even during tough budget times, the state has maintained funding for the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment program, which annually serves about 20,000 first- or second-year teachers.

But the state has significantly reduced funding to improve the skills of veteran teachers, particularly in specific content areas. Despite an urgent need for many veteran teachers to gain and demonstrate their knowledge of specific subjects to meet federal requirements, most state-funded professional development programs either have been eliminated altogether or are on life support (see Fact Sheet 5).

To the degree that California is spending dollars on professional development, the state largely has limited its focus to reading and mathematics in the early grades. But with large numbers of teachers now needed in middle school and high school, particularly in key subjects, the state and local school districts will have to significantly increase efforts to provide these teachers with the content and skills they need to help students meet the higher requirements for graduation.

Unfortunately these increased demands for professional development come at a time when both the state and local school districts are cutting budgets rather than investing more.



Going Forward with Insufficient Dollars

The budget crisis in California appears far from over, and programs that strengthen the state's teaching force are more likely to get cut than increase. Still, the state has set the expectation that all students will master the California academic standards, and it has put the burden of getting students to succeed on local school districts and schools.

With uncomfortable consistency, those districts and schools that serve poor communities have the least-prepared teachers. In settling the *Williams* lawsuit, the state acknowledged its responsibility for ensuring students have equal learning opportunities. Now, California must find a way to help those schools move beyond a *desire* to provide success for their students to ensuring they have the *capacity* to generate success.

Through budget cuts and policy choices, California has largely disrupted the system in which the state invested to ensure that new and veteran teachers have the knowledge and skills to teach a growing and diverse group of more than 6 million students. Without a reversal of course, students are likely to face more underprepared teachers and more classmates in every class.

Without state intervention, these problems will grow increasingly dire over the next decade. We believe there is a small window *now* for the state to act to avoid a crisis of the magnitude we saw in the late 1990s. Now, unlike then, the warning signs are clear; the crisis is avoidable.

Clearly, investment is difficult at a time when the state and local governments have fewer dollars. But such investment is required if Californians are to have the schools they demand, the schools they need and that students deserve.

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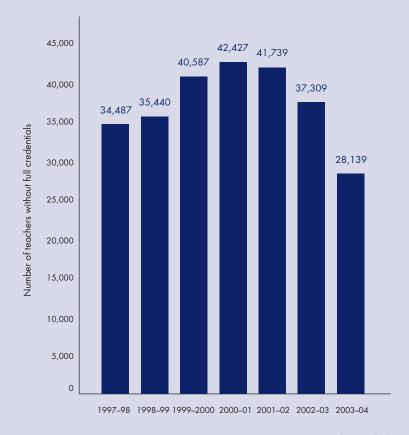


The Good News — Fewer Underprepared Teachers

Over the past few years, California's volume of underprepared teachers — those teachers who do not yet have full teaching credentials — has declined. Now, approximately one of every 11 California teachers are underprepared.

- The 28,139 underprepared teachers in 2003–04 included 12,000 working on emergency permits and 8,500 teacher interns. Essentially all of these teachers do not have full teaching credentials or have never done "student teaching" under the supervision of a veteran teacher.
- Under federal requirements, the 20,000 teachers on pre-intern certificates, emergency permits and waivers would not be allowed to teach in the school year that starts in 2006.
- Budget cuts have essentially eliminated \$150 million a year that California was spending to recruit new teachers.

Number of Underprepared Teachers in California, 1997–98 to 2003–04



Source: CDE.







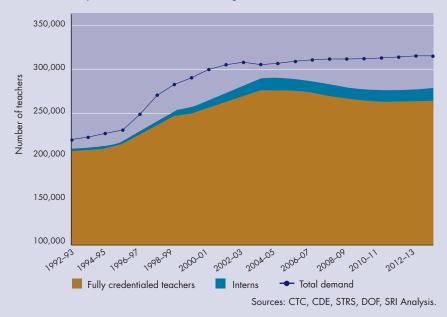


The Bad News — More Underprepared Teachers on the Way

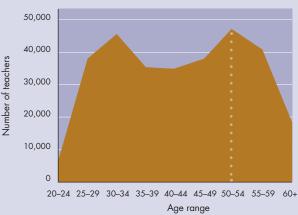
The trend line is troubling. California is not producing anywhere near enough new teachers to meet the projected demand. The problem is exacerbated by an aging teaching force that is increasingly eligible for retirement.

- In 2014 the point at which federal law expects all students to be proficient it appears as though California will face a shortage of tens of thousands of credentialed teachers. Unlike in the past, the state will no longer be able to issue emergency permits to allow noncredentialed teachers to take classrooms.
- About a third of California's teachers are over 50. One in five teachers will be eligible for retirement in the next five years and one in three over the next decade. By 2014, the state will have to replace 100,000 teachers due to retirement alone.

Projected Teacher Workforce through 2013–14



Age Distribution of Teacher Workforce, 2003-04



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Sources: CDE, SRI Analysis.





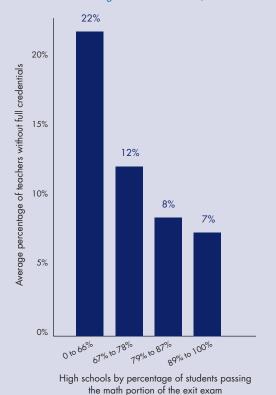




Poor and Minority Students Get the Least-Prepared Teachers

The number of underprepared teachers has declined fastest in schools with considerable poverty or concentrations of minority students. But the gap between schools is still unacceptable — schools with large numbers of minority students still have five times the percentage of underprepared teachers as those schools with few minority students.

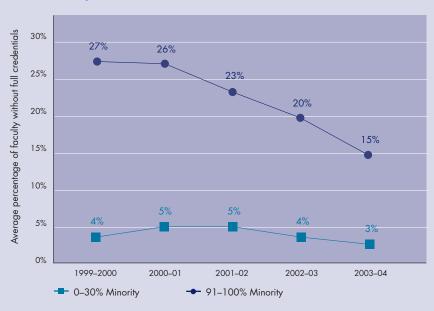
Average Percentage of Underprepared Teachers by School-Level Percentage of Students Passing the Math Portion of the High School Exit Exam, 2003-04



Sources: CDE, SRI Analysis.

- The students most in need of the best teachers poor students, minority students, students in schools with the lowest API rankings or students learning English — are in fact the most likely to face underprepared teachers.
- Those high schools with large portions of students failing the state exit exam also have the largest portions of teachers who are underprepared.

Underprepared Teachers in Schools with the Highest and Lowest Percentages of Minority Students, 1999-2000 to 2003-04



Sources: CDE, SRI Analysis.

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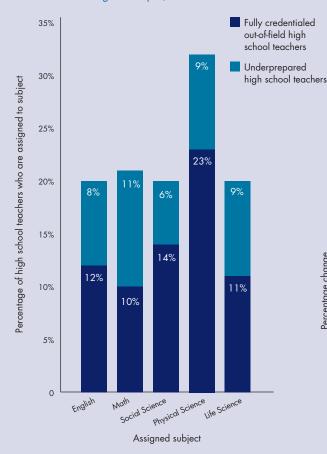


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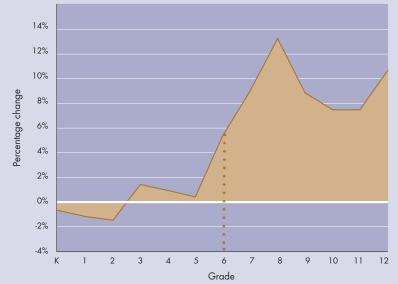
Starting with the class of 2006, all California students must pass the state exit exam to receive a diploma. Students who expect to go on to college need to meet much higher academic standards. But in key subjects, far too few high school teachers are sufficiently prepared to help their students reach these standards.

Percentage of Out-of-Field and Underprepared High School Teachers in Assigned Subject, 2003–04



- In English and mathematics, the two subjects included on the high school exit exam, about one of every five teachers either are underprepared or do not have training in the subject they are teaching.
- A growing number of California students are entering middle school and high school, while numbers are relatively flat or even shrinking in the lower grades. This bulge of students is likely to face both more students in their classes and teachers who are underprepared.

Percentage Change in Public School Enrollment by Grade from 2000–01 to 2003–04



Sources: CDE, SRI Analysis.

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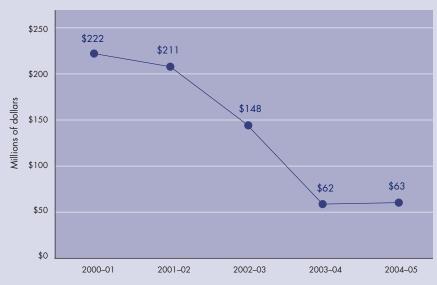


Professional Development — Disappearing State Dollars

Despite an urgent need for many veteran teachers to gain and demonstrate their knowledge of specific subjects to meet federal requirements, most state-funded professional development programs either have been eliminated altogether or are on life support.

- State spending on professional development has been cut substantially and largely focused on reading and mathematics in the elementary grades.
- The focus on the elementary grades leaves middle and high school teachers with much less state-funded professional development specifically targeted toward meeting their needs or those of their students.

State Allocations for Professional Development Programs, 2000–01 to 2004–05



Sources: CDE, UCOP.