Perspectives from Accomplished California Teachers

Promoting Quality Teaching:

New Approaches to Compensation and Career Pathways

National Board Resource Center,
Stanford University

This report and a policy brief are available at http://acteachers.org.

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The Accomplished California Teachers forum was established in January, 2008. ACT membership is open to National Board Certified Teachers and other accomplished teachers who wish to contribute to conversations about initiatives that advance quality teaching in California. Its primary mission is to give policymakers and the public ways to learn the views of skilled practitioners about the issues that will build and enhance the quality of the teacher workforce in the state. This report is the second in a series on education policies informed by teacher perspectives.

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Foreword

> **[In] powerful, successful schools..., the people who are seen as most credible with the greatest expertise about teaching and learning are the teachers themselves.**
>
> ***—Carl Glickman "Pretending Not to Know What We Know," Educational Leadership, 1991***

It has been more than 20 years since Carl Glickman wrote these words. They are truer now than ever. However, the voices and the wisdom of teachers have been so marginalized in recent years that they are all but disregarded in most current conversations about school improvement. It is ironic that, while the most strident and powerful voices in today's political discourse assert that the quality of teaching is the most important school-related factor in determining student success, they often pay little or no heed to what teachers know and say. Few would take issue with the role of quality teaching as a critical determinant of student outcomes. But, we cannot continue to pretend that ignoring teachers' views and perpetuating the low status of the profession will result in better teaching and learning. If the schools we need to ensure the dreams and aspirations of all Californians are ever to be realized, then it is time to listen and consider the voices and perspectives of those closest to students and families—the teachers.

In this report, members of the Accomplished California Teachers network have taken a step beyond their previous call for an evaluation system designed to advance the quality of teaching. Here they call for an innovative system of professional compensation that not only recognizes effective teaching, but is designed to support and spread the development of expertise, both for individuals and for the profession as a whole.

What they are proposing is as complex as the work of teaching itself. Rather than simplistic formulas linked to snapshots that purport to show student achievement, their proposal suggests that teacher advancement and compensation should be aligned to demonstrated ability to promote each child's learning—and should further tap this ability through mentoring and leadership roles that pass it on to others. In building a framework for professional growth and compensation based on learning for students and adults, rather than merely rewards or sanctions, they create a different vision for a teaching profession: one that honors the knowledge and craft of developing successful teaching over a lifelong career and that creates incentives for well-qualified individuals to enter the profession, continue to grow, and to share what they know so that the entire enterprise of education improves.

ACT's call for such a system is based on what its members see now as the perilous state of teaching in California and the nation. Many young colleagues leave the profession all too quickly because they are underprepared, cannot afford to stay, are crushed by the demands of the work,

and see no path for advancement. Expert veteran teachers are discouraged as they work under mandates that make them accountable for outcomes but give them little authority over their professional decisions or opportunity to help build high-quality practice around them. Committed people who might choose teaching and might be very successful are dissuaded from pursuing a career they rightly perceive as one in crisis.

The accomplished teachers who contributed their energy and ideas to this report did so because of a passionate commitment to the profession of teaching and to the young people of this state. In this report they offer their wisdom about how state and local policymakers can join with practitioners to advance the profession of teaching and its vital role in ensuring the common good for all Californians.

Linda Darling-Hammond,
Stanford University
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Preface

The Accomplished California Teachers (ACT) network, a group founded 4 years ago under the sponsorship of the National Board Resource Center at Stanford University, brings together distinguished teacher leaders from around the state and engages them in conversations about how to improve the quality of teaching and to foster the conditions in which it thrives. We believe that the insights of seasoned practitioners are essential in the design of education policy that will renew California schools. The teachers in our network are committed to redefining what it means to be a professional teacher; we have joined together to promote education policies that improve student learning and also support quality teaching. We know that students benefit when California public schools retain great teachers and make the profession more attractive to a new generation.

ACT's first report, *A Quality Teacher in Every Classroom: Creating a Teacher Evaluation System That Works for California*, [http://acteachers.org/publications] laid out a vision for fair and effective evaluations to ensure that every teacher receives the feedback and support needed to advance along a path of constant improvement. Our central recommendation in that report was that teaching expertise should be evaluated using multiple, robust measures, along a continuum of professional growth.

This report builds on that notion and presents another dimension of our vision for the teaching profession: teacher compensation and its role in advancing teacher quality. A good evaluation system should be linked to a compensation plan that recognizes increasing levels of accomplishment, fosters higher quality teaching, and rewards the significant teacher contributions to the learning of students and colleagues. But money alone will not transform teaching; higher compensation should be logically tied to new professional roles and greater responsibilities as teachers progress along a career pathway.

Our report is unique in deriving its findings and policy recommendations directly from teacher leaders in California public schools. We reviewed research, discussed compensation systems and career pathways from around the country. We reached a consensus grounded in our decades of experience, and put forth recommendations that we believe will keep us where we want to be and where we are most effective—providing the best education we can for the students in our classrooms, and working more systematically with our colleagues and districts to lead the way in improving education.

Our desire for reform should not be construed as an endorsement of just any change. Some of the proposed solutions we have seen are worse than the status quo. That is why we have joined together to offer new ideas and different solutions. We have carefully detailed guiding principles we hope policymakers will attend to in designing alternative systems that ca accomplish the goal of strengthening teaching and learning. We encourage policymakers to give due consideration to the collective experience of the team that produced this report, and look forward to continued engagement with the policy community in our pursuit of our shared mission to provide an outstanding education to all of California's children.

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Introduction

The impact of good teaching is increasingly cited as a major determinant of the economic well-being of a society and its citizens. We might well suppose, then, that professionals whose work is deemed so important would be compensated accordingly. However, in the United States, mid-career teachers are paid about 60% of what other college graduates receive. In high-achieving countries teacher pay is commensurate with that of other professions.[1] Professionalizing teaching necessarily implies changing compensation to reflect the nature of preparation and the level of responsibility society places on its teachers.

A useful and productive system of teacher compensation should function as an important lever for attracting well-qualified and highly motivated people to the teaching profession, and it should reward them for increasing levels of knowledge and skills along a continuum of professional growth. It should also not only advance the quality of individual teachers, but also form part of a strategy for improving the collective quality of teaching in collegial settings. Teacher pay bonuses or incentives should never undermine opportunities for professional learning and collaboration. Compensation systems must help build the expertise of all teachers, not just reward an elite few. Finally, a new compensation system should allow for flexible career pathways that keep teachers in the classroom while providing opportunities to manage and lead their profession.

Teaching is demanding and complex in nature. Those individuals who make it a lifelong career, under the right circumstances, become much better at it over time. This is most likely to happen when teachers get good feedback and guidance about their performance tied to meaningful opportunities to improve. As their skills evolve over a well-defined continuum of growth, teachers must be offered challenging and interesting career paths and professional opportunities to use their expertise in a variety of interesting roles. At the same time, they must be offered pay that is competitive and fair, recognizing the worth of their contributions to the profession and schools. This is not the situation that exists today.

In this report we identify what we think are smart ways to redesign career paths and compensation for California teachers. We know which changes are most likely to improve both teaching quality and student achievement, because these changes address what really matters in schools and what motivates us as teachers. These are not the traditional and popular merit-pay designs touted by many school reformers. Most attempts at those have already failed[2], some in sudden and dismal crashes, and some in gradual dissolution, precisely because they ignore or misunderstand what motivates us as teachers and what we need in order to constantly improve our practice.

Drawing on our own experience as well as a solid body of research on motivation and behavior, we can state that teachers are no different from other people who take on complex and cognitively demanding work. In the terms used by Daniel Pink in Drive: *The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*[3], the working conditions that matter most to us are autonomy, mastery, and purpose. We seek opportunities to make informed decisions and assume the level of responsibility for our instruction that is commensurate with the level of accountability to which we are held. We want to improve constantly and to become experts in our field. We want our work to serve the complete and complex needs of our students as human beings — to help them become

self-determinant, ethical, fulfilled, and productive members of society, who contribute as both workers and citizens.

Such levels of responsibility and achievement in teaching will involve giving classroom teachers greater influence over schooling through a wider variety of roles, both in their classrooms and in leading the work of schools and the profession. Logically, these new opportunities are linked to an improved, robust, growth-oriented model of teacher evaluation. As teachers demonstrate that they are highly accomplished professionals, they should be accorded greater responsibility and flexibility to meet the needs of their students and contribute to the professional growth and learning of their colleagues. And they should be compensated for their expertise and contributions.

In contrast to our vision of a vibrant profession, the current career path in teaching is a flat and narrow one. Regardless of their skills as teachers and leaders, too many teachers are limited by the current system. Many of our veteran colleagues have retired from the same class assignments, even from the same classroom and school, where they have taught for years. Some have never observed a colleague teaching or have themselves been observed by another colleague.

Instead of perpetuating a rigid system that stalls our professional growth, burns teachers out, or only rewards teachers adequately when they leave the classroom, we are suggesting in this report something new and better: a career ladder that doesn't lead teachers away from students, but allows them to share their expertise and lead the profession while remaining practitioners. Our proposal is founded on a constant cycle of evaluation and learning, a system of intelligent accountability, and compensation aligned to levels of expertise.

A Better Way to Pay Teachers That Advances Quality

Significant reforms in teacher compensation are worth pursuing only if they are part of a larger effort to advance the profession of teaching, and, by extension, advance the capacity of schools to produce deeper learning for students. A good system must be fair, predictable, and sustainable. It must create real incentives for all teachers to improve along a well-defined continuum of professional growth. It must recognize the complexity of teaching and be based on a shared understanding of what effective teaching is and what it looks like in a variety of settings. Our goals are not to simply raise test scores and then suggest that doing so provides evidence of rich and useful learning. This new system must encourage every teacher to embrace accountability for broadly defined student learning and personal growth, school-wide improvement, and enhanced professional authority of the whole community of teachers.

"Why change the existing compensation system?" was the first question we raised as we prepared this report. The same question has been posed often in recent policy discussions, but our answers are different from those being widely proposed. We hear lip service paid to the idea that the quality of teaching matters most among school-related influences on student learning. However, the main rationale for performance pay in many recently enacted models is to reward teachers whose students produce the greatest test scores or gains, and to motivate teachers to produce these results. This approach has some inherent problems. First, it assumes that good teaching necessarily results in high test scores, which is a simplistic assumption of cause and effect that has not proven to be true in research on the approach[4] or in our collective experience in all types of California schools. Second, it purports to increase teacher motivation while rely-

ing on measures that, according to a recent national survey, 74% of teachers consider inaccurate measures of student learning.[5] Finally, it fails to create an avenue for all teachers to reach high levels of accomplishment.

Our view is that a new compensation system should be one part of a cohesive approach to teacher development and learning. Together with a good evaluation system, the compensation system should serve to expand and reward teacher expertise, and do more than reward teachers for one or two parts of their work, or flawed indicators of success. The new system must be aligned to and promote a continuum of teacher competency and effectiveness. By contrast, the current system rewards longevity and accumulation of units, regardless of how those factors contribute to the quality of teaching. We are ready to modify and modernize the traditional "step-and-column" salary schedule—but it must be done wisely.

Many currently proposed changes privilege some form of student "achievement" based on test scores that are viewed as evidence of good teaching. As we have noted, this occurs despite the lack of evidence establishing a reliable and causal link between score gains and the quality of teaching by individual practitioners. Of deeper concern is the likely impact on teaching when standardized tests are used as the measure of quality. Since standardized tests by definition cannot assess high-level skills and deep thinking, the focus on them is likely to direct teacher attention to low-level skills and, in turn, foster increasing levels of mediocrity in the profession.

> **If you are paying teachers for better test scores, it feels like the assumption is that teachers don't care about results unless they get more money. Teachers are going to work hard regardless, but they should be aiming for more than test results. We should not encourage a system that allows teachers to settle for good test scores instead of choosing to go above and beyond where they are as teachers.**
>
> ***— Jane Fung, a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) in the Los Angeles Unified School District***

Too few existing compensation plans offer a strong enough connection between pay and the actual work that teachers might do in a school to increase their effectiveness and improve student learning. As teacher leaders from around the state, we start with an understanding of these kinds of school experiences, but we also operate with the research-backed assumption that people in general want to be successful and effective at their jobs. Policymakers will improve their odds of success to the extent that policies they enact directly support teachers in doing their jobs well, rather than relying on a discredited "carrot-and-stick" rationale aimed at individuals rather than systems.

With these factors in mind, we address the following questions in this report:

- Based on what we know from our experience and research about motivation and performance, what kind of compensation system will build on teachers' intrinsic motivation and desire for competency and thus produce better learning outcomes for students?
- What changes in career paths and compensation significantly affect the learning culture at schools?
- What proposals foster higher levels of teacher collaboration and other practices that we know to be effective at improving learning?

- How can policies be designed to recognize and compensate good teaching while accounting for the complexity of the work?
- How can policies help teachers focus on meaningful outcomes for students?
- How could changes to a compensation system be made that would ensure more equitable teacher distribution so that all students have the teachers they need to succeed?

Envisioning the Future of Teacher Compensation in California

We imagined what it might be like for in the future for our colleagues to work in a new professional reality. In this new reality teachers receive higher compensation not just by virtue of longevity but by advancement through a tiered system of expertise that is based both on their impact on student learning and their contributions to the profession. New careers in teaching might resemble the following vignettes, which imagine new tiers of professional practice to be described in further detail in the sidebars on pages 6 and 7.

We think these scenarios capture a life in teaching that is attractive to us, our colleagues, and prospective teachers. They describe a profession that is vibrant and interesting, offering opportunities for both intellectual and financial enrichment. These teachers of the future will improve schools, grow the profession, and foster a genuine sense of accountability along with the responsibility for learning that should attend it. Bringing this reality to life for California teachers in the 21st century demands that we first subscribe to some important guiding principles.

Guiding principles to reform teacher compensation and career paths

1. Teacher participation is vital to ensure quality and consensus in all education policies relating to teaching.

Effective policy depends on including the perspectives and garnering the support of those directly affected by policy changes — if teachers aren't active and equal partners in crafting policies, those policies are less likely to work as intended. Reform plans that have been successfully enacted and continue to thrive have been designed with teachers and their associations as full partners with policymakers and other stakeholders.

2. Evaluation reform precedes compensation reform.

In order to serve a purpose in compensation and career advancement, the teacher evaluation system must be changed to reflect what we know about good teaching. It must establish its value in promoting improved learning for students and improved performance by teachers. Our recommendations for a robust, growth-oriented model of professional evaluation can be found in our prior report, *A Quality Teacher in Every Classroom: An Evaluation System That Works for California.*

3. Individual and collective teacher growth must be the goal of evaluation and compensation policy.

If money alone is the reward for good teaching, teachers will be encouraged to either "game the system" or leave teaching. There are good models and abundant research to guide the creation of a new system that offers teachers opportunities to improve every facet of their

own professional practice and that of their entire teaching community. These models must be examined and their lessons applied. The goal of teacher growth that they have advanced must be the highest priority.

4. Compensation systems should promote equitable access to quality teaching for all students.

Teacher pay varies widely across districts, and has exacerbated inequities by making it harder for high-needs districts to attract and retain teachers. We want to change that. If a new system does nothing to address these inequities, we anticipate continued patterns of schools struggling in low-income areas and thriving in more affluent communities. In addition to creating more equitable funding and teacher pay, a new system should remove existing barriers that prevent teachers from moving between districts without losing their designated status on the professional continuum. There must be ways to permit highly accomplished and motivated teachers to move to schools and districts where they are most needed without incurring large financial penalties.

5. Compensation systems should be designed to support and recognize all categories of teachers.

We share a commitment to student learning in every subject area, discipline, grade level, and setting. We need a system of professional advancement and compensation that recognizes the importance and encourages the growth of teachers in every classroom, lab, theater, gymnasium, studio, clinic, and correctional facility. We cannot depend on a system that does not recognize the contributions to student and collegial learning from teachers across the wide scope of content areas.

Recommendations for a new system of teacher compensation

Before designing a new professional compensation system for teachers or other significant education policies, we must be clear about the vision we share for California's education system. We believe that the California school system must be robust enough to meet the needs of a state that prizes cutting-edge design and innovation. It must subscribe to beliefs in collaborative work and the power of diversity and diverse ideas. It must promote opportunity for all its children by preparing them to make choices suited to their talents and dispositions. Finally, it must produce informed citizens who are committed to working for the common good.

Agreements about the definition of a well-educated citizen have been missing from most public conversations about schools and the teachers who staff them. Too often, education policy talks about student learning but focuses the conversation on a narrow band of content measured by low-level assessments that yield little useful information to those who must act upon it. The arts, history, civics, and even science are given short shrift. The dimensions of learning that lend richness and depth to the lives of students are sadly omitted. We believe that Californians of all walks of life want more than what multiple-choice testing offers as a means of defining educational success for our children.

Before creating new policy governing the profession charged with advancing the educational goals for the next generation, policymakers must first be very sure that their policies align with a rich and finely grained vision of the education system the state needs. They should then attend

New Teacher Vignettes

Maria is a newly minted teacher coming out of a highly regarded teacher preparation program. Her student teaching portfolio, which shows how she has planned and taught a curriculum for diverse learners, is based on a framework aligned with the standards for the teaching profession and the evaluation system she will encounter in her job. At a hard-to-staff school in a large urban district, Maria's portfolio, which includes videotapes of her teaching and samples and analyses of her students' work, has convinced a principal that Maria would be a perfect fit for a job at that school. Using equalization funds from the state's new finance system, the district is able to offer Maria a starting salary competitive with more affluent districts that were also vying for Maria's services. In her first 3 years on the job, Maria will benefit from ongoing mentoring and evaluation linked seamlessly to her pre-service work. This continuity will help develop her strengths and address her weaknesses as a teacher, while a healthy boost in pay helps ensure Maria's ability to stay on as she moves from the novice teacher level (Tier I) to a professional level (Tier II) on the career ladder. Advancement to this level is not automatic after 3 years; Maria must demonstrate her professional growth by completing Tier II of the Performance Assessment for California Teachers. Preparation for that assessment has been part of the revised induction program in the state. This step will be accompanied by a significant pay raise, commensurate with Maria's demonstrated accomplishments with students and ongoing commitment to teaching.

Clint is in his third year as a teacher at the professional level (Tier II), and in his sixth year of teaching overall. With solid evaluations and a portfolio of professional accomplishments and student work, Clint continues to receive regular evaluations that help him refine his practice. At the high-poverty high school where Clint works, a variety of data gathered from students, teachers, and families has pointed to the ninth-grade transition as the key to improving graduation rates and college eligibility. Rather than hire outside consultants or make changes to the administrators' workload, Clint's school district has modified his contract and increased his pay, allowing him and another experienced ninth-grade teacher to re-examine and re-design the school's program for freshmen. These two teachers are using a variety of research and analytical techniques to define the problem clearly, propose solutions, gather feedback from other members of the school community, and make informed decisions. Clint's teaching expertise, ongoing classroom practice, and enduring connection to the school help ensure staff buy-in and a smooth implementation of the suggested changes. Documentation of this work will be part of the portfolio Cliff will submit to the district evaluation team to reach the master teacher level (Tier III).

Elsa has become a National Board Certified Teacher, and completed additional steps to be recognized as a master teacher in California (Tier III). Those steps include training in mentoring

strategies, theories of adult learning, and evaluating artifacts of teaching practice for evidence of teaching standards. The significant pay raise she received affirms her expertise and encourages Elsa to focus on continued growth in both her own teaching and that of her colleagues. In search of new challenges and learning, Elsa has applied to be a teacher evaluator for her district. Other positions for which she would have been eligible at this stage included instructional coach or mentor for pre-service or new teachers who are part of the district's combined BTSA/PAR program. Mentors in that program work with novices and help the district make serious, well-informed decisions about granting permanent status. Her new position will temporarily pull her out of the classroom, but will require her to return there after 3 years. Her demonstrated teaching expertise, along with additional training and focused time for the work, make Elsa a highly effective evaluator. Teachers being evaluated by Elsa find that her classroom expertise and curricular mastery make for a productive and supportive relationship that can't be matched by busy administrators. At the end of 3 years, when Elsa returns to the classroom, she will retain her higher pay and serve as a master teacher. Her classroom will be a demonstration site for visiting and student teachers, so that Elsa can continue to make an impact on colleagues by sharing her wider experience and understanding.

Tara is an award-winning educator, a master teacher recognized by her peers and by outside organizations for her excellent work with our youngest students. Seeking to improve teaching in other classrooms at the same grade level, Tara's principal decides to use her expertise to support her peers. Her new position comes with the higher pay and release time from her classroom that is routinely given to master teachers serving in support roles. Tara facilitates professional development work at her school that meets the specific needs of her peers at the point when those needs arise, such as developing lessons aligned with new standards or organizing collaborative research teams. In her own classroom she also models successful pedagogy and strategies for her colleagues and engages them in analyses of practice and examinations of student work.

Roberto is a Tier III master teacher who has spent decades developing a middle-school science curriculum that consistently produces high student achievement in his school. In an effort to spread the effectiveness of the curriculum, Roberto has been hired as a curriculum specialist with his district, allowing him to teach fewer classes (many of which are observed by his peers), and to spend half his time writing and modifying the curriculum, meeting with peers, and taking on administrative responsibilities connected to adopting and implementing the new curriculum at other schools. His unique skill set and career contributions to teaching in his district are well utilized and rewarded not only with the opportunity to impact more students, but also with higher pay.

to the following recommendations to advance quality teaching through a different compensation system that works as a lever to realizing the vision:

1. **Create a Career Ladder that Defines and Compensates Tiered Levels of Teaching Expertise**

   Replace the current system with its flat career horizon for teachers with a career ladder based on advancing levels of expertise within the profession. Use evaluation to identify and drive improved practice and accomplishment. Instead of raising salaries based primarily on years of service, base compensation on a *balance* of experience, continuing learning, attainment of higher levels of practice and responsibility, and contributions to student and collegial learning.

2. **Expand Teachers' Roles and Responsibilities**

   Define new and expanded roles for teachers that offer opportunities to advance accompanied with real responsibility to foster student learning for which they are accountable. In addition, give accomplished teachers stronger roles in increasing the learning of other teachers, which is essential for building the teaching profession we need.

   Create a teaching continuum to include new, varied, flexible professional roles that will allow teachers to spread their expertise, advance the profession, and improve student learning. Teachers cannot adequately prepare students for a 21st-century workplace if the ones we work in are stuck in the 20th century, where decisions about everything from instructional planning and analysis of student learning to teacher evaluation are made by non-practitioners.

3. **Develop a Well-Funded System Fostering Equity and Quality**

   Change school funding to address student needs on a more equitable basis, so that schools with the greatest challenges have more resources to recruit the highly skilled teachers they need.

   Talking about teacher pay without addressing the challenges of staffing high-needs schools with the expert teachers they need will simply exacerbate a long-standing problem. Paying more to teachers who work in the most demanding schools is essential. Such schools must also be made attractive to teachers willing to embrace difficult problems of practice and lead the way to solving them. Equalization funds, along with weighted student funding approaches that send money to districts on an equitable basis tied to pupil needs, can create a foundation for competitive and equitable salaries and working conditions.

4. **Ensure Steady, Long-Term Funding to Sustain a New Compensation System**

   If the necessary working conditions and professional development opportunities are not available, there will not be enough teachers making the progress required to fully implement this vision of a transformed profession. Likewise, if a new system is funded for only a few years, it will destabilize the profession and the state's teaching force. Teachers will not put their full faith and effort into a system that is not sustainable. No one will welcome a plan that will set off new battles over scarce funding.

5. Provide Supports to Bring High-Quality Teachers to High-Needs Schools

Offer teachers who are willing to work in the most challenging schools paid opportunities to develop the unique skill sets and problem-solving abilities that allow them to be successful with their students.

This recommendation relates to the conditions that motivate teachers we referred to earlier: autonomy, mastery, and purpose. While it may be tempting to suppose that paying teachers more to work in high-needs schools might attract accomplished teachers to move to such schools, the reality is that teachers want to be successful as much as they want to be compensated for taking on large challenges. To be successful in a very challenging environment requires skills and knowledge that are highly complex and constantly changing. For that reason, we suggest that a salary package for teachers in schools identified as the most needy should include release time and additional stipends specifically for ongoing, job-embedded professional development related to the needs of the student population.

6. Take Time for Deliberation and Collaboration

Don't rush the design or implementation of a new system. Take the time to engage all the stakeholders in the design of a new system and pilot it carefully. Be willing to change it. Make it flexible enough to work in a variety of places in the state. Avoid one-dimensional, quick-fix approaches that fail to recognize the complexity of good professional practice.

Background: How We Got Where We Are Today

Bias and discrimination were once pervasive in teacher pay systems. Men were typically paid more than women, White teachers were paid more than Black teachers, and secondary teachers were paid more than elementary teachers. In some districts, pay could be completely arbitrary and linked to favoritism or patronage.

In the first half of the 20th century, most places in the country enacted major reforms to teacher compensation. The purpose of these reforms was the elimination of unfair practices based on gender, race, and teaching assignment. The reform that resulted in the single-salary schedule that still exists today was a major improvement over the old system that treated many teachers unfairly.

However, while the existing pay system provides a measure of fairness for teachers in the same district, it does not measure or promote quality teaching; it does not differentiate among good teachers, great teachers, or marginally effective teachers. It offers few incentives for improving professional practice.

We understand why there are widespread calls to change compensation structures. The existing single-salary schedule has limits and needs to be revised. However, reforming teacher compensation alone has been mistakenly conceived as a tool for rewarding good teaching and creating incentives for improvement. We discourage basing changes in compensation on that notion. Rather, changes in pay should be designed to both develop and reflect growing practitioner expertise and effectiveness. Additionally, a good system should help define and create interesting career paths that make the profession more attractive to qualified individuals, and that encourage talented practitioners to stay in the profession, become ever better at their work, and spread their expertise among colleagues.

How Our Collective Experience Has Shaped Our Reasoning

Our current thinking reflects a gradual evolution over a period of years. Through nearly 20 hours of conversation for this report, we have shared experiences and concerns that have propelled our work toward solutions.

Sadly, we have all had experiences in our teaching careers of working with colleagues whose commitment to the profession we questioned. Some recycled stale lessons year after year, and were even referred to as "the working retired," yet their salaries were at the top of the pay scale and disproportionate to their contributions to the learning of either their students or their colleagues. No good teacher supports this or wants it to continue.

We do not think that overpaying *some* teachers is the worst aspect of the current system, though, especially as we consider that *most* teachers are underpaid. More serious concerns abound. One is the slow pace of salary advancement under the step-and-column approach. Such incremental advancement affects the recruitment and retention of good teachers, including career changers. Equally distressing is the fact that salary advancement does not routinely correlate with the learning needs of either students or teachers. Teachers are not obliged or encouraged to select courses for professional advancement that are aligned with their own growth needs (a situation that reflects a problem with the way evaluations are done). Even worse, it is rare that anyone asks if a teacher's coursework is connected to the learning needs of his students. Careful teachers

make sure coursework and other professional development activities are aligned with students' learning needs, but there is lots of inconsistency in this area.

Though we call for many essential changes in a new system, our teacher team agreed that it should retain some of the best qualities of the existing one, and that any new model that does not do so will undermine itself from the outset. We therefore carefully considered the ways in which elements of the current compensation system contribute usefully to the retention of good teachers and the creation of incentives for important teacher development and learning. For example, we like the transparent and unbiased progression for each teacher, and we still believe in a base-pay approach that provides some reward for longevity and equal benefits derived from cost-of-living increases. We value the predictability of being able to estimate future earnings so we can manage our own lives and livelihoods.

In addition, we value the stipends offered in most compensation agreements for advanced degrees and, in some cases, National Board certification. The issue of increased compensation for advanced degrees has been questioned recently; it has even been suggested that paying teachers for master's degrees is a waste of money. This argument is based on some studies that show little or no improvement in student test scores in classes where teachers hold advanced degrees (Monk, 1994).[6] However, other studies show positive effects of master's degrees, and the effects are particularly strong when the degrees are focused on instructional expertise in specific content areas (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2011; Betts, Rueben, & Danenberg, 2000; Ferguson, 1991; Ferguson & Ladd, 1996; Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996).[7]

In general, master's degrees are a crude proxy for teacher education, especially since many of them, until recently, have been aimed at jobs outside of teaching, such as administration, counseling, measurement and evaluation, and the like. Goldhaber & Brewer (1998) made this point, and conducted research that documents the greater influence of both bachelor's and master's degrees in the content area taught (e.g., mathematics or mathematics education; science or science education) as compared to undifferentiated degrees.[8]

In our experience, most advanced degrees earned by teachers significantly enhance content knowledge and add to their ability to make informed instructional decisions—but not always. We need better research in this area that looks beyond test scores to clarify how various degrees do or don't produce results. It must also be recognized that the worth of a master's degree varies according to the institution and program where it is earned. Rather than concluding that advanced degrees are inconsequential, it seems wise to examine them more fully. With solid information in hand, it becomes possible to ensure that teachers receive wise counsel about which programs and degrees are worth pursuing, and to then make certain those teachers have access to them.

Of equal concern to us is that there is no systemic approach to compensating teachers for other types of advanced learning and work that we know improves practice. This learning can be both informal, such as classroom-based research and service in various school and district leadership roles, or formal, as with National Board certification. Teachers who achieve National Board certification have been shown more effective in raising student achievement[9], and California once offered substantial stipends to Board-certified teachers—up to $20,000 to teachers in high-need schools. We suggest that this practice be restored as part of a strategy to address the maldistribution of quality teaching in our neediest schools.

The teachers of our network resoundingly endorse the goal of advancing the quality of teaching. We welcome both increased scrutiny of our work and plans to promote higher levels of professional knowledge and skill for every teacher. We are eager to work on a plan to develop a compensation system that will help realize these goals, but, as we made clear in our first report, a reliable evaluation system and a compensation plan that promotes better teaching are inextricably linked. To see our key recommendations on teacher evaluations, please see the sidebar on page 13.

Why teach? What motivates teachers?

Our team engaged in deep examination of our own experiences and practices as teachers. The group included teachers from different regions, different types of schools, and different generations to ensure that our discussions led to a true consensus.

When we answered the question, "What first attracted you to teaching?" our answers were universally the same. Not one of us entered this work thinking we would become wealthy. With respect to income, our best hope was that we would make a living wage. The opportunity to do meaningful, interesting, and useful work was what strongly attracted us.

We expected teaching to offer the chance to enrich the lives of children, equipping them with the skills, knowledge, care, and encouragement necessary to help them thrive as adults. While this may be a cliché, we all agree that the most significant rewards of teaching have nothing to do with money. As Berkeley Unified School District teacher Silver White explained it, "Watching children learn and figuring out how to make learning happen is the most interesting thing I can think of doing."

When we considered the question, "What is it that keeps you teaching?" the answers included the following:

- The ability to make instructional decisions that result in the success of students.
- Opportunities to learn and grow as professionals (especially in cooperation with colleagues).
- The knowledge that a teacher's work is useful and valuable to the communities they serve.

Those are exactly the factors Daniel Pink cites in his book, *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us* (2009), which we mentioned earlier. Pink says that there are only a few instances where incentives organized as bonuses for increasing specific outputs create positive changes in productivity. These are usually in cases where people are paid to do menial, repetitive work that offers no intrinsic motivation. In situations involving creative thought and complex operations, monetary incentives actually have negative effects on performance. In copious detail and with ample research support, Pink argues that there are three powerful motivators in complex work like teaching:

- *autonomy*—the desire to direct our own lives;
- *mastery*—the urge to overcome a challenge and develop expertise; and
- *purpose*—the yearning to work in service to something worthwhile and larger than ourselves.

Recommendations for Effective Teacher Evaluation Systems

From A Quality Teacher in Every Classroom: Creating a Teacher Evaluation System That Works for California. (ACT, 2010)

Evaluation is the backbone of a new compensation system for teachers. Below are the guiding principles needed to develop a strong teacher evaluation program:

1. **Teacher evaluation should be based on professional standards** and must be sophisticated enough to assess teaching quality across the continuum of teacher development. The state should use the California Standards for the Teaching Profession and the National Board standards to create a continuum of expectations from pre-service teaching to accomplished practice.

2. **Teacher evaluation should include performance assessments** to guide a continuous, coherent path of professional learning throughout a teacher's career. These should include existing assessments like PACT and the Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) in pre-service; a new tool like the PACT that would be more productive than the current assessment to guide induction during BTSA; new, authentic assessments related to classroom practice for developing professionals; and the National Board assessment.

3. **The design of a new evaluation system should build on successful, innovative practices** in current use, and teachers must have a significant role in the design of a new framework and in promoting it among teachers in the state.

4. **Evaluations should consider teacher practice and performance, as well as an array of student outcomes for teams of teachers as well as individual teachers**. To support collaboration and the sharing of expertise, teachers should be evaluated both on their success in their own classroom and their contributions to the success of their peers and the school as a whole. They should be evaluated with tools that assess professional standards of practice in the classroom, augmented with evidence of student performance on authentic tasks that demonstrate learning.

5. **Evaluation should be frequent and conducted by expert evaluators,** including teachers who have demonstrated expertise in working with their peers. Evaluators at each juncture should be trained in the recognition and development of teaching quality, understand how to teach in the content area of the evaluated teacher, and know the specific evaluation tools and procedures they are expected to use.

6. **Evaluation leading to teacher tenure must be more intensive and must include more extensive evidence of quality teaching.** This evidence should be collected and reviewed by both the teacher and trained evaluators and should include documentation showing that the teacher's practice exhibits the standards that define quality teaching. The process should be an ongoing part of a serious teaching induction process that helps novices grow in their profession.

7. **Evaluation should be accompanied by useful feedback, connected to professional development opportunities, and reviewed by evaluation teams** or an oversight body to ensure fairness, consistency, and reliability.

Every successful example of a good compensation system we looked at addressed these needs. Every failed example we saw failed in at least one of these aspects. Every recommendation we make in this report draws upon these simple but powerful concepts: autonomy, mastery, purpose.

In schools, discussions about autonomy and mastery become discussions of work conditions that allow us to guide our own growth, to learn constantly, and to improve our teaching. Autonomy does not mean individual teachers disconnected and following their own agendas; rather, it means teachers having some say in the shared agenda of a school, having choices about their own professional development needs, and the professional responsibility to make appropriate decisions about curriculum and instruction to promote student learning. With autonomy and ample support, we believe that teachers will maintain the motivation to pursue mastery for ourselves and our students.

Shared Purpose Drives Good Teaching

Discussion of student learning brings us to discussion of purpose. Perhaps the greatest obstacle we see in education reform debates is the lack of consensus about the purpose of education. Without that shared vision of purpose, the policies that define career paths and dictate compensation will be based on false assumptions about teacher motivation.

When our group talked about purpose, about real student success, the examples we cited were those we had seen right in front of us: Jane Fung talked about a first grader who once did not know how to distinguish a question from a statement and is now able to ask good questions about a story he has read, Lynne Formigli remembered a middle school student who posed a question about the data she obtained from a science experiment and figured out ways to investigate further, and David Cohen recalled a high school student whose research led to a compelling persuasive essay that found a receptive audience beyond the school.

As teachers, we know the many factors that imbue our work with purpose, yet we have seen others reduce that purpose to one thing: producing better test scores. Before going any further down the path of reform, it is critical to reach agreement about which outcomes Californians truly care about and which are essential to move the state forward. We believe the single-minded and simplistic focus on test scores has taken on a life of its own and does not reflect the goals for educated citizens held by the people of California. If the focus remains on test scores, it will engage teachers only on the narrowest and least helpful of measures—narrow because of the minimal content and limiting format, and unhelpful because, even if the results could be shown to be meaningful, they reach teachers long after that cohort of students has moved on.

Policies that have relied too heavily on student performance on standardized tests have consistently failed. As noted earlier, Texas, New York, and Tennessee have recently demonstrated the shortcomings of relying on test scores to measure and improve teacher performance. Creating incentives for teachers to improve test scores is thus unlikely to result in either improved scores or more substantive kinds of improvement in student learning.

A Professional Culture and Strong Leadership

Any changes to teacher compensation and career pathways should occur in ways that also improve the school as a workplace, and enhance practices that improve learning. In his 2006 report on retaining teachers in California, *A Possible Dream*,[10] Futernick (2007) concluded, "The most basic findings from our study tell us that teachers are less concerned with compensation (though they are not unconcerned with it) than they are with a whole range of particulars about their work environment." The work environment to which Futernick refers is the culture for teaching and learning at a school site. Our own experience supports this idea, as does research into how changing the culture for teaching and learning affects outcomes.

Darling-Hammond (2008)[11] summarizes what teachers want:

> **Although money can help, teachers are primarily attracted by principals who are good instructional leaders, by like-minded colleagues who are committed to the same goals, by having the instructional materials they need readily available, and by having learning supports that enable them to be efficacious.**

She points to career-ladder systems that combine evaluation based on professional teaching standards with opportunities for professional learning and advancement. In these plans, judgments about competence and increases in compensation occur at several junctures over the course of the career—rather like the moves from a junior associate to a partner in a law firm, or from assistant professor to full professor in a university—based on intensive evaluation. (We would point out that it is the evaluation of one's peers that matters in these examples.) This evaluation includes systematic use of evidence about teachers' practices, as well as multiple sources of evidence about contributions to student learning and the school as a whole. Some districts implementing career ladders with these features have been found to improve student achievement more than similar districts without such plans.

A case in point comes from Hamilton County School District in Tennessee (Silva, 2008),[12] where teachers with high value-added scores were recruited through the offer of bonuses to work in nine high-needs schools. In addition to the bonuses, the teachers had the opportunity to work with visionary school leaders and in collegial learning communities. The schools indeed showed huge improvements. For example, the percentage of third graders who were reading proficiently grew from 12% to 74%. The most significant part of this initiative, however, is that the teachers who had the largest student achievement gains were not those recruited to the schools, but rather the existing staff members. The culture for teacher collaboration and learning changed as a result of the initiative: teachers were given more time to examine and reflect upon their teaching practices and the resulting student work, they were given useful feedback from instructional coaches on ways to improve their practice, and they were provided with many opportunities to observe and learn from one another.

We are not alone in our desire to improve the culture for learning in our schools. Research on effective professional development underscores the importance of teachers working together to improve their collective practice. Jackson & Bruegmann (2009) showed that economists[13] were able to measure student test score gains associated with teams of teachers with varying levels of expertise. They found that most value-added gains are attributable to teachers who are more experienced and better qualified, and who stay together as teams within their schools.

The researchers found that peer learning among small groups of teachers seems to be the most powerful predictor of improved student achievement over time. One teacher in our team, Kathie Marshall, illustrates that idea with this example from her own experience:

> **I worked with a group of teachers on an action research project. We wanted to know how intermediate students learn more from one another through classroom conversations. One teacher who had never let students do much talking began to change his practice over time so that after several months students were regularly engaging in questioning and challenging one another. He began to see much deeper levels of understanding from all of the students. He admitted that if he had not had the examples and support of colleagues, he would still be stuck in a "sage on the stage" model of teaching.**

This insight about the importance of collaboration for improved teaching is also reinforced in a review of teachers' professional learning in the United States and abroad (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009):

> [**There**] **is increasing consensus that the most effective forms of professional development are those that are directly related to teachers' instructional practice, intensive and sustained, integrated with school-reform efforts, and that actively engage teachers in collaborative professional communities.**
>
> **Teachers in many high-achieving nations have these kinds of opportunities on a regular basis, as considerable time is built into their work time for collegial planning and learning, lesson study, and peer observations.**[14]

Honoring the Complexity of Teaching and Avoiding the "Value-Added" Trap

It is tempting to change teacher compensation by just pegging salaries to how well a teacher's students do on standardized tests. These "value-added" models (VAMs) are gaining popularity in the United States despite any evidence that they improve student learning. We encourage California policymakers to resist the temptation to believe that teacher effectiveness and student success can be gauged simply by a test and a mathematical formula.

Value-added models for teacher evaluation involve a comparison between students' predicted and actual test scores. Yet standardized tests only aim to measure a narrow slice of student learning, and by relying on a multiple-choice format, they limit students' opportunities to show anything more than superficial learning.

As career educators, many of us who worked on this report have welcomed rigorous evaluation, achieved National Board Certification, received a variety of recognitions for our work, and taken on leadership roles in our schools and districts. If we believed VAMs in teacher evaluations would help students and teachers, we would embrace it. However, our experience has shown that there is no productive use for VAMs in teacher evaluations or professional development.

Ascribing test results to teachers requires a number of statistical calculations and controls that cannot possibly account for all the factors that affect performance and every choice in creating the statistical formula has its own limitations and biases. Change the formula, change the

results. In these formulas, we also argue that significant school, student, and teacher variables are either ignored or treated as constants, in defiance of the realities we recognize in our work each day.

It is not just teachers who see VAMs as fraught with too many assumptions to be considered trustworthy. Research from some of the most reliable sources on VAMs as a method for evaluating individual teachers is mixed at best and casts serious doubts about reliance on this approach. A 2010 report from the Economic Policy Institute (EPI)[15] developed by 10 leading scholars in the fields of economics, measurement, and policy analysis, calls into question the accuracy and reliability of VAMs for analyzing student test scores. Even in their most sophisticated form, such measurements are highly problematic for high-stakes decisions regarding teachers.[16] The report identifies the following problems with that approach:

- Large error bands for teachers' VAM ratings, coupled with instability and unreliability across statistical models, classes, years, and tests.
- Biases in the ratings due to the fact that students are not randomly assigned to teachers. Even when controls for student characteristics are used, the ratings are significantly influenced by the composition of the classes teachers are assigned.
- Incentives to avoid students, classes, and schools that serve the highest need students, thus exacerbating their lack of access to experienced teachers.
- Incentives to teach to the test, narrowing the content and formats of instruction in ways that will reduce higher-level learning, given the tests that we currently use.
- The likelihood that collaboration will be undermined as teachers are ranked against each other, and one's success means another's failure. This is an especially chilling prospect, given the evidence that teacher collaboration and shared goals have larger effects on student learning and achievement than teachers working alone.

The problems with VAMs, and the ensuing controversies when they're used for teacher evaluations, have demoralized the teachers in our network, and divided education stakeholders around the country. By focusing on outcomes that matters most to student learning, policy makers can appeal to teachers in a way that will generate greater trust and motivation.

> **When I think of the way that performance pay is proposed now, I only see how it's tied to test scores. Teachers may sometimes want the validation tests provide (in the absence of other kinds of validation), so they begin to teach in a way that has a positive impact on test scores. So, perhaps we get test scores to look pretty good. But, down the road, that's not really going to prepare students to succeed. We want to teach so that students are prepared to do whatever they choose and so that they are complete people, thinking critically, and able to make good decisions and contribute to their communities by using what they know. The reason I teach is *never* about the test scores.**
>
> ***—Silver White, NBCT, Literacy Coach, Berkeley Unified School District***

Furthermore, VAMs cannot take into account any of the complicating factors that we know from experience impact students' performance on tests: family changes such as job losses, health problems, death in the family, incarceration, poverty, abuse, and/or violence at home or in the

neighborhood. Advocates for VAMs argue that such variations will even out with large enough data samples, but we are not convinced that they can offer such assurances with confidence, nor do we accept blithe dismissals of the events that shape our students' lives.

One of our team members, remaining anonymous to shield the school, shared this anecdote, which further illustrates the harsh realities that shape some of our students' lives:

> **The weekend before testing week began at my school, several of the students attended a dance at a local community center. As they were leaving the dance, a drive-by shooter targeted a group of students in a case of mistaken identity. Two of the students were seriously hurt and three others suffered minor injuries. One of the boys later died. When students arrived at school on Monday, they were told that testing would be delayed one day. Grief counselors would be available to students who were upset over the loss and injuries to their schoolmates. Seriously? *One day* and some grief counselors would fix up their adolescent pain? Which of us can perform well after an experience like that? This was unfair to the students and to the school. Events like this make a test meaningless to kids. It is certainly not a way to know anything about what they have learned or to decide about the effectiveness of their teachers!**

Of course such events do not happen every day, but children's lives are full of unexpected and often disruptive events ranging from abscessed teeth to family trauma. Can statistics really account for the impact of these events?

In addition, the available data do not indicate what kinds of positive sources of help and instructional support students get beyond the teacher's contributions to learning. In many schools, parents pay for tutors for their children. A teacher in such a school could be ineffective but look really good if judged by test scores from students tutored elsewhere. Often tutoring centers align their courses to directly match the content of tests. If a teacher has a cluster of such students (as is the case in many privileged schools) she could appear to be far better than she really is.

It is not just teachers who see VAMs as fraught with too many assumptions to be considered trustworthy. Research from some of the most reliable sources on VAMs as a method for evaluating individual teachers is mixed at best and casts serious doubts about reliance on this approach. The 2010 EPI report stated:

> **There is broad agreement among statisticians, psychometricians, and economists that student test scores alone are not sufficiently reliable and valid indicators of teacher effectiveness to be used in high-stakes personnel decisions even when the most sophisticated statistical applications such as value-added modeling are employed.**

The report documents a number of studies finding that VAMs intended to measure the effects of an individual teacher actually measure many other factors, including school resources, the contributions of other current and previous teachers and tutors, the effects of home and parental supports, and student characteristics themselves. As a consequence, the measures are highly unstable, varying widely across statistical models, years, and different classes taught by teachers.

Furthermore, the measures strongly reflect the types of students taught by the teacher, even when student demographics and prior test scores have been previously "controlled" statistically. Thus, teachers who teach different kinds of classes look more effective when they are teaching

high-tracked classes with more advantaged students than when teaching students with lower prior achievement, those who are new English learners, and those with special needs. This gives rise to the troubling possibility that the use of VAMs for evaluation would cause teachers who teach the highest need students to be unfairly measured in a test-based teacher evaluation system, making many teachers less likely to welcome such students into their classrooms.

The report goes on to quote many leading research organizations that caution against the use of these scores in teacher evaluation. For example, the Board on Testing and Assessment of the National Research Council (2008)[17] stated, "VAM estimates of teacher effectiveness should not be used to make operational decisions because such estimates are far too unstable to be considered fair or reliable."

A review of VAM research from the Educational Testing Service's Policy Information Center (2005)[18] concluded, "VAM results should not serve as the sole or principal basis for making consequential decisions about teachers. There are many pitfalls to making causal attributions of teacher effectiveness on the basis of the kinds of data available from typical school districts. We still lack sufficient understanding of how seriously the different technical problems threaten the validity of such interpretations."

McCaffrey, Koretz, Lockwood, & Hamilton (2004) reported:

> **The research base is currently insufficient for us to recommend the use of VAM for high-stakes decisions. In particular, the likely biases from the factors we discussed … are unknown, and there are no existing methods to account for either the bias or the uncertainty that the possibility of bias presents for estimates. Furthermore, the variability due to sampling error of individual teacher-effect estimates depends on a number of factors— including class sizes and the number of years of test-score data available for each teacher—and is likely to be relatively large. Similarly, rankings of teachers should be avoided because of lack of stability of estimated rankings.[19]**

Ensuring Equity: Unintended Consequences Often Happen

Serious, unintended consequences might result from changing pay structures to connect directly with test scores. Teacher salaries tied to performance could further widen the achievement gap by creating disincentives for good teachers to work with the most challenging students. Many teachers might avoid schools where students begin several steps behind their more advantaged peers, so that the time needed to prepare students for standardized tests is impossibly short. In such cases the only way to be judged effective and worthy of a higher salary is to "game the system." Gaming approaches range from practices like only teaching a narrow curriculum confined to basic skills that are tested in multiple-choice formats, to outright cheating by coaching students during testing, or changing students' answers afterwards. We are already seeing examples of such attempts throughout the country and in our own state. The result is the same no matter how gaming occurs: It further disadvantages the already disadvantaged.

What We Know About What Does *Not* Work: Learning From Experience

A recent effort in New York City provides a cautionary tale about financial incentives offered to teachers. The city invested tens of millions of dollars in a 3-year attempt at a program that had failed many times before. In July 2011, a report from the RAND Corporation concluded:

The program did not have the desired effects on student achievement or the necessary intermediate teacher outcomes. There was no consistent evidence that the program motivated educators to change their practices or that continuing the program would improve outcomes.[20]

Other similar attempts have failed in Florida and Texas, where bonuses were awarded to teachers who achieved large test score gains. Florida's merit pay plan was linked to an widely criticized testing system and was viewed as unfair to teachers working in high-need schools. Some teachers burned their merit paychecks publicly before the program was repealed in the face of widespread public dissatisfaction in 2007. In Texas, at the conclusion of a 3-year experiment, there was no strong evidence of an impact on student achievement gains. Teachers were skeptical of the program, echoing concerns that the tests weren't designed for the purpose for which they were being used.[21] Yet both Texas and Florida are now introducing value-added plans that are not supported by teachers and no more promising in terms of a proven track record than their rejected previous attempts.

An eye-opening study from schools in Portugal offered even more alarming results. Pedro S. Martins of the University of London examined 7 years of data and compared students taught by teachers in different parts of the country more and less affected by a new policy of teacher performance incentives. While New York experienced no effect from performance pay, Martins found a negative effect in Portugal: Overall, results consistently indicate that the increased focus on individual teacher performance causes a sizable and statistically significant decline in student achievement.[22]

California has also experimented with performance pay in the past and policymakers can learn from this history. In the late 1990s schools and teachers received bonuses for improvements in standardized test scores. One teacher in our report team (who prefers to remain anonymous on this point), received such a bonus, and reported:

One year, with very little information or communication about it, we just received bonus checks for raising test scores. We couldn't really point to the exact reasons for the improvement and there was no feedback or guidance to help us in the future. It was like empty praise given to students; it served no useful purpose. Within a couple of years, the gains in scores were smaller and the school had not met the targets set by the state though little had really changed and we were now on a list of schools needing improvement. That was not money well spent and certainly did nothing to enhance quality teaching or offer teachers a direction for improving practice. It should serve as a caution not to go for the narrow, unproven, quick-fix strategy again.

We are not surprised by the poor outcomes of all these attempts. Alfie Kohn, writing in *Education Week* in 2003, offered reasons for skepticism:

Wade Nelson, a professor at Winona State University, cites a government commission's evaluation of England's mid-19th-century "payment by results" plan. His summary of that evaluation: Schools became "impoverished learning environments in which nearly total emphasis on performance on the examination left little opportunity for learning." The plan was abandoned.

In *The Public Interest*, a conservative policy journal, two researchers concluded with apparent disappointment in 1985 that no evidence supported the idea that merit pay "had an appreciable or consistent positive effect on teachers' classroom work." Moreover, they reported that few administrators expected such an effect "even though they had the strongest reason to make such claims." [23]

We are mindful that appropriate use of testing data can sometimes inform school, district, and state policies. If testing is used properly, not consuming too much of our time and not inflated in its importance, or used for purposes for which it was never intended, then tests can provide one of multiple types of data that inform evaluation and policy at the school or district level.

Ways to Get It Right: What's Working

To devise an effective new system of teacher compensation and career pathways for California, there is no need to imagine something that does not already exist. We have identified and studied a number of promising approaches, some proposed models, and some that have been implemented. Among successful experiments we studied were those in Minneapolis and New Mexico, and the Teacher Advancement Program used in selected schools around the country. We also looked at theoretical models from two policy organizations, the Economic Policy Institute and the Educator Compensation Institute. (See Appendix A for a more complete discussion of several of these plans.)

We like some features of all of these plans because of the designers' focus on quality teaching and their careful attention to involving teachers in the work, their deliberate use of pilots before full-scale implementation, and their ongoing revisions in response to new learning. As a result, they focus on the conditions that lead to better teaching and keep student learning in mind (directly or indirectly) at each step.

For example, the Minneapolis Alternative Teacher Professional Pay System (ATPPS) has linked compensation to professional growth. They report, "There have been over 75 different ProPay courses offered with over 2,400 action-research projects successfully completed by Minneapolis teachers as a result. Most importantly, these research projects show evidence of strong impact on the improvement of student learning and engagement."[24]

In all these scenarios, we were impressed by the attention paid to ensuring that student outcomes were authentic and broadly conceived, rather than reduced to a single test score. Especially impressive was the way in which Minneapolis evaluates changes in teacher practice, the correlation with students' mastery of goals, and the manner in which teachers have assumed ownership of their professional growth. The evidence there has been positive on all measures. Because teachers designed this plan, many of its features appeal to us as fellow teachers, and we can well imagine our colleagues embracing it. Liane Cismowski, a National Board Certified English Teacher in the Mount Diablo, Calif., school district, identified its most appealing features:

I like the Minnesota Plan because of its emphasis on making teachers accountable for outcomes in a highly ethical manner. Teachers do action research in their own classrooms and look at student outcomes and ask how student learning has changed because of what the teacher has done. They say, "I am the agent of change." They assume both the professional responsibility for outcomes and the authority to affect changes in them.

Existing plans that continue to work are those that have every stakeholder group involved from the start and take the time to ensure consensus. It may seem obvious, but surprisingly, some states and districts impose new systems only to find fairly quickly that their haste has cost them the essential buy-in that allows all parties to proceed in good faith during the adjustment period. Although unions are often portrayed as an obstacle to reform, we find that the systems that endure are those that are negotiated and bargained by the unions.

Each of the systems we studied closely has evaluation as its primary focus, with compensation and career advancement flowing from teaching success, and success being identified by good evaluation approaches. None of these systems simply posts rewards and hopes that teachers will work harder chasing prescribed results. The people doing the evaluation vary: they may be site leaders, evaluation panels (Minneapolis), or even state-employed master teachers reviewing portfolios as objective outsiders (New Mexico). In every case, teachers must demonstrate mastery and improvement, linked to authentic student performance on measures more meaningful and informative than state test scores.

Recommendations: Our Plan for California

Earlier, we offered a summary of our recommendations. Here, we present those recommendations in detail, along with a reminder of the guiding principles that must be considered in deciding on any reform. These recommendations are drawn from examples and lessons learned from research and theory.

The guiding principles behind our recommendations are essential to any process going forward. The recommendations themselves will certainly be subject to change; indeed, we would not presume to recommend one single model and set of policies for a state as large and diverse as California. In the process of crafting our recommendations, we had respectful disagreements within our group, and, as we have already detailed in this report, there are multiple models in existence elsewhere that are serving schools well. However, our underlying principles for reform represent the strong consensus of our team of teacher leaders, and we assert that any proposal that neglects any of these principles will fail to achieve the bold changes and improvements that are needed to create an effective teacher evaluation system that improves student learning.

Recommendation 1:

Create a Career Ladder that Defines and Compensates Tiered Levels of Teaching Expertise

Create a career ladder that defines levels of teaching expertise in a tiered system and compensates teachers for levels of expertise. Establish well-defined tiers in the teaching profession based on evidence from good evaluations, development of expertise, and the level of the demands related to professional roles teachers assume. Accompany the progression from one tier to the next with pay increases commensurate with the level of mastery and responsibility.

The idea of differentiated compensation is not new in California. Not so many years ago, the state agreed to pay teachers to become Board certified and to encourage them to teach in high-

needs schools by offering a yearly bonus for up to four years. Liane Cismowski, a Board-certified teacher from Mount Diablo Unified School District, observes, "California does not have an ideological problem with recognizing and promoting a continuum of professional growth. The expected continuum vaguely exists, but it is an open question whether the state even recognizes what it has in place."

The overarching goal of a professional compensation plan must be to build the capacity of the state's teaching force by replacing "the flat and static career of full-time classroom teaching with a differentiated set of opportunities that expands teachers' scope of responsibility, draws upon their expertise, and relies on them to improve schools."[25] Therefore, we propose a system of professional pay built on rigorous and effective teacher evaluation that compensates teachers for demonstrating continual improvement, in which they move to new levels of accomplished practice and make increasingly important contributions to student learning as well as to the learning of colleagues. This system would contribute in a substantial way to the transformation of California schools and the teachers who staff them.

Our support for such a system would depend on a few conditions:

- that it preserve the predictability of some increased compensation linked to years of service as in the step-and-column system;
- that it use a robust evaluation system like the one we proposed in our first report;
- that the criteria for movement along the continuum of teacher development are transparent, well understood, and supported by teachers; and
- that it allows enough flexibility for teams of teachers and administrators to work together to tailor the new system to meet individual school and district needs.

How California designs new evaluation and compensation systems will not and should not be exactly the same as in other places. We can, however, learn from others' experiences and recommendations. We present the following design for a tiered compensation plan and recommendations for developing it as a starting place for changing compensation for California teachers. We have based this hypothetical model on what we learned from the research, studies of existing models, and consideration of what ACT members and other colleagues have said about what matters most to them.

We recommend a system to pay teachers at three tiers of expertise that recognizes years of experience within each of them. The expected professional work at each level and the pay structure accompanying the work are as follows:

Tier I: Novice Teachers (on probationary status: first 2 to 4 years of teaching)

This is the entry-level tier where new teachers spend from 2 to 4 years continuing to develop the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind begun in pre-service education. Novice teachers receive guidance and coaching from master teachers. Regular evaluations give them feedback targeted to their learning needs from a trained evaluator using a process designed to assess entry-level teaching skills. If they have not demonstrated the level of mastery needed to advance to the next tier after 4 years, they are dismissed or, in exceptional cases, given intensive support to improve in the fifth year.

Recommendations about appropriate teaching assignments at this tier are based on the new teacher's strengths and needs as demonstrated through the Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT) or Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA), completed at the end of pre-service teaching. Master teachers, the site administrator, and the novice teacher create a development plan together, using both the teaching assignment context and the pre-service work as a guide. This kind of approach is currently used in some induction support programs, but it is not the general case.

Ideally, all novice teachers experience their first year in the profession teaching as apprentices under the direction of a master teacher for part of the day, and spend the other part working on developing lessons, analyzing student work, observing master teachers' classrooms, and deepening their content knowledge. While we recognize that this recommendation is expensive, it is a way to ensure that teachers are fully supported in their entry into the profession and able to master skills like classroom management, lesson design, and assessment. We recommend that the state, or districts, should carefully study how the associated cost could be offset by increased teacher retention and, ultimately, by more effective teaching. If this approach is deemed too costly to implement for all teachers, it should at least be considered for teachers who work in the highest-need schools and with the most challenged student groups.

Recommendations for advancement to the next tier are based on collaborative analysis of a novice teacher's work by the evaluator (a well-trained principal or teacher who is designated for this role) and the master teacher. Additionally, the novice teacher is expected to contribute an analysis and reflection on her practice to deepen the evaluators' understanding of significant issues to address in the evaluation. That evaluation includes recommendations for targeted professional development in Year 2.

Pay at this level is a full time entry-level salary as set by school district contracts. Pay in succeeding years at Tier I increases along a scale negotiated by the district and its bargaining units. Movement on the salary scale is conditional on an evaluation of a teacher's practice that demonstrates growth in her abilities to manage a classroom, assess student learning, analyze student work in relation to her own instructional strategies, reflect on implications for developing her practice, and implement effective changes based on these analyses and reflections.

After the first year at Tier I, teachers have full responsibility for their own classrooms, but continue to receive support from the master teacher. Novices spend designated time with their master teachers during that year, working on areas of need as determined by an evaluation done at the end of Year 1. Like other teachers at a site, they also focus some of their work on developing strategies to help achieve goals for school-wide improvement. Beginning in Year 2, teachers begin compiling evidence of professional growth to add to a professional portfolio that builds on the pre-service assessments and the summary evaluations from Year 1. These additions are partly of the teacher's choice (e.g., a collaborative lesson-study project) and partly evidence that the district deems essential for gaining permanent status.

At any time between the end of Year 2 and Year 4, teachers in Tier I can submit a portfolio to a district team to be evaluated as a basis for granting a clear teaching credential. We envision a portfolio that includes elements of teaching prescribed as essential to a teacher's content area, along with analysis and reflection on the work much like what is done in the current PACT, only at a more advanced level. At this point the novice teacher also presents evidence of student

learning, using an approach that includes both formative and summative assessments, along with solid rationales for the instructional decisions the teacher has made as a result of these assessments.

In the event that a clear credential is awarded at that point, the teacher moves to Tier II — the Developing Professional level — and receives a significant increase in compensation. We think it is likely, however, that most Year 2 novices will receive advice about areas they still need to improve and continue at Tier I for a third year. Master teachers will continue to work with these novices to help them identify growth areas and to develop improvement plans. Teachers who do not submit enough evidence of their accomplishments at the end of their fourth year would, in most circumstances, be dismissed.

Tier II: Developing Professionals

Teachers who are awarded a clear credential move to Tier II, where they can choose to remain as long as they receive satisfactory evaluations each year. At defined intervals, (e.g., every 2 years), they are required to submit an updated portfolio. The additions to the professional portfolio at this level include evidence of effective teaching and student growth, along with continued professional learning. Documentation consists of a thorough analysis of selected student work and of achievement patterns of students over time. (This documentation might include standardized-test-score results to identify areas where a teacher's students show consistent strengths or weaknesses.) The updated portfolio also includes demonstrations of a teacher's new skills relevant to the learning needs of students, and contributions to the professional school community in the form of work on collaborative lesson designs, classroom research, or other activities that build the collective expertise of the staff. Different schools and districts might require teachers to submit different evidence based on the unique challenges of each school. Teachers who do not receive satisfactory evaluations and/or are unable to provide evidence of effective practice, are eligible for intervention assistance from a master teacher or intervention team for 1 year. After that, failure to improve would be grounds for dismissal.

Compensation at Tier II provides for regular increases according to a formula set by the district agreements. We imagine that many teachers will remain at this tier for an extended period of time, because of their need and desire to develop their teaching skills. Unlike the current situation, in which teachers who have achieved clear certification are evaluated by a principal who might look only for adequacy and not consider a teacher's concerns or questions about his practice, in this model teachers are expected to provide concrete evidence of growing knowledge and skill, validated by the observation of a skilled evaluator. The expected evidence of effective teaching includes the manner in which teachers build their knowledge of students' strengths and needs, how they select appropriate goals and align instructional practices, and the learning that students demonstrate as a result.

Those who wish to move to Tier III can choose to do so by becoming National Board certified or meeting whatever alternative criterion is set by their district and agreed to as a valid measure of expertise. The teacher's evaluation team contributes to the decision about the appropriate timing for attempting this move.

Tier III: Master Teachers

Tier III teachers receive a substantial salary increase and, in cases where it is appropriate, are offered a reduced classroom teaching load in order to spend more time in leadership roles; teachers at this level spend the balance of their time in activities such as mentoring novices, providing assistance for struggling veterans, supporting National Board candidates, leading grade-level or department teams, working as peer evaluators or content-area instructional coaches, developing curriculum, or working with pre-service teachers in collaboration with their universities. The professional portfolio of teachers at this level includes an evaluation of their contributions to student learning, a heavily weighted assessment of their contributions to the learning of their professional colleagues, and indicators of the impact of those contributions on student learning.

Compensation is structured on a graduated base Tier III rate, augmented by an amount pegged to the demands of whatever additional assignments a teacher assumes. For example, a teacher who is an instructional coach in mathematics may need to spend time in the evenings in conferences with teachers, and time during summers improving coaching skills and working on a curriculum-development team. Such a teacher would receive a larger additional salary stipend than a Tier III teacher who provides intervention coaching to just one struggling teacher. Districts determine the designations of stipends and compensation attached to each assignment.

Tier III teachers who have been released from classroom duties can elect to return full time to a classroom and still receive the same base compensation, with the presumption that they will serve in other capacities, such as demonstration teachers or leaders of collaborative research projects or lesson study groups. Tier III teachers are still subject to regular evaluations, as well as to assessments of their contributions to the professional learning of their colleagues and the school community. They are not immune from dismissal if their evaluations fall below a set standard and subsequent work fails to improve.

Some teachers who have achieved Tier III can be tapped for special district assignments, such as teacher evaluation committee leaders, technology consultants, student assessment committee leaders, or curriculum developers and coordinators. These are similar to existing "teachers on special assignment" positions in some districts. However, the manner of selection is based on demonstrated readiness for these kinds of positions. Teachers are compensated not only on the schedule set for Tier III, but also for the additional number of working days in the contract year they commit to such assignments.

In addition to different compensation according to tier, schools that present the biggest teaching challenges (even within the same district) should pay teachers on a different schedule. This would attract teachers who are willing to commit to the extra hours, personal investments, and acquisition of special skills that are needed to help disadvantaged students be successful. We cannot state forcefully enough the need for districts to provide increased resources in terms of strong leadership, instructional resources, and scheduling accommodations, to create conditions for success for teachers who make such commitments.

This three-tier teacher licensure proposal incorporates some important design elements from developers of other models, as well as elements that are repeatedly identified as important to our colleagues in schools, including the following:

1. **Predictable and fair compensation:** Salary schedules retain the predictability of current schedules, in that teachers' years of service are still factors in compensation. However, compensation at each level follows its own schedule. For example, each year a teacher works at Tier II, the compensation increases according to a cost-of-living index, as long as his evaluations are satisfactory. If a teacher moves from Tier II to Tier III, there is a significant salary increase when the move is made, and then year-to-year increases at the higher rate for Tier III teachers. If enacted together with a strong evaluation system, this approach makes teaching attractive as a lifelong career, in which developing expertise is recognized and rewarded, and contributions to the professional learning of colleagues' improved practices support student learning throughout the system.

2. **Clearly defined expectations:** The incentives for continued improvement of practice are built into the compensation framework. Teachers can easily understand what they must be able to demonstrate in their practice in order to move from one tier to the next, as well as what is considered effective practice over time. As we described in our report on evaluation, this understanding includes how to adjust their practice in response to identified student needs.

3. **Comprehensive performance evaluations:** This plan honors the complexity of teaching. It recognizes that good teaching demands broad knowledge of content and pedagogy as well as the disposition to connect with and understand each student personally. This plan does what some of the ill-conceived "pay-for-performance" plans try but fail to do. It offers teachers professional autonomy but ensures high performance through the use of a rigorous evaluation plan. It addresses teachers' desire to continually improve their practice, and it honors the higher purpose that calls most teachers to the profession: to prepare the next generation for productive roles in our democracy and economy. It also recognizes, and rewards with higher salaries, those teachers who work in the most disadvantaged schools.

4. **Professionalized standards:** Finally, this plan is truly professional in nature. It is unambiguous in the manner in which it outlines a career path in teaching. It recognizes excellence and offers ongoing support for improvement, while being intolerant of incompetence. It creates and rewards important roles with increasing responsibility throughout a teacher's career and offers incentives for remaining in the practitioner role in the profession. And it elevates the status of the career teacher, an essential change if we are to attract and retain talented teachers who improve student learning and systemic practices.

Recommendation 2:

Expand Teachers' Roles and Responsibilities

While accountability for student outcomes in schools shifts increasingly to teachers, the improvement of teaching remains disconnected from the classroom – occurring separately from practice and directed by non-teachers. Teachers can and should assume the tasks of managing and monitoring professional work, and should be compensated accordingly. If teachers are to be held accountable for increasing levels of student achievement, then it makes sense to give well-qualified teachers more prominent roles in professional development, new teacher induction, mentoring of colleagues, leading action-research projects, working as community liaisons, and developing

curriculum. Furthermore, teachers should be paid more for assuming these responsibilities and be given the requisite time to perform these roles well. Not only does this recommendation make sense from an accountability perspective, but it is essential if the quality of teaching is to improve.

Supporting High-Quality Professional Development

Professional development is the first area where it is essential to change the status quo. The one-shot, "spray and pray" forms of professional development so common in schools are shown to be ineffective in improving teacher effectiveness.[26] High quality professional learning, which is shown to improve student achievement[27], is connected to the actual contexts of teachers' work with children and guided by practitioners. We not only believe that this makes sense in terms of professional quality, but we also suspect that it makes good fiscal sense.

One of our team members, Anthony Cody, noted that the outcome of the large amount of money spent by his school district on professional development from outside contractors, "did little more than overwhelm teachers with programs and ideas that they could not possibly implement. The result was not better teaching but anger and resentment at the massive waste of resources and little or no improvement to instructional practice."

Teachers as Leaders

In our earlier report, we referred to roles for teachers as evaluators and mentors. There we asserted that teachers have the greatest stake in the quality of their peers and therefore would likely do a more thorough job of developing the work of their young colleagues and the learning of their peers. Recent research validates that assertion.[28] Any plan to improve teaching quality must involve roles for teachers supporting the professional growth of our peers, and ensure that we have the time and resources to be highly effective. Institutional supports might include scheduling for collaborative learning opportunities, and compensating teachers for assuming increased responsibility in planning and leading professional learning.

New roles and responsibilities for Tier III teachers could include leading lesson-study groups and designing curriculum aligned with standards. Countries that have been identified as world leaders in student achievement, such as Singapore and Finland, engage in such practices routinely.[29] While these practices are not yet routine in California or the United States in general, National Board Certified Teachers and other accomplished instructional leaders could lead the way in developing such practices. They should be helped to do so, and compensated accordingly. If this model of teacher leadership became a centerpiece of school reform policy, we believe that the impact on teacher learning and efficacy would be substantial.

We advocate for these changes in the work of teachers because we believe that the best way to achieve systemic improvement in teaching quality is to put teachers in charge and to both capitalize on and develop our expertise. We are not advocating a system without oversight and accountability — effective administrators are vital to high-quality schools. Thinking back to Daniel Pink's analysis of motivation, we are asking for the *autonomy* to pursue *mastery* that helps us address the *purpose* of our profession.

The issue of collective professional autonomy and engagement in the decision-making process is particularly important here. If we want the highly professional teaching force needed to meet 21st-century goals, teachers themselves must monitor the quality of practitioners, in much the same way that members of other professions manage their own licensing boards.

Under the current system, we find deficits in each of the potential motivators defined by Pink. School and district administrations, under intense and frequently counter-productive pressure from outside the system, too often focus on test scores and miss the larger *purpose* of teaching and schooling. They too often respond by removing teacher *autonomy*, which actually decreases our motivation and effectiveness; some excellent teachers simply quit. When districts and schools adopt various intervention programs, with trainings cycling through too quickly and with inadequate support, we find it much harder to achieve *mastery*.

To some extent, teachers are already beginning to fill many new roles on school campuses, but the conditions under which they do so are often onerous. Too often the teachers are doing the work informally, on a voluntary basis, and without oversight, evaluation, or professional compensation. One story that illustrates exactly this case was told by Kathie Marshall, a recently retired instructional coach from Los Angeles Unified School District:

> **I became sixth-grade chair, English chair, the school's lead teacher, and coordinator of several grant programs. Of course, these responsibilities came with no additional salary; however, I was lucky because one administrator allowed me two conference periods in order to perform these additional duties.**

Funding Teacher Leadership

To develop an effective system with teachers assuming more responsibility for managing their work, shifts in the entire system will be necessary: some of the managerial tasks now done by district personnel would either change or become unnecessary and outside consultants and professional development groups would be needed far less, as job-embedded development becomes the norm and schools develop greater capacity to promote teacher learning with teachers leading the work. We believe that such changes could result in shifting funds that are currently allocated away from the classroom to teacher compensation. Obviously some serious negotiation would have to be done to construct such a system. As difficult as the process might be, however, we believe that the end result makes it eminently worth undertaking. This is the kind of innovative work that is well matched to the enterprising climate on which California prides itself.

Recommendation 3:

Develop a Well-Funded System Fostering Equity and Quality

This recommendation should require very little persuasion in logical terms: We can't expect a new system to succeed if we don't pay for the pieces that will make it work for all students, teachers, and schools. Equitable outcomes for students will only happen when schools for the neediest children can recruit and retain outstanding teachers and create working conditions that nurture teaching quality at the same or higher levels as schools for the most privileged.

Create Incentives for Teachers to Work in High-Need Schools

The way that schools and districts are funded in California contributes significantly to the achievement gap and to the maldistribution of good teachers. A conversation between two of our team members, David Cohen and Liane Cismowski, both National Board Certified Teachers, further highlights equity issues related to teacher distribution. David is a high school English teacher in the high-performing and well-resourced Palo Alto Unified School District. At the time of this conversation, Liane taught English in a continuation high school in Concord, a district with mixed performance, lots of students with serious challenges, and significantly fewer resources than Palo Alto. They considered what sorts of incentives would induce someone like David to take a position in a high-needs school like Liane's.

Setting aside any issues about the support that might exist for collegial work and advancing teaching expertise, they decided to think only about the financial implications of such a move. First of all, most districts only give teachers up to 5 years of experience credit, so an experienced teacher could lose substantial salary from this disincentive alone. Even if this were not true, however, David would still take a $26,000 pay cut if he were to move to Liane's school. Further, even if the state offered a bonus of $10,000 per year to attract very accomplished teachers to such schools (twice what it once offered for National Board Certified Teachers to teach in high-need schools), it would still mean that David would take a $16,000 yearly pay cut.

The solution is not simple. The notion that boosting teaching quality in high-needs schools can be accomplished by offering bonuses for good teachers to move to these schools is naïve. This idea does not take into account that, in states like California, teachers who work in high-poverty districts are generally paid significantly less to begin with and teach under more challenging conditions. These conditions include poorer facilities, fewer materials and supplies, larger class sizes, and fewer specialist supports. In addition, such teachers must help students overcome the consequences of severe poverty — inadequate food, sub-standard or non-existent housing, poor health care, and the myriad impacts that arise from living in violent neighborhoods.

Because California's school funding has become less adequate, with cuts of nearly $2,000 per student in recent years, and more unequal, with rich districts sometimes spending twice as much as poor ones, the gap in salaries and the disparities in teaching conditions have both grown enormously. Add to that the punitive accountability conditions in schools serving low-income students and it is clear why good teachers avoid high-needs schools.

Even in the time since we began this report, the landscape for teaching has changed drastically. As the extended financial crisis in the state drags on, teacher salaries are continuing to decline in most places, but not in a uniform way or with equal effects. Faced with budget shortfalls, many districts have cut back on instructional days and reduced teacher salaries accordingly. At the same time, class sizes have increased. Sadly, the budget axes have fallen hardest on many of the most impoverished districts, which cannot make up shortfalls with local revenues or fundraising.

As a consequence, students of color in low-income schools are 3 to 10 times more likely to have ill-prepared and inexperienced teachers than students in predominantly White schools. The impact from these untrained teachers on student performance is only one part of the problem. When there are large numbers of such teachers in a school, the demands on veterans (when there are any) are higher. Veterans are asked to help the novices, who often require more time than the veterans can reasonably provide. Veteran teachers also have to address shortcomings in the preparation of stu-

dents who have had one or more novice teachers in the years before entering their classrooms. In addition, very often the novices, especially interns, stay only a short time before leaving for other pursuits. As these people leave, just when they might actually be able to start contributing, the school loses not only potential expertise, but the opportunity to sustain a professional culture.

Anthony Cody, who worked as a teacher coach in Oakland, spoke to this issue based on his experience assisting a large number of such teachers, noting, "We're the folks that spend all our time and energy training and mentoring them. It's just energy sucked into a black hole because, after all that, they are out the door."

To correct this situation, the state will need both to equalize funding for districts and include incentives for attracting and keeping experienced and able teachers in high-need districts.

Addressing the serious challenge of providing every child with the teacher he needs thus requires more than bonuses or other changes in pay. California needs to create a fair funding system for schools that will support more equitable salaries and school supports, as some other states have done. In Connecticut, North Carolina, and New Jersey, for example, equalizing funding reforms were enacted, along with incentives to improve and equalize the qualifications of teachers across districts, leading to substantial improvements in achievement. California should learn from states that have successfully addressed the problems we experience.

In addition, the state needs to focus on teacher retention, which will reduce the costs of teacher turnover. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF), using statistics from 2007, found that the national cost of public school teacher turnover could be more than $7.3 billion a year.[33] With California educating nearly 12% of the nation's students, our costs might approach $1 billion. The NCTAF report offered the following estimates of teacher turnover costs for three of California's largest districts: Los Angeles, $94.2 million; San Francisco, $11.9 million; and Oakland, $12 million.[34] These are eye-opening numbers but the benefits of a new career path and pay system for teachers might be more than compensate for the costs.

To enhance retention, equalized funds should be used to equalize salaries and working conditions, and to support mentoring for beginning teachers that will encourage and enable them to become competent and stay.

Recommendation 4:

Ensure Steady, Long-Term Funding to Sustain a New Compensation System

California must decide to invest more in its children, while making decisions that ensure it can do so in a reasonable and efficient manner. We should recognize that any consensus around a new compensation and career system for teachers will rapidly disintegrate if that system is built on temporary funding or if it sets off a battle over the same limited pool of money.

We are under no illusions that this kind of situation can be corrected easily or instantly, but if California is really committed to closing the achievement gap and ensuring every child the best chance of success, teacher compensation must be addressed.

We suggest that the tasks of research, planning, and persuasion begin now so that when the state regains fiscal solvency, it is ready to act. And we propose that this task be considered a responsibility shared by all stakeholders.

If our suggestions lead to better teaching and learning, we would expect to see fewer dropouts and a more productive work force, along with less crime (which has its own costs to the general public, plus the costs borne by the legal and correctional systems). These benefits to the entire state would certainly be harder to quantify but, in our view, these arguments are even more compelling, as they begin to represent a vision of a better California for all, within and beyond public schools.

Recommendation 5:

Provide Supports to Bring High-Quality Teachers to High-Needs Schools

Offer teachers willing to work in the most challenging schools paid opportunities to develop the necessary skill sets and problem-solving abilities at levels that allow them to be successful with their students. It is well known that teaching in some of California's high-needs schools requires additional knowledge and skills. Few teachers arrive in our neediest schools with all the knowledge and skills they will need to be effective year after year. Teachers must be able to understand and relate to students from many different backgrounds and cultures (this requirement also changes as the nature of immigrant groups changes in many places). They must know how to communicate with families from diverse backgrounds, who may relate differently to school than might be expected. And they must understand and address the additional challenges (such as poverty, violence, and homelessness) that children from low-income neighborhoods can face. Ideally, they will be able to communicate in at least one other language. Teachers must know different ways to assess their students and employ useful interventions. The list goes on. While no one teacher will likely ever have all of these skills, we must provide for teachers' continual professional learning if we expect the best teachers to assume positions in our most challenging school settings.

Teachers who work in high-needs schools are already asked to invest more time in their work than others, especially as the safety nets that once existed in communities have frayed and schools are called upon to provide them. If teachers are to develop the skills they need to provide excellent education of our least privileged students, the state should staff these schools with additional personnel so that teachers can be released for professional development activities during their regular work times, including, for instance, being released to take classes at schools of education that are only offered during the day, or to spend time learning the language of the community in intensive immersion programs.

Teachers bear much of the cost of their professional development themselves. While in the current system teachers sometimes recoup those costs by moving up the pay scale, it often takes a very long time to do so. In a new system, this might not be the case at all. As we have already pointed out, it is essential that teachers in challenging environments are given the best chance possible to master the work there and to stay in the high-need school. Offering stipends to cover the costs of courses and programs that directly address the skills teachers need is one way that the state's commitment to ensuring equitable opportunity can be secured.

Recommendation 6:

Take Time for Deliberation and Collaboration

Plan and pilot innovations. Use the time of scarce monetary resources to enlist input from stakeholders willing to work on developing good ideas. The state's current fiscal crisis does not preclude an opportunity to plan for future reforms. We already have an abundance of information, including widely accepted professional standards, a large body of research to consult, and models of success and failure. We believe there is enough good will to bring together thoughtful, innovative people from all stakeholder groups to design a professional compensation framework that will serve California well for decades to come.

Conclusion

California's teachers want above all to be effective in their work with children. This report reflects our commitment to ensuring that California's children attend schools that are staffed by highly professional teachers committed to doing whatever it takes to make students successful.

If the state is to have the teaching force its children need and deserve, it must find ways for teachers to monitor the quality of its members and develop their expertise, so that all of them are prepared to master whatever challenges they encounter. It makes no sense to expect California's teachers to prepare students for a 21st-century workplace while teachers themselves endure 20th-century practices of top-heavy management, non-distributed leadership, undifferentiated professional growth opportunities, and low pay.

The professional teaching force California needs will not evolve without changes in the context of teachers' work in schools. That context has many dimensions. The two that must be addressed first are creating an evaluation system productive of higher quality teaching and a professional compensation plan that attracts the right people to the profession and keeps them engaged in the essential work of schools: teaching and learning.

We call on the state's policymakers to pursue and further develop this plan, expand opportunities for teachers to direct meaningful improvements in teaching and schools, and compensate teachers at a professional level commensurate with their expanded roles and responsibilities. If California is going to restore its educational system to world-class quality, we will need a world-class teaching force to bring it about.

Appendix

Examples of Effective Models

After considering models that are currently working, we considered others that are being proposed as guidelines in some locations. Jim Carlson of the Education Compensation Institute has a model that draws from examples he studied around the country. Another model that is working in many schools is the Teacher Advancement Program, an initiative of the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET). The New Mexico Career Ladder offers a statewide approach that is grounded in a portfolio allowing teachers to illustrate and evaluate their practice. Finally there is a promising theoretical model from the Economic Policy Institute. We describe what we believe are productive features of these models here.

Accomplished Teaching Pathway

Jim Carlson's model, Accomplished Teaching Pathway (A-PATH)[35], is a tiered model that has four levels: Residency, Initial Educator, Professional Educator, and Master Educator. A-PATH adds an induction step to traditional developmental models called *residency*, during which new teachers work and learn in an apprentice situation with an accomplished teacher before assuming full responsibility as the teacher of record. During residency, novices teach 50% time and spend the rest of the day working with mentors and master teachers. This step addresses the problem of new teachers assuming the same or more difficult assignments as veterans. This residency step is the most unique aspect of A-PATH. We like the way that this approach inducts new teachers, supports teacher development based on individual needs, capitalizes on the skills and experience of accomplished teachers, and creates a well-designed framework for professional growth.

After their residency year, teachers enter a career path with three remaining levels, similar to other models. Progression through each level requires excellent evaluations grounded in evidence of effective teaching and professional growth. The resulting career ladder is designed to improve teacher retention and effectiveness by equipping teachers to stay on the job longer, by defining career paths within teaching, and by compensating teachers for their increasing skill levels.

There is also a market incentive in A-PATH that pays teachers an annual bonus for service in a high-needs position. Teachers on our team had mixed feelings about these types of bonuses: We support them philosophically out of a concern for equity, but we question the effectiveness of this approach if other systemic inequities in pay and working conditions are not corrected.

Teacher Advancement Program

The Teacher Advancement Program (TAP)[36] also takes an approach to compensation based on multiple career paths. TAP has three tiers—career, mentor, and master levels—rewarding

accomplished teaching through a competitive selection process that recognizes master and mentor teachers. Teachers reaching the highest level comprise part of the leadership team at both the school and district levels. Compensation, career opportunities, and professional responsibilities are specific to each tier. The program has developed its own system of evaluation—The Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC)—tied to teaching skills and student achievement, drawing on standards and rubrics from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and several leading districts. Professional growth activities are job-embedded, highly relevant to the context of the work, and are recommended based on evaluations that occur four to six times each year by trained evaluators. As in A-PATH, there are significant costs attached to this model, including release time for mentors and increased compensation for additional work time at the top two tiers.

TAP uses value-added models for 20% of its determination of a teacher's students' achievement, which factors into the compensation system. Although this method raises questions for us because standardized tests are not designed for this purpose, the system does not rely solely on this measure of student learning. A survey of teachers in TAP schools found that the large majority (about two thirds) are very supportive of the linked evaluation and professional development components of the system, while about one fifth are enthusiastic about the differentiated compensation component that includes test results. We believe that aspects of this program are worth considering (with some modifications), since it formalizes expectations for teaching quality, promotes teacher leadership, and compensates teachers based on the demands of their positions, the quality of their instruction, and their students' achievements.

New Mexico Public Education Department

We also like New Mexico's three-tiered career ladder plan because it reflects a commitment from the state as a whole to support teacher development, leadership, and professional pay. Teachers, districts, and lawmakers worked together to ensure that the key policy components interact to yield a logical and cohesive system for professional advancement and pay.

New Mexico goes a step further by incorporating National Board certification as a formal (optional) part of their state licensure for master teachers. National Board certification is a proven indicator of teacher effectiveness, requiring candidates to produce evidence of effective teaching linked to student learning. Trained assessors provide anonymous evaluation of candidate portfolios to ensure that a National Board Certified Teacher meets or exceeds rigorous professional standards. Becoming Board certified in New Mexico's system allows teachers to take on new roles and earn more money.

Pat Graff, a veteran English teacher in New Mexico, told us:

> **I think [the system] has set a new, more communal culture of professionalism among our teachers and I know that many of our newer teachers start working to prepare themselves to move to Level 3 [Instructional Leader] as soon as they move to Level 2 [Professional Teacher].**

Economic Policy Institute

Finally, we considered the tiered system designed by the Economic Policy Institute[35], which is similar to the first two. The designers of this plan point out the merits of the current system for its budgeting predictability and the stability it brings to teachers and district accounting departments. This plan builds school capacity and embeds rewards in a career structure. It consists of a four-tiered system, where moving from one tier to the next is accompanied by a substantial pay increase, but where cost-of-living increases are preserved within each tier. Like the other plans we studied, this one demands an excellent evaluation system with clear criteria for moving from one tier to the next. It suggests a flexible length of time for a probationary period and some kind of evidence-based assessment of a teacher's work before granting tenure. At the other levels, evaluation and professional development are linked to the needs of the school and district; budgeting to meet these needs is a carefully thought-out element of the plan.

Teachers have choices about how quickly they move through the tiers. After the probationary period, teachers may stay at the professional teacher level indefinitely, as long as they receive acceptable evaluations. Teachers at the master teacher level assume positions much like those in the other plans. They are still evaluated every year and must submit evidence of the impact of their work on student learning. At the top tier—the school- and district-leader level—teachers take on wider roles such as induction coordinators, technology support staff, curriculum developers, and evaluation committee coordinators, and they can be part of a preferred pool designated to work on special projects.

End Notes

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Teacher Biographies

Tammie Adams has taught primary grades at Brookfield Elementary School in the Oakland Unified School District for thirteen years. She is a National Board Certified Teacher and supports new candidates for certification at the National Board Resource Center at Stanford. She has mentored beginning teachers and worked on committees in her district to improve evaluations to promote more effective teaching.

Liane Cismowski is a National Board Certified Teacher in Adolescence and Young Adulthood/ English Language Arts. She is an English and English language development teacher at Olympic High School in Concord, Calif. She was recognized as the Contra Costa County Teacher of the Year in 2003, was the recipient of the California Teachers Association WHO award in 2004, and was California District Seven Teacher of the Year in 2005. In 2006 she was named the California Affiliate Nominee for the NEA Award for Teaching Excellence. She has led the Mt. Diablo National Board Certification candidate support group for the past six years. Ms. Cismowski is also a faculty member of the Masters of Arts in Teaching Leadership program at St. Mary's College, Calif.

Anthony Cody is a recently retired science teacher and instructional coach in Oakland. He is a National Board Certified Teacher, an active member of the Teacher Leaders Network, and writes the popular blog "Living in Dialogue" feature for Education Week. He has also helped launch and lead the national Save Our Schools movement. Cody is a founding member of ACT and was instrumental in facilitating the collaboration of teachers to produce this report.

David B. Cohen has taught high school English for 14 years, 11 of them in California public schools. He is a National Board Certified Teacher, currently employed at Palo Alto High School. For two years, he supported National Board candidates who teach English throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, an experience that provided insights into teaching practices in different types of schools, and that informed his understanding of how teacher evaluation could be improved. Cohen is also a member of the Teacher Leaders Network, and is the associate director of Accomplished California Teachers.

Sandra Dean is currently the director of the National Board Resource Center at Stanford University and coordinates the ACT network. She is a National Board Certified Teacher who taught mostly primary grades for over thirty years and was a literacy coach and school reform coordinator. She has mentored new teachers, supported National Board candidates and been part of several teacher research projects.

Lynn Formigli teaches sixth-grade science in the Santa Clara Unified School District. She is a California Teachers Association State Council representative and chaired the Santa Clara County Service Center Council. Lynne was an active participant in CTA's work on improving teacher evaluation and advocating for CTA's promotion of developing professionalism in teaching. She is National Board certified in Early Adolescent Science.

Jane Fung is a primary grade teacher in the Los Angeles Unified School District. She is a National Board Certified Teacher and a Milken Educator, and a member of the Teacher Leaders Network. She has published her teacher research and has been a mentor teacher in her district.

Cliff Lee taught English, social studies and media arts at Life Academy in Oakland Unified School District for five years before returning to graduate work at UCLA where he is focused on critical pedagogy, urban education, professional development, small schools, social justice, and media arts. He became a National Board Certified Teacher in 2007 and is a member of the Technology Liaison Network Leadership Team for the National Writing Project.

Kathie Marshall has taught for 35 years in public and private schools. She has recently retired after teaching English, history, and math intervention at Pacoima Middle School in the Los Angeles Unified School District. She was a fellow with the Teacher Leaders Network and a member of their Teacher Solutions Team. She is a former winner of a Disney Creative Classroom Grant. Kathie is a frequent contributor to *Teacher Magazine*.

Silver White is a National Board Certified Teacher. She has worked as a Literacy Coach and Reading Recovery Teacher Leader in San Lorenzo, at East Palo Alto Academy Elementary, and at Berkeley Arts Magnet in Berkeley. She has been a support provider for National Board Candidates since 2001. She is currently coordinating continuing contact sessions for Reading Recovery teachers in the Berkeley Unified School District.