

The Condition of Teacher Quality in Arizona: 2005

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Background

The mission of the Arizona State Board of Education is “to aggressively set policies that foster excellence in public education.”¹ The department’s website notes that Arizona’s education code, Title 15, “charges the Board with 24 specific powers and duties” in its oversight of nearly one million students from kindergarten through 12th grade.² The State Board has 11 members with very specific categories of membership. Ten of these members are appointed by the governor and approved by the senate for four year terms. The 11th member is the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, who is an elected official.³ The State Board has serious responsibilities to all aspects of education in Arizona. Only by following the link to the Arizona Administrative Code, however, does one come to appreciate the extent of the Arizona State Board of Education’s reach inside and outside the K-12 public education system.⁴ This brief explores the far-reaching impact of State Board policies related to teacher quality in Arizona. The brief will focus on how changes in State Board requirements for certification affect college and university programs that prepare teacher candidates.

In addition to specific powers over and responsibilities for curriculum and instruction within Arizona’s public schools, the State Board and the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) are charged with the responsibility for teacher certification, school administrator certification, guidance counselor and school psychologist certification,

professional teaching standards, and the evaluation and approval of professional preparation programs of institutions in Arizona that prepare candidates for these certificates. State Board Rules, specifically those related to Professional Teaching Standards, define quality teaching in the state. The State Board, through ADE, determines what college courses or alternative routes can lead to certification and what counts as professional development after certification.

The State Board sets rules following the procedures outlined in the Arizona Rulemaking Manual.⁵ According to the Rulemaking Manual, a rule is an agency statement of general applicability that implements, interprets, or prescribes law or policy or describes the procedure or practice requirements of an agency. State Board Rules are the guidelines and procedures for administering education policy enacted by the legislature and ordered by the courts. Rules also set standards and limits for the exercise of discretion. Policies are different from rules. Policies are set for internal, departmental procedures while rules directly and substantially affect the public. The Administrative Procedure Act requires the Secretary of State's office to publish summaries of proposed policies and rules. Public comment is invited during the notice and comment process. It is the responsibility of the public to take advantage of the opportunities to comment on the proposed rules and policies. The Attorney General gives final approval and it becomes a State Board Rule 60 days after filing with the Secretary of State, and it is published in the Register and the quarterly Code Supplement.

Recent Policy Developments

This section of the brief includes a review of five areas that directly affect teacher quality and were major discussion and action points for the State Board for the past 14 months. These five areas are: (1) structured English immersion (SEI) and the mandatory training requirement; (2) changes in certification requirements for early childhood educators (pre-K-first grade); (3) changes in the program review and approval process for institutions and their professional education programs within the state; (4) tiered certification; and (5) "performance assessment" to allow teachers to move from provisional certification to standard certification.

Structured English Immersion

The Office of the Attorney General gave final approval to the SEI Endorsement on October 18, 2004. This policy requires all persons holding a valid Elementary, Secondary, Principal, Superintendent, Supervisor, Career and Technical, or Special Education Arizona State Certificates to get the course work or training necessary to qualify for the endorsement. The only exceptions are educators from the above categories who hold a full English as a Second Language (ESL) Endorsement or a full Bilingual Endorsement. The full SEI Endorsement is required to be completed by August 31, 2009, and will be added when educators renew their certificate with the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). The certificate renewal is the gate keeper; educators who have not complied with the full SEI requirements will not have their certificates renewed.

On January 24, 2005, the State Board approved the curricular framework for a Provisional SEI Endorsement, requiring 15 clock hours of professional development, and the Full SEI Endorsement, requiring an additional 45 clock hours of professional development; the framework had been recommended by the SEI Task Force. In addition, the checklist for SEI training, including instructor qualifications, was approved.

Early Childhood Teacher Certification

Early Education (kindergarten through third grade) is one of Governor Napolitano's top educational priorities. The Governor presented her ideas, which are based on the research and recommendations by the School Readiness Board, to the State Board on January 26, 2004. Additionally, the governor followed the State Board's deliberation of Early Childhood Teacher Certification, sending a representative to present on the topic at 6 of the 20 Board meetings reviewed for this brief. At the March 29, 2004, State Board meeting, a Notice of Supplemental Rulemaking for the Arizona Early Childhood Education Certification and Endorsement, R7-2-612 and R7-2-613, was approved.⁶ At the meeting, Karen Woodhouse, ADE Director of Early Childhood Education, chronicled the history of the three-year effort to require pre-school teachers to

be certified and to have college degrees. This supplemental rulemaking includes modifications to allow grandfathering provisions for existing kindergarten teachers.

At the August 30, 2004, meeting, the State Board was asked by Woodhouse to consider and approve a Notice of Supplemental Rulemaking for the Arizona Early Childhood Education Certification and Endorsement R7-2-612 (I)(J) and R7-2-613(L). This rule stipulated that teachers who serve children from birth through kindergarten in a public school setting become certified teachers. Educators already certified in another area may add the Early Childhood Endorsement to an existing certification to meet the requirements and enhance their qualifications as early childhood educators. This proposal was approved by the State Board at the December 6, 2004, meeting.

Program Review

Teacher preparation programs approved by the State Board contain an Institutional Recommendation (IR) that teacher candidates submit to the Certification Unit at ADE for teacher certification. The criteria for State Board approval of teacher preparation programs is intimately connected with questions about teacher certification, quality preparation, and quality teachers. At the February 23, 2004, meeting, Kathy Wiebke, ADE Deputy Associate Superintendent for the Highly Qualified Professionals Division, presented the problem of IRs currently issued for professional preparation programs that have changed over time and are different from the original application approved by the State Board. The old rubric and requirements of this review had a lack of standard quality criteria. It is extremely difficult to judge the quality of a program using the old system, and the review team members relied on the teacher certification rule, which required 45 semester hours of education course work for elementary teachers and 30 for secondary teachers. Adding to this challenge is the lack of records of past program evaluations and approvals. Currently, there are 16 institutions of higher education (IHEs) that have received IR status.⁷

At the March 29, 2004, meeting, the State Board agreed to cease providing IRs for endorsements and courses that are not part of a “program.” At the May 24, 2004, meeting, the State Board ruled that new programs submitted by State Board approved

institutions will be evaluated according to the old, existing rubric and, if appropriate, granted conditional approval with the approval date of December 31, 2005. The State Board will not accept applications for new institutions or new program approvals after June 30, 2004, until a better scoring guide is designed. A team of stakeholders in the different teacher preparation programs was authorized to work on developing the rubric over the summer. The proposed Teacher Preparation Program Evaluation was presented to the State Board on October 25, 2004. This draft proposed seven components and three ratings for each standard. This encompasses a three-part process: preliminary review, program evaluation, and a site visit.

The shift to requiring evidence of proficiency in those areas that need to be mastered was a noteworthy change. This evaluation is a standards-based system with the measure of mastery aligned with the following:

- Arizona Professional Teaching Standards
- Arizona Professional Administrator Standards
- Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC)
- Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Administrator Standards

The proposed procedures for the approval of professional preparation programs were given final approval by the State Board on February 28, 2005.

Tiered Certification

Tiered certification is a means to recognize years of service, outstanding performance, and contributions to the teaching profession. Governor Napolitano's vision of a Master Teacher focuses on individuals who not only excel in their own classroom, but also help others as they step through their own professional development.

On September 27, 2004, the Governor sent a representative, Becky Hill, to present a Recommended Definition and Framework for the Governor's Master Teacher initiative. The method for nominating candidates for this program includes self-nominations, but all nominations would be required to go through a selection committee.⁸

The program recognizes, rewards, and advances skills of Master Teachers and would develop a new core of Master Teachers through mentoring, funding professional development opportunities, and providing the opportunity for a national board certificate. The area needing to be clarified is how to credential the Master Teacher. The emphasis is to start on a small scale as lessons are learned along the way in order to grow into a successful program.

On October 25, 2004, the State Board reviewed a presentation and discussion regarding certification reform. This included updates from the Performance Assessment Subcommittee. The committee is working on a possible four-level tiered certification system:

- Initial
- Proficient
- Standard
- Master

This is an ongoing initiative within ADE and the State Board. At the time of publication of this brief, the Master Teacher designation has been lifted from the proposed certification system. This is a tacit recognition of the emotional and critical definition baggage around the use of the term Master Teacher. Key to these discussions, embedded within this topic, is the last item, performance assessment for teachers. It is in the best interests of children, parents, teachers, and administrators that this performance assessment is a fair measure.

Performance Assessment

One of the primary issues in most discussions about certification this past year at State Board meetings was performance assessment. Performance assessment is required by State Board Rules to move from a provisional to a standard certificate, but the requirement has never been implemented. The definition is vague and needs to be more clear and specific about what it is, how it is measured, and whether it should be the principal's job to perform the assessment.

At the October 25, 2004, meeting, the Performance Assessment Subcommittee reported that it was examining models from other states and that a teacher excellence through compensation model would coordinate with existing professional development strategies and resources within the state. Another important component under consideration by the subcommittee was the planning and implementation of training for mentors and assessors. Some cost would be incurred by local districts, and the subcommittee recommended piloting this program in volunteer districts. This model is based on Arizona's professional teaching standards and includes:

- Specified portfolio requirements (i.e. evidence of use of Arizona Teaching Standards and examples of good teaching).
- A redefined assessment rubric.
- Responsibilities of the involved education entities.
- Rationale for meeting each sub-objective of the Professional Teaching Standards in Board Rules, R7-2-602.
- Recommended implementation timeline.

The subcommittee is clear that the assessment needs to be doable, sustainable, and flexible. The implementation timeline, imposed by the Attorney General's ruling, is June 2005.

Available Data

The analysis in this brief is based on an in-depth review of the online minutes of the Arizona State Board of Education meetings from January 19, 2004, to March 14, 2005. These State Board meetings are open to the public; minutes from each meeting are public record and are published online.⁹ As noted in the introduction of this brief, the mission for the State Board encompasses almost all aspects of public education. Decisions made at the meetings and changes in State Board Rules affect students and institutions pre-K through college. The time period under analysis, 15 months, was particularly productive with critical changes made to State Board Rules and initiatives begun that will in turn make more changes to Arizona's educational system and

definitions of teacher quality. The discussions at the State Board meetings and the subsequent changes in State Board Rules were key indicators that this was an overlooked source of current information concerning issues of teacher quality in the state. Careful study of the detailed minutes of each meeting with an analysis of the topics under discussion highlighted the focus of the State Board's concerns. Mapping the topics across each meeting for content, substantive changes, and frequency of presentations yielded the five areas discussed in this brief that directly affect teacher quality. These were the five most frequent issues discussed relating to teacher quality as measured by number of times presented and action items taken. Once these five topics were identified, each State Board presentation on each topic was analyzed. A synthesis of State Board discussions on each topic was mapped across a timeline framework set up for individual topics and analyzed for scope and progression of development. The results from the analysis highlighted the background conversations and emerging policy decisions. Most have been codified into State Board Rules.

Findings/Policy Implications

Structured English Immersion

The impact of the State Board's decision to require all educators without an English as a Second Language (ESL) Endorsement or a Bilingual Education Endorsement to have a full Structured English Immersion (SEI) Endorsement by 2009 has extensive ramifications for the training and professional development of teachers. Teacher quality now has a new and very specific component as determined and ruled by the State Board: training in SEI. The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) now requires the local educational agencies (LEAs)—in other words, schools—to report the number of SEI endorsed teachers, ESL endorsed teachers, and Bilingual endorsed teachers on their Arizona School Report Card.

The State Board's policies also will affect institutions of higher education (IHEs), requiring them to add a new course to their preparation programs for educators. In turn, this will require IHEs to submit course syllabi for approval to ADE's English Acquisition Services Division. The curricular framework approved by the State Board has specific

guidelines.¹⁰ The Provisional and Full Endorsements include objectives with specific content and clock hours assigned to them. The ADE Certification Unit's "SEI Endorsement K-12 Requirements" information sheet notes that all coursework must be on the Arizona English Acquisition SEI Approval List. IHEs across the state are following the curricular framework guides, submitting proposed course syllabi for approval, and making the appropriate program changes within their institutions. LEAs may also provide professional development course work in SEI under the same rules.

Early Childhood Teacher Certification

Pre-school teachers and child care workers have been some of the lowest paid workers in the state. These personnel can least afford the tuition necessary to obtain a certificate, as the State Board will require of all early education personnel. It was pointed out by Becky Hill from the Governor's office that the School Readiness Board targets how to provide scholarships and has a partnership with one university with a grant award of \$1.6 million to train early childhood educators.¹¹

Concerns were raised by State Board member Joanne Hilde about (1) the possible loss to programs of long-term but not certified staff, (2) unintended consequences, and (3) the increased cost of certified teachers. Further discussion revealed that a five-year time frame was built into the plan to provide time for compliance. With this action, the nexus of change within the state came out of a consortium of the Governor, an ad-hoc committee, the ADE Early Childhood Unit, and the State Board. The result has completely changed the definition within the state of what a quality early childhood educator/teacher is.¹²

Program Review

A standards-based evaluation is a major change from the old method of teaching program review. The impact will be felt around the state as institutions and faculty engage in the process of re-examining their own programs in light of the new evaluation system. The significance of a standards-based program for teacher quality involves the change in focus from the number of course hours to course content and program alignment to standards with evidence of mastery. Discussions of this issue focused on

what content knowledge, skills, and pedagogies were gained from teacher education programs as well as professional habits and dispositions. Several times across the sample of meeting minutes, a State Board member stressed the importance of teachers learning how to write lesson plans based on the Arizona Standards. That message has been forcefully sent in this standards-based evaluation method.

Tiered Certification

Governor Napolitano requested that public forums be held on a four-tiered certification system that would offer teachers who wish to distinguish themselves in the profession an opportunity to demonstrate their effectiveness. It is significant that professional development was recognized as necessary to attain this level of achievement. There has been a positive year one review of the pilot program.

Advanced certification will be available for exemplary performance in the profession and for those who adhere to and pursue licensure standards determined by the state. Having a Master Teacher certification would give educators something to work toward and to aspire to. While not all teachers may wish to engage in this pursuit, some certainly would. At present, there are very few incentives for teachers to continue professional development through graduate courses, professional workshops, or self study. While many teachers participate in professional development activities, these are seldom recognized or rewarded.

Performance Assessment

At the December 6, 2004, State Board meeting, the Performance Assessment Subcommittee presented a draft of the teaching standards portfolio and rubric. The final draft of the performance assessment materials is scheduled to be presented to the State Board by the end of this year. This is an extremely complex task with many stakeholders involved. It is yet another example of another definition of teacher quality being worked out in collaboration with practitioners, IHEs, ADE, and the State Board. There are many voices in this discussion, and the outcome is especially important to teachers as well as their students. It is equally important to teacher preparation institutions as another dimension of assessment is put forward to measure teacher quality.

These five recurring topics in presentations and discussions at the State Board are indicators of change in teacher quality in the state and were chosen because they are indicators of a quiet revolution. These five topics demonstrate that definitions of quality, competency, and professionalism are being discussed and debated. As a result of this, State Board Rules are being made that will have an impact on students, teachers, parents, and institutions of higher education. The investigation of the State Board minutes revealed that this is an important lens to examine current trends and policy decisions concerning education in our state. All stakeholders need to be critically informed of these conversations of policy and practice; it is important that many voices are represented.

Recommendations

After reviewing the relevant State Board minutes and examining the data within them, it is recommended that:

1. The Arizona State Board of Education amend its rules to institute an attendance policy to ensure that major stakeholders are represented and part of policy decision making.
2. The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) establish a database of information listing K-12 classroom teachers' program preparation, date of certification, and years of teaching experience as well as any transfer experience and certification from other states. Such data, currently unavailable, are critical to determining the quality of teachers in the state. For example, one hypothesis for low student performance on standardized testing in Arizona is that there are far more new teachers in classrooms than in other states. Is the revolving door to the classroom swinging faster in Arizona? Without such a database, answers to these questions are speculation at best.
3. ADE continue and expand its already considerable effort to include major stakeholders in committee and subcommittee work that eventually appears before the State Board, so that all committees engage a broad base of representation across the state.

Notes & References

¹ Arizona State Board of Education. (n.d.). *Mission and program description*. Retrieved May 2, 2005, from <http://www.ade.state.az.us/stateboard/mp.asp>

² *Ibid.*

³ Article XI: Education, 3. Arizona Constitution. Retrieved April 11, 2005, from <http://ade.state.az.us/stateboard/>

Article XI reads:

The state board of education shall be composed of the following members: the superintendent of public instruction, the president of a state university or a state college, four lay members, a president or chancellor of a community college district, a person who is an owner or administrator of a charter school, a superintendent of a high school district, a classroom teacher, and a county school superintendent.

⁴ Board Rules can be found at:

Education: State Board of Education, Arizona Administrative Code, Title 7, Chapter 2. Retrieved May 10, 2005, from http://www.azsos.gov/public_services/Title_07/7-02.htm .

⁵ Rulemaking in General, Arizona Rulemaking Manual, Section 1. (2002, November). Retrieved March 11, 2005, from http://www.azsos.gov/public_services/rulemakingmanual/2001/section1.pdf

⁶ Education: State Board of Education—Early Childhood Education Certification, Arizona Administrative Code, Title 7, Chapter 2, Article 6. Retrieved May 10, 2005, from <http://ade.state.az.us/stateboard/downloads/EarlyChildhoodEducationCertification.pdf>

⁷ The 16 institutions with IR status are: ASU Tempe, ASU East, ASU West, Arizona Teachers Institute, Apollo, Grand Canyon University, Northern Arizona University, Ottawa University, Pima Community College, Prescott College, Rio Salado College, Scottsdale Community College, Southwestern College, University of Arizona, University of Phoenix, and Western Governor's University.

See:

Wiebke, K. (2004, February 23). *Presentation and discussion regarding R7-2-604: Professional preparation programs, teacher preparation program requirements, and teacher certification task force discussions* [Powerpoint presentation]. Presented to the Arizona State Board of Education board meeting. Summary of presentation available in the meeting minutes, p. 3. Retrieved March 19, 2005, from <http://ade.state.az.us/stateboard/minutes/02-23-04.pdf>

⁸ Hill, B. (2004, September 27). *Presentation and discussion and consideration to approve a recommended definition and framework for the governor's "master teacher" initiative to forward to the governor*. Special presentation to the Arizona State Board of Education board meeting. Summary of presentation available in the meeting minutes, pp. 7-8. Retrieved March 19, 2005, from <http://ade.state.az.us/stateboard/minutes/09-27-04.pdf>

According to Hill, the benefits and responsibilities in the master teacher program include:

- Mentor peers in the classroom and out of the classroom
- Three years of service as a master teacher
- May stay in their own districts
- May decide to continue mentoring or return to their own classroom

- Help teachers advance to a higher level
- Refinement in skills
- Funding for up to 10 teachers at a time
- Districts supported partial financial support to hire a new teacher when moving a master teacher out of the classroom
- Invest in National Board Certification keeping Arizona competitive at the national level
- Requires teachers to build portfolio

⁹ Arizona State Board of Education. (n.d.). *State board minutes*. Available at:
<http://ade.state.az.us/stateboard/minutes/default.asp>

¹⁰ Moreno, I. (2005, January 24). *Presentation, discussion, and consideration to approve the curricular framework for the provisional and full structured English Immersion Endorsements*. Presentation to the Arizona State Board of Education board meeting. Summary of presentation available in the meeting minutes, p. 8. Retrieved March 19, 2005, from
<http://ade.state.az.us/stateboard/minutes/01-24-05.pdf>

¹¹ Woodhouse, K. (2004, March 29). *Presentation, discussion, and possible consideration to approve notice of Supplemental Rulemaking for R7-2-612 and R7-2-613 regarding early childhood education certificates and endorsements*. Summary of presentation available in the meeting minutes, pp. 11-12. Retrieved March 19, 2005, from
<http://ade.state.az.us/stateboard/minutes/03-29-04.pdf>

¹² Arizona State Board of Education. (2004, December 6). *Board meeting minutes*. Retrieved March 10, 2005, from <http://ade.state.az.us/stateboard/minutes/default.asp>

For the rule change, see:

Education: State Board of Education—Early Childhood Education Certification, Arizona Administrative Code, Title 7, Chapter 2, Article 6. Retrieved May 10, 2005, from
<http://ade.state.az.us/stateboard/downloads/EarlyChildhoodEducationCertification.pdf>