

TEACHER QUALITY: RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND RESOURCES

(Adopted by Convention Delegates April 2001)

Reviewed by Board of Managers March 2012

- WHEREAS, The California State PTA believes that all children and youth should have the opportunity, through free public education, to develop to their full potential, and that educators and the general public should unite in efforts to secure for all children and youth the highest advantages of physical, mental, social and spiritual education; and
- WHEREAS, Research shows that teacher quality – the combination of teacher knowledge, skills and expertise – is the single most important educational resource influencing student learning and academic performance; and
- WHEREAS, California teachers possess varying qualifications and levels of preparedness, and many do not possess certification in the subject matter they teach, and have a limited understanding of how to teach students from diverse backgrounds with an array of learning styles; and
- WHEREAS, A high number of teachers currently in California classrooms have only an emergency teaching permit or waiver, and a disproportionate number serve in low performing schools; and
- WHEREAS, Studies show that high quality teacher preparation along a continuum that includes well supervised and supported student-teaching experience in the areas of classroom management, lesson-planning and curriculum implementation, and induction programs that provide support and assistance for beginning teachers, contribute to a more highly skilled teacher corps and to increased teacher retention, as well as to student achievement; and
- WHEREAS, High quality, standards-based and subject-relevant professional development, (including teacher in-service and continuing education) that is well planned and carefully targeted to help both new and experienced teachers improve their skills and expertise promotes opportunities for individual academic success for children; and
- WHEREAS, To sustain a high-quality, credentialed teaching pool, schools must have funding sufficient to provide compensation for teachers that is comparable to other professionals, necessary classroom supplies and teacher materials, teacher support, adequate teacher resources and improved working conditions; now therefore be it

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RESOLVED, That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts work to educate their membership and the general public about the need for quality teachers who are knowledgeable in their subject matter and teaching methods, and who are able to provide learning opportunities that enable all children to develop to their full potential; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA and its units, councils, and districts advocate for and support state and local policies, programs and practices that promote the recruitment, hiring and retention of well prepared, fully credentialed teachers, and that reduce California’s dependence on emergency teaching permits and waivers; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts advocate for:

- Rigorous, standards-based teacher preparation programs that prepare competent, credentialed teachers;
- Policies and programs that provide financial and profession-based incentives that encourage individuals to enter and remain in the teaching profession;
- Implementation of policies and programs that support beginning teachers; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA and its units, councils, and districts advocate that appropriate state and local agencies provide for all teachers high-quality, standards-based professional development and continuing teacher education programs for which they are compensated, aimed at assisting both new teachers and experienced teachers to improve their teaching skills, methodologies and practices; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA advocate for sufficient state funding to provide for teacher salaries competitive with other professions, materials essential to the performance of teaching responsibilities, and teacher support, including but not limited to mentoring, peer assistance, networking and team building.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The demand for teachers in California has grown dramatically during the 1990s and is expected to continue to increase. According to a recent report, *Teaching and California’s Future – The Status of the Teaching Profession*, at least 26,000 new teachers are needed each year. Study after study has demonstrated the strong relationship between teacher quality and student learning. But more than one in ten classrooms in the state are staffed with teachers who have not met the state’s minimum qualifications, and a third of new teachers quit within their first three years on the job.

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Teacher candidates who come from rigorous, well designed teacher preparation programs make the easiest transition to the classroom, are most likely to remain in the teaching profession, and are the most satisfied with their chosen field. Induction programs that support beginning teachers help transition individuals from learning about teaching to being good teachers. Induction programs result in improved teaching and student success because of the focus on professional teamwork and student progress. As standards rise for what all California students are expected to know and be able to do, so must the standard qualifications rise for teachers as they enter the classroom and begin to gain the necessary experience that increases their skills. States with high achieving school systems have beginning teachers with solid liberal arts backgrounds, expertise in their subject areas and in teaching methodology, and extensive student teaching experience before even entering the profession.

Teachers who regularly participate in professional development, in-service and continuing education are more confident and competent in their field. They bring more knowledge to the classroom, not only in their subject but how to teach it. When teachers experience quality professional development pertinent to their field of study, they become more effective and are able to enrich the educational environment in which children learn. Professional development must be a continuing process and ALL teachers must participate. States that have year-round, continuing professional development, paid in-service conferences throughout the year, and an extended school year (e.g., one week at the beginning and one at the end) for staff development help teachers do a better job educating students.

RAND, a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decision-making through research and analysis, states, “The role of compensation is very important in attracting and keeping quality teachers, including increase to teacher pay to be more competitive with other occupations... the move to link salary with performance is based on sound economic theory.” RAND also explains that poor working conditions and lack of equipment, materials and space adds to frustration. In addition to improved working conditions, other needed incentives include better work environments, mentoring, peer assistance and networking.