

# State Policies That Work

# RAISING EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT



A Series of Policy Briefs from the Policy Matters Project

Brief No. 3

## INTRODUCTION

The well being of young children and their families is significantly related to their success in school. States wishing to improve children’s long-term prospects for success must consider the enactment of policies that strengthen the educational achievement of students and the quality of education provided.

*Educational Success* is defined as the ability of all students to perform at high levels of proficiency, graduate from high school, and obtain post-secondary education and training. A variety of policies, including those that govern teacher and school quality, student achievement, access to postsecondary institutions, and equitable school finance, impact the ability of students to learn successfully and achieve greater long-term well-being.

This brief is a companion to a complete policy and research paper that reviews factors affecting the educational success of students and offers a beginning framework for state policy. The complete paper is one in a series of papers available from CSSP at [www.cssp.org](http://www.cssp.org). Policy and research papers and companion “Policies That Work” briefs are available for six core outcomes: family economic success, school readiness, healthy families, educational success, youth engagement, and strong family relationships. Interested readers may obtain these publications from the CSSP website ([www.cssp.org](http://www.cssp.org)) or by calling the Center at 202-371-1565.

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State education policies aim to assure that students of elementary and secondary schools graduate from high school as proficient learners, engage in postsecondary education, and graduate with a postsecondary degree or credential. To accomplish these basic educational outcomes, state policies must address these five key areas:

- Teacher quality;
- School quality;
- Student achievement;
- Postsecondary education; and
- Education finance.

## Teacher Quality Policies and Benchmarks

Following the influences of the home and family, teaching quality is the biggest predictor of student educational success. There is substantial research evidence documenting that students with highly qualified teachers make the best academic progress, without regard to socioeconomic factors. With passage of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) of 2001, states and districts are under increasing pressure to better define “highly qualified” teachers and to do more to ensure that children have access to them. This requires that state governments pay close attention to the training, recruitment, retention, and compensation of a strong teacher workforce.

### POLICY 1

#### Teacher Education and Qualifications

State policies can create a more equitable distribution of quality teachers by ensuring that schools with large numbers of economically and culturally disadvantaged students and rural schools get well-qualified teachers. Moreover, an emerging research-based consensus defines the notion of “well-qualified” teacher as a teacher with deep knowledge in course content and how students learn, and competency in teaching; creating positive learning environments; assessment strategies; collaborating with parents, colleagues, and communities; and the pursuit of professional growth.<sup>1</sup> The training and education teachers receive is an important predictor of their teaching success. To better prepare prospective teachers for the classroom, state policy should strengthen course work, licensure, and exit exam requirements for teaching.

**1.1 Teacher Content Knowledge.** One predictor of teacher quality is the level of content knowledge a teacher possesses for the subjects they teach. For example, research demonstrates that teachers of high school math and science with a college major in the subjects they teach elicit greater student gains than out-of-field teachers. While research does not

demonstrate consistent results for master's level education, an undergraduate major in the field of teaching has a greater effect on teacher quality and student performance than a certification.<sup>2</sup> And yet, 15 to 22 percent of middle-grade students in English, math, and science had teachers who lacked a postsecondary major, minor, or certification in these subjects. Thirty to 40 percent of students in biology, life science, and English as a second language (ESL) had such teachers.<sup>3</sup> At the classroom level, teachers lacking even a college minor in their subject area teach 24 percent of all secondary classes in core academic subjects. For classrooms in high poverty areas, teachers without a minor in the subject instruct 34 percent of classrooms.<sup>4</sup> However, there is some positive news regarding state policy requirements for content knowledge and teacher education. Thirty-eight states currently require middle and high school teachers to possess a bachelor's degree with a major or minor in an academic content area for certification. Consequently, half of the nation's newest teachers – compared to 32 to 41 percent of more experienced teachers – now possess an academic major.<sup>5</sup> States should require all teachers to have a bachelor's degree in the subjects they teach.

**1.2 Emergency and Provisional Licenses.** To meet an increasingly serious shortfall in the supply of teachers, schools nationwide awarded teacher waivers or provisional licenses to six percent of all teachers. In some states, waivers accounted for more than 10 percent of the teacher population. Only four states reported having a 100 percent certification rate and 21 report less than one percent. However, the relatively low statewide number of provisional teachers masks a disproportionate distribution of teachers holding temporary provisional or emergency teacher licenses. As much as eighteen to 23 percent of teachers in some high-poverty school districts held waivers or provisional licenses, concentrating some of the least prepared candidates in areas with the greatest need for quality teachers.<sup>6</sup> Some states, like New York, prohibit teachers with provisional or temporary licenses from teaching in low-performing schools. At minimum, state teacher qualification policy should require schools to limit the number and term of service for emergency and provisional teachers who serve as lead teachers in each school.

**1.3 Praxis or Exit Examination Requirements.** Another way to ensure that only quality teachers enter the teacher workforce is to require prospective teachers to demonstrate minimum levels of skill and knowledge appropriate for their subject areas and the school curriculum *before* entering the profession. In many states, the minimum level of knowledge or “cut-off” scores on licensure tests is very low. For example, California requirements for the California Basic Educational Skills Test were set at the 10th grade level. Among the 29 states using the Praxis Pre-

Professional Skills Test to assess prospective teachers in math, reading and writing, only Virginia adopted cut-off scores near or above the national median score in all three areas. The remaining states generally established cut-off scores in the 20-30th percentile for math and the 40th percentile or lower for reading. In 2001, 24 states had policies linking teacher certification and student content standards, 8 states were in the process of developing such standards, and 18 states and the District of Columbia did not have standards set.<sup>7</sup> States should require that graduates of teacher preparation courses or schools of education take Praxis or exit examinations with cut-off scores at the 40th percentile of the national median. In addition, state policy should require that state certification requirements be aligned with student content standards.

## **POLICY 2** **Hiring Incentives and Compensation**

Disparities in the distribution of teachers between affluent and high-poverty communities reflect inequities in the allocation of resources and ineffective administrative decisions at the district and school level.<sup>8</sup> Shortages of qualified teachers and significantly high teacher turnover rates make the recruitment, retention and distribution of teachers a pressing problem in many states and districts.<sup>9</sup> To remedy this situation, states most often look to across-the-board teacher salary increases as a strategy for recruiting and retaining quality teachers. However, across-the-board pay increases, while useful, neither fully address the pressing problem of unequal distribution of quality teachers nor do they appropriately reward teachers with higher levels of knowledge, stronger job performance, willingness to teach more difficult subjects and students with more difficult behaviors. States can ensure that communities and students with the greatest needs for highly qualified teachers receive them by combining financial incentives with compensation levels and pay scales commensurate with professional preparation, continuing education, and job performance. For incentives to be maximally effective at improving teacher retention, recruitment, and assignment of highly qualified teachers to low-performing schools, the mix of incentives must be comprehensive and the size of the incentives sufficient.<sup>10</sup> The following policy options should be considered by states:

**2.1 Financial Bonuses for Recruitment and Retention.** Financial bonuses are one strategy for improving the entrance of prospective teachers into the field and for rewarding high performance among incumbent teachers. Financial bonuses can be targeted to prospective teachers, former teachers, and other professionals interested in joining the teaching field and are generally of four types – signing bonuses, bonuses for additional skills and knowledge, bonuses for teaching in certain subject areas, and bonuses for teaching in low-performing or hard-to-staff schools. As of

June 2002, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, and South Carolina offered signing bonuses. Thirty-three states provide salary supplements for teachers awarded the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certificate, with three of these states offering additional bonuses to NBPTS-certified teachers willing to teach in low-performing schools. Four states – New York, Utah, Florida, and Georgia – have adopted legislation authorizing bonuses to teachers willing to teach in high-need subject areas in their states. Louisiana, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, and Alabama offer bonuses to teachers willing to teach and/or provide assistance in low-performing schools.<sup>11</sup> To meet the dual purposes of improving overall teacher performance and of attracting quality teachers to low-performing schools, states should: (a) enact each of these four bonus measures; (b) make bonus measures available to prospective new and former teachers and mid-career professionals interested in entering the field; (c) require 3 or more years of service in low-performing schools as a condition of receiving some bonuses; and (d) enact bonuses sufficient enough to attract teachers to subjects and schools in need of quality teachers. Early evidence suggests that bonuses ranging from 20 to 50 percent of teacher salaries may be needed to attract quality teachers to school settings and subjects posing significant challenges.<sup>12</sup>

**2.2 Skill-based Pay Scales/Certification Bonuses.** Teacher salary scales should provide for salary adjustments indexed to their performance appraisals, skills, and knowledge levels.<sup>13</sup> One of the bonus incentives discussed above – bonuses for additional skills and knowledge – holds promise for significantly impacting the number of quality teachers in low-performing schools. States could define advances in skills and knowledge with the use of state certifications or NBPTS certification. For example, California offers a model certification bonus program that (1) awards all teachers in all schools for acquiring national certification, and (2) offers additional incentives to any nationally certified teacher working in low-performing schools or filling critical need subject areas. All nationally certified teachers receive a one-time \$10,000 bonus. Those agreeing to work in low-performing schools receive an additional \$20,000 bonus – \$5,000 per year for four years of service. In the programs first year of operation (2000-2001), nearly 50 percent of California's nationally certified teachers elected to serve in low-performing schools. In the second year, close to 60 percent taught in such schools. Nearly 2,700 Maryland teachers are earning bonuses of \$2,000 per year for helping to close the quality teacher gap in low-performing schools. Florida's teachers receive \$1,000 per year.<sup>14</sup> States should use certification bonuses linked to service in low-performing schools as a strategy for creating better access to highly qualified teachers. States also should use certification

bonuses to support mentor relationships between nationally certified teachers and beginning teachers in low-performing schools.

### **2.3 Tuition Reimbursement, Loan Forgiveness, and Teaching Fellowships.**

Tuition reimbursement, loan forgiveness, and teaching fellowship programs generally cover some or all of a prospective teacher's education costs in exchange for an agreed upon term of service in the public school system. Once teachers have completed their terms of service, the state either pays the lender on behalf of the teacher or waives tuition costs. Teachers who fail to fulfill the term of their agreement must repay any grants or loans outstanding. Several states fund reimbursement, loan forgiveness or fellowship programs. For example, California's Assumption Program of Loans for Education pays \$11,000 to lenders for student loans for any teacher agreeing to teach full-time for four years. If the teacher is certified in math, science or special education the state pays an additional \$4,000 and another \$4,000 if the teacher agrees to serve in a low-performing school. Between 1998 and 2001, participation in California's program grew from 400 to 6,500 teachers. Alabama, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia offer similar scholarship or loan forgiveness programs.<sup>15</sup> States should make their teacher recruitment and retention incentive packages more complete by offering loan forgiveness, scholarship, or fellowship programs that link service in public schools to forgiveness of tuition costs.

**2.4 Housing Incentives.** Housing incentives are another way states can attract highly qualified teachers and administrators, especially in areas with high housing costs or facing high teacher demand. Housing incentives offer a number of advantages, including their ability to connect teachers to the community, make home ownership more affordable, attract teachers to rural and remote areas, and help decrease turnover. In addition, school districts may be able to offer housing incentives for little or no cost. Housing incentives include relocation assistance, reduced or free rent and utilities, housing loans and grants, reduced mortgage rates or home costs, down-payment assistance, and tax credits. California, Connecticut and Mississippi offer various housing incentive programs to its teacher workforce. Implementation evidence from states offering such incentives also indicates that housing incentive programs should be tied to teacher willingness to serve for a specified term, usually three to four years.<sup>16</sup>

**2.5 Parity in Salary Scales.** On average, new college graduates in fields other than teaching earned approximately \$40,000 per year. In 2000-2001, average teacher pay for beginning teachers surpassed \$30,000 for the first time in history. However, the salary gap between beginning teachers and college graduates widened between 1995 and 2001. And while increases in experienced teacher salaries were somewhat smaller than gains for

beginning teachers, experienced teacher salaries did outpace inflation in four of five years between 1998 and 2003.<sup>17</sup> Between 2000-2002, eleven states adopted teacher salary increases.<sup>18</sup> Such increases usually were made in an attempt to bring teacher salaries up to the national average and to prevent the attrition of teachers seeking better pay in other states, districts, or careers.<sup>19</sup> To improve pay parity between teachers and other white collar professions, states should increase beginning and experienced teacher pay to the national average. States should also tie a portion of these enhanced incentives to mentoring younger teachers in troubled schools.

## Quality Schools Policies

Researchers, analysts, and advocates have identified numerous state policies that are useful for establishing and maintaining high quality schools. Recent evaluations of reform measures undertaken in four metropolitan school systems confirm that system-wide, comprehensive approaches achieve greater improvements in student progress in mathematics and reading than do school-by-school approaches.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, attending high-quality kindergarten classes improves the academic performance of children in later grades.<sup>21</sup> To improve the overall quality of schools, lawmakers should consider improvements in school curriculums; school and class size; inclusion of students with disabilities, low-income students and minority students; and school and community connections.

### **POLICY 3** Curriculum Requirements

Unlike most other industrialized countries, there is no national standard curriculum in the United States. And while very few states provide more than “curriculum frameworks” or lists of textbooks for local adoption, there are signs of positive change, especially in the area of early reading. At the high school level, state policy has begun to address certain tracking issues by eliminating the “general” track and requiring that schools offer upper-level and advanced placement courses. Continued improvements in the quality of school curriculums is an important step in improving overall school quality.

**3.1 Curriculum Frameworks in Core Subjects.** In a review of state standards and accountability systems, the Fordham Foundation found modest improvements in the specificity, measurability, and content of state standards. According to the report, between 1998 and 2000, the number of states receiving “honors” recognition for their standards in English rose from 6 to 19, in history from 4 to 10, in geography from 6 to 15, in math from 12 to 18, and in science from 13 to 19. Nine states, up from three in 1998, managed an honors rating in all five subjects.<sup>22</sup> The use of strong curriculums for core subjects helps to ensure that all children receive adequate instruction and skills in subjects necessary for academic and

career success. One national research study found that completing a rigorous high school curriculum was strongly related to student persistence and staying on track to a bachelor's degree in postsecondary education.<sup>23</sup> Giving this growing evidence and progress, states should prescribe curriculum frameworks that meet professional standards in each of five core subjects – math, science, language arts, history and geography.

**3.2 Upper-level and Advanced Placement Courses.** Advanced Placement (AP) courses provide students with challenging secondary educational experiences and help students become better prepared for higher education. However, not all students have access to rigorous courses, making it more difficult to compete for admission into some universities. Specifically, minority students, inner-city and rural students, students from low-income families, high-poverty schools, and families where parents have less than a high school diploma are most likely to have limited access to AP courses.<sup>24</sup> Completion of challenging courses and subject-matter tests benefit students by making them eligible for college honors courses, earning them college credits prior to beginning their college careers, and helping them remain successfully engaged in postsecondary education.<sup>25</sup> In 2000, 22 states enacted legislation to improve access to challenging academic content in subjects as diverse as English, math, science, foreign languages, statistics, art and music theory. Generally, state policy measures varied, including: mandated course offerings (4 states), financial incentives to districts and schools providing AP courses and improving student performance (12 states), teacher training in teaching AP courses (7 states), subsidies for student tests following completion of AP courses (9 states), and accountability incentives for schools or districts offering AP courses (8 states).<sup>26</sup> To ensure educational equity in course offerings, states should mandate the offering of AP courses statewide and enact at least two of the other strategies to ensure that students in high-poverty communities have access to challenging course instruction. In 2000, three of the four states mandating AP courses would meet this benchmark.

**3.3 General Track Prohibition.** Because rigorous courses are better suited for preparing students, states should prohibit “general track” curriculum options in secondary schools. These below core curriculums do not require students to learn the skills and content necessary for academic, job, career, and life success. Little more than half of students participating in such courses and enrolling in four-year institutions remain continuously enrolled. Students from core or less than core curriculums are nearly twice as likely to transfer, and are five times more likely to drop out of college than their peers in rigorous classes.<sup>27</sup> Rather than diluting school curriculums, states should ensure that course work for students

not choosing advanced classes be equally as rigorous in expectations and standards for skills development.<sup>28</sup> One approach for meeting this aim is the integration of vocational and academic course work and materials for students in skill-training curricula, which results in significantly improved levels of achievement and greater likelihood that students will go on to enroll in post-secondary education.<sup>29</sup> States should eliminate low-level courses or tracks from school curriculums.

## **POLICY 4** **Supports for Including All Students**

Education inclusion policies focus specifically on two student populations: children of immigrant families and children with disabilities. The focus on immigrant students generally involves the provision of bilingual or English-as-a-second-language (ESL) programs for English language learners. This is a controversial issue with wide policy variations among states. Second, there is general consensus that students with disabilities should be educated with their non-disabled peers to the extent practicable. Specifically, states should adopt:

**4.1 Bilingual and English-as-a-second-language (ESL) Programs.** Between the 1997-98 and the 2001-02 school years, about eight percent of the total public school enrollment were English language learners.<sup>30</sup> However, the total number of ELL students grew by over 310,000 students in one school year,<sup>31</sup> with greater concentration in urban school districts. For example, more than 36 districts enrolled 10,000 or more English language learners in the 1998-99 school year.<sup>32</sup> And though enrollment of foreign-born immigrant children in secondary school outpaces enrollment of such children in elementary school, significantly smaller numbers of immigrant children receive ELL instruction in middle or high school than those in elementary schools.<sup>33</sup> With this increased enrollment, however, has come some disagreement regarding the best methods and policies for instructing ELL students. On the one hand, some argue for English-only or “sheltered” English instruction and dissolution of bilingual education. Consistent with this approach, ballot initiatives in California (1998) and Arizona (2000) implemented “sheltered” English immersion programs for ELL students, aimed partially at moving language-minority students more quickly into mainstream academic classes.<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, traditional ESL or bilingual programs do not require any time limit for instruction. They do generally place some emphasis on acquiring English proficiency, interacting with English-speaking peers in other classrooms as soon as possible, and acquiring skills for grade promotion and graduation.<sup>35</sup> While the conceptual debate continues, there is little research to support selection of any particular program, nor is there a compelling answer to the question of how long language instruction is required. In a review of

three research studies and practices in six states, the GAO found that four to eight years appear warranted for becoming proficient in English in all subjects. They also found that most programs last four years or less. Though no consensus exists for either the definition of proficiency or how long it takes to achieve it, the studies reviewed by the GAO suggest that approximately four years are needed for ELL students to develop language skills commensurate with their English-speaking peers.<sup>36</sup> Based upon this tentative finding, state policy should ensure that ELL students receive between three and five years of bilingual and English-as-a-second-language support. States should also require teachers in ESL and bilingual/dual language classrooms to hold certifications in teaching these subjects. Of the 37 states offering ESL teacher certification and the 23 that offer bilingual/dual language certification, 23 require teachers in ESL classrooms and 17 require teachers in bilingual/dual language classrooms to have the appropriate certification.<sup>37</sup>

**4.2 Inclusion of Children with Disabilities.** With passage of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, states have been required to educate children with disabilities in the “least restrictive environment.” This requirement was reinforced in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997. Increasingly, the least restrictive environment has come to mean the regular classroom for many students with disabilities, and greater attention is being paid to the actual outcomes experienced by students with disabilities. Between the 1988-89 and the 1998-99 school years, the percentage of students spending at least 80 percent of their school time in classrooms providing the general curriculum increased from 31 percent to 47 percent. This improvement has occurred even though the population of students with disabilities has outgrown increases in total school enrollments. Increases were greatest for students with specific learning disabilities and smallest among students with multiple disabilities and students who are deaf and blind.<sup>38</sup> To meet the intent of federal legislation, states should set a policy goal of including at least 50 percent of students with disabilities in regular classrooms for their school instruction.

**4.3 Individualized Education Plans.** Another way states can ensure that students with special needs are included in the regular school environment is to require all children with disabilities to have individualized education plans (IEP) and financial support for any required services. Nationally, over 6.3 million students or 13.3 percent of all students had IEPs in the 2001-2002 school year.<sup>39</sup> This is up from 6 million or 12.8 percent the previous school year.<sup>40</sup>

## **POLICY 5** **Class and School Size**

Over the past few years, reduction of class size, particularly in the early elementary grades, has been the subject of federal and state policymaking and evaluation. One systematic examination of variation in test scores among states for students of similar family backgrounds found that lower pupil-teacher ratios, especially in the lower grades, explained higher achievement levels.<sup>41</sup> Some states have moved to reduce average class size for all schools; others require reductions only in high-poverty schools. In addition to smaller class size, smaller school enrollments are associated with higher levels of student achievement than is now typical in urban middle and high schools. To address the policy of class and school size, states should adopt:

**5.1 Class Size Standards for K-3.** Class size reduction is a popular school reform measure among teachers, administrators, parents and policymakers. And although some argue that class size reduction is too expensive as a strategy compared to some other strategies,<sup>42</sup> research on the relationship between class size and student achievement is generally viewed as providing some support for the efficacy of smaller classes on a range of outcomes, especially in the early grades. Moreover, class size reduction should be viewed as one strategy to be combined with others such as improving teacher quality.<sup>43</sup> Twenty-one states have invested \$2.3 billion in class size reduction efforts since the 1980s. The federal government, through its 1998 Class Size Reduction Program, has invested another \$1.2 billion in lowering class size in the early grades. The federal program recommends no more than 18 students per class nationwide.<sup>44</sup> Some research indicates that a class size of 18 or fewer students per classroom is necessary if gains in student achievement are to be realized.<sup>45</sup> In a randomized experimental study of the effects of class size on student achievement, researchers found that students participating in smaller classes (13-17 students) and beginning such classes earlier rather than later demonstrated significantly greater achievement than students in larger classes (22-26 students), and these effects endured in all school subjects through eighth grade, the last grade at which achievement was measured.<sup>46</sup> Given this research evidence, states should establish a class size standard for kindergarten through grade three at no more than 17 children per teacher.

**5.2 Class Size Standard for Grades 4-12.** The benefits of smaller class size in the early grades appear to endure into high school. States can protect earlier investments in class size reductions in grades K-4 and improve the quality of instruction and attention to students in later grades by keeping class sizes manageable throughout the school years. States should establish a standard ratio of 25 children per teacher as the maximum class size for grades 4-12.<sup>47</sup>

**5.3 Maximum School Enrollment Levels.** Like smaller class size, there is evidence that smaller schools have a positive effect on academic achievement, graduation rates, student behavior, and school safety. Smaller schools also decrease the achievement gap between students in low-income and more affluent communities and schools. While there is no agreed upon definition for small school size, most estimates range from 400 to 600 students for high school.<sup>48</sup> Some argue for small size definitions based upon grade levels rather than total school enrollment, especially where individual schools span a small number of grades (e.g., K-2 versus K-8).<sup>49</sup> Like small class size, critics of small school size reforms argue that the costs are prohibitive. However, the relative cost effectiveness of small schools depends largely on whether the costs are calculated on a per pupil or a per graduate basis. Because small schools graduate students with greater success, per graduate comparisons make small schools equal to or superior to larger schools in terms of cost. The cost-effectiveness of small schools has been demonstrated in both rural and urban states.<sup>50</sup> Given the available research on the effectiveness of small schools, states should consider two policy options. First, states should at least limit the size of schools in all low-income, highly concentrated neighborhoods. Second, states should set maximum school size limits at the elementary (151-250 total students), middle (300-400 students) and high school (450-600 students) levels.

## **POLICY 6** **Community Connections**

Policies that enable and strengthen community involvement in public education result in enhanced quality, increased public support, and expanded educational options for students. In addition, by fostering greater connections with their surrounding communities, schools contribute to the positive civic and social development of young people. To enhance a school's connection to the community, states should adopt:

**6.1 School-to-Work Programs.** School-to-work programs now exist in all states and many – but not all – public secondary schools. Evaluations show that they contribute to successful completion of high school and to perceived likelihood of future labor market activity.<sup>51</sup> Other research indicates that youth employment programs have positive impacts on student achievement motivation, school engagement, and educational expectations.<sup>52</sup> Though no overwhelming consensus regarding school-to-work programs emerges from the research literature, some evidence does exist to suggest states should make investments in such programs as a method for improving student motivation and short-term work prospects.

**6.2 Service-Learning Programs.** One of the principal conclusions of a 2002 synthesis report on youth development by the National Academy of Sciences was that community programs, including ones sponsored by

businesses, service organizations, and government, provide important opportunities for youth to develop personal and social assets.<sup>53</sup> Other research indicates that participants in service learning programs are more competent socially, are personally and socially more responsible, and performed better in the classroom and on state basic skills tests.<sup>54</sup> Though some research on service-learning programs indicates only short term gains for students as a whole, the gains experienced by non-white and educationally disadvantaged young people were significant and the program costs were inexpensive relative to the benefits yielded.<sup>55</sup> In view of this evidence, states should seek to improve school-community connections by making voluntary service learning programs available statewide.

**6.3 Adult Education Programs.** Adults without a high school diploma or with no college education rely on publicly supported adult education programs. The U.S. Department of Education’s 1999 National Household Education Survey, Adult Education Interview, found that 22 percent of adults in the U.S. without a high school education and 57 percent of those with a high school diploma but no college had participated in an adult education program during the past 12 months.<sup>56</sup> However, in most states, long waiting lists exist for adult literacy programs.<sup>57</sup> States can facilitate both quality and accessibility of adult education programs by ensuring adequate access to such services. Some states ensure this by appointing the community college system as the lead agency in literacy initiatives.

## Student Achievement Policies

Nearly all education reform and improvement initiatives have as their goal the improvement of student achievement. And while student achievement is defined in various ways, including performance on standardized tests, classroom performance, and achievement in non-academic activities, there is broad consensus that helping students achieve at higher levels is essential for their long-term academic, career and work, financial, and personal success. Three state policies lay the foundation for higher levels of student achievement and preparation for higher education and employment.

### **POLICY 7** Testing

State education systems can promote greater student achievement by establishing high-quality testing based on clearly defined standards. Some states have designed their own well-regarded tests, while others have purchased “off-the-shelf” tests from commercial publishers. The latter runs the risk of failing to align their tests adequately with the curriculum content standards they have adopted. Once state tests are developed or purchased, a state has to determine its desired student performance levels—usually some variation of achievement at

below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced levels. States vary, with some setting much higher performance demands on students than others for each category.<sup>58</sup> To improve the quality, effectiveness, and appropriateness of state testing policies, state testing policy should include:

**7.1 Testing Aligned to Subject Matter Standards.** For state achievement tests to be relevant and appropriate, they must cover material that students are expected to learn as defined by curriculum standards. In a review of state standards and accountability systems, the Fordham Foundation found modest improvements in the specificity, measurability, and content of state standards. However, according to the Fordham Foundation, only five states effectively combined strong standards with strong accountability approaches. The remaining states enacted a combination of mediocre to weak standards and weak accountability measures.<sup>59</sup> In their review, Education Week found that 12 states with criterion-referenced assessments aligned their tests to state standards in each of the core subjects.<sup>60</sup> States should establish a system of testing and align it with subject matter standards for each grade level and the curriculum that children receive in classrooms.

**7.2 Special Projects and Portfolios as Alternatives to Testing.** To accommodate students with special needs, states should specifically include provision for special projects and portfolios as supplements and alternatives to testing. There is broad consensus and support for this approach. Over 100 national civil rights, education, and advocacy organizations have endorsed a set of criteria to guide the use of alternative assessments.<sup>61</sup>

**7.3 Testing Accommodations.** In some cases, two accommodations to traditional testing are necessary. States should specifically require and provide support for accommodations for testing students with disabilities and students for whom English is a second language.<sup>62</sup> The National Center on Education Statistics issued a report on language accommodations on large-scale assessments for ELL students. They found that ELL student performance was significantly lower on assessments than English-speaking students and that students who speak a language other than English in the home fared worse than students who speak English at home. However, ELL students allowed to use accommodations performed significantly better than students without accommodations, especially when customized dictionaries are available.<sup>63</sup> There is also research evidence that modifying tests to reduce unnecessary language complexity on math assessments significantly improves test performance for ELL students.<sup>64</sup> Because language difficulties influence the validity of assessments for ELL students, states should require language accommodations be made for students with limited English proficiency, especially customized dictionary accommodations and linguistic modifications to reduce language complexity.

## **POLICY 8** Graduation Requirements

Graduation requirements determine whether students are allowed to exit high school without having mastered necessary core content. These requirements may include four years of language arts, three years each of math and science, and requirements in history, civics, and health education. Courses can be offered in traditional academic settings or in technical and career-oriented courses of study. States should consider the following policy requirements for high school graduation:

**8.1 Minimum Graduation Requirements.** Some researchers have defined a rigorous curriculum leading to graduation as including 4 years of English, 4 years of mathematics, 3 years of foreign language, 3 years of social studies, 3 years of science, and at least one AP course or test taken. These researchers have shown positive relationships between completing rigorous high school curriculums and persistence in college studies.<sup>65</sup> These requirements also reflect “the new basic curriculum” recommendations contained in *A Nation at Risk*.<sup>66</sup> However, in 2001, only Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina required students to complete coursework consistent with these research recommendations in English/language arts, math, science, and social studies. Another 18 states met these recommendations in three of the subjects, usually English/language arts, social studies, and science.<sup>67</sup> Given this research and the ability of most states to reach this requirement, states should require prospective graduates to complete the recommended rigorous curriculum.

**8.2 Graduation Exam Requirements.** In the late 1970s, Florida became one of the first states to require students to pass exams before graduating from high school. In response to businesses and colleges that complained of unprepared high school graduates, many other states followed Florida’s example. By 2000, half of all states either implemented or were in the process of implementing requirements for end-of-course or end-of-school exams as a condition for receiving a high school diploma.<sup>68</sup> To ensure students have mastered necessary knowledge for work and higher education, states should require graduating students to pass end-of-course exams.

## **POLICY 9** Public School Choice

School choice is an area of both rich state experimentation and considerable controversy. Research to date is unclear about which options (e.g., private school vouchers, universal public school choice, and charter schools) support student achievement gains.<sup>69</sup> Controversy and uncertainty notwithstanding, states have forged ahead in establishing varying degrees of school choice, most notably in the form of charter schools. As of fall 2002, 2,699 charter schools were open in the United States. The states with the greatest number of charter schools in 2002

were Arizona (465), California (427), Texas (228), Florida (227), and Michigan (196). There are no charter schools in New Hampshire, and only one in both Mississippi and Wyoming.<sup>70</sup>

States can support positive outcomes for children by preventing the restriction of children and families to under-performing schools and preserve the ability of students and families to receive high-quality education at a school of their choice. To foster student achievement through school choice, states should adopt the following:

**9.1 Clear Student Transfer Procedures.** States should provide for transfers from low-performing to higher-performing schools with free transportation at all public schools. In addition, states should adopt transfer procedures that ensure equity for students and families exercising choice by implementing transparent transfer decision-making processes. A 1997 study in Massachusetts found that the provision of transfers resulted in school improvements at schools that lost enrollment due to transfers, did not affect racial/minority enrollment patterns, and reflected parental desires to get better academic opportunities for their children.<sup>71</sup> In 2001, 18 states adopted statewide provisions for school choice.<sup>72</sup> To expand the base of knowledge for improving the performance of all schools, and to track the effects of school choice policies, states should require and fund the evaluation of its school choice policies.

**9.2 Charter and Nontraditional Schools.** Charter and nontraditional schools offer educational opportunity to students whose needs can be better met in alternative educational settings. In 2001, 22 states established strong charter school laws.<sup>73</sup> States should enact charter school laws with clear accountability provisions and provisions that expand charter authority beyond local school boards.<sup>74</sup>

## Quality Post-Secondary Education Policies

Public post-secondary education policies vary widely from state to state. Generally speaking, post-secondary institutions are allowed much more “academic freedom” than elementary and secondary schools and are guided by fewer state policies. However, state policy decisions can improve the quality and the access of low-income and minority families to post-secondary schooling.

### **POLICY 10** Academic Supports

One of two major factors accounting for disparities in post-secondary enrollment and completion is the inadequacy of elementary and secondary education. Low-quality elementary and secondary education increases the number of poorly prepared students entering post-secondary institutions. These students will need

remedial support in one or more classes to fully take advantage of educational opportunities and embark upon high-wage career paths. In addition, working adults who have been out of school for some time, as much as 60 percent of immigrant college students, and many low-income or disadvantaged students benefit from academic support.<sup>75</sup> Given that these students have the potential to succeed in post-secondary education and that remedial supports are bridges to career paths, states should require:

**10.1 Remedial Academic Supports in Four-Year Institutions.** States should require that state-supported four-year institutions of higher learning provide academic supports to poorly prepared students. According to a survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 41 percent of first-time students at undergraduate institutions required remedial instruction in mathematics, reading, or writing.<sup>76</sup> In a survey of both four-year and two-year institutions, the Education Commission of the States found that 60 to 70 percent of students at two-year institutions required remediation in some states.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, remediation is relatively inexpensive, comprising less than one percent of total annual higher education budgets.<sup>78</sup> States can encourage and support enrollment of historically under-represented and non-traditional student groups with both financial assistance (discussed in the Education Finance section) and the provision of remedial courses and academic supports for under-prepared but capable students. Specifically, states should provide funding for remedial supports, and ensure that remedial credits count for financial aid, full-time status, and graduation requirements.<sup>79</sup>

## **POLICY 11** Diversity

Substantial enrollment disparities characterize many colleges, universities, and other institutions of higher learning. In a landmark case, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that diversity is an acceptable goal for university admissions criteria.<sup>80</sup> While the court provided little clear guidance on how best to meet this goal, universities and colleges are free to seek the creation and benefits of a more diverse student body. Encouragement of enrollment by historically under-represented groups and people with disabilities will support improved prospects for families and children in these groups. To improve diversity at post-secondary institutions and create greater opportunity for historically under-represented and non-traditional groups, states should consider the following policy options:

**11.1 Admissions Incentives.** While debates over the effectiveness or desirability of affirmative action have raged for years, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that diversity is an allowable post-secondary admissions goal, and that admissions procedures that consider race, class, and other factors are not inherently unconstitutional. States should provide incentives for admission of minority, low-income, and students with disabilities into state-supported institutions of higher learning, especially flagship state universities.<sup>81</sup>

**11.2 Inclusive Eligibility for Need-based Financial Aid.** For many low-income workers, older students, high school graduates, and public assistance recipients, higher education provides a path to better employment and careers. However, financial access to higher education poses a significant barrier for such students. To assist financially needy students gain access to higher education, states should craft policies making need-based financial assistance available to qualified students. If broader campus diversity is the goal, such policies should include immigrant students, former foster youth, recipients of public assistance, older adults returning to college, and other non-traditional students among those eligible to receive need-based financial aid and/or waivers of in-state tuition.

## **POLICY 12** **Community Colleges, Articulation and Workforce Development**

Community colleges provide a crucial bridge between public secondary school completion and higher education or skilled work opportunities for many young people and adults. With regard to education, community colleges are vital institutions for preparing many young people for study at four-year institutions and for older students transitioning to new fields or careers. Community colleges are also important because of their accessibility to many rural areas and their commitment to serving very diverse educational needs.

In addition, the community college system is a critical component of state policy approaches to workforce development, with 19 states designating community colleges as lead agencies for worker training.<sup>82</sup> But while community colleges are critical, whether enrollees and graduates receive an education suitable for the employment market is not clear.<sup>83</sup> A significant issue for state-supported community college systems is the extent to which they offer education and training that match the employment market and the state's needs for a skilled workforce, and lead to further post-secondary education. To improve general education levels and to prepare enrollees for high-wage employment, state community college policies should require:

**12.1 Transfer and Articulation.** Transfer from community colleges to four-year institutions is the only route to a four-year degree for many students and prospective employees. Given the significant number of students needing remedial education, most of whom will opt for or be required to attend community college for remedial support, it is critical that transfer procedures and articulation agreements be well established. The Education Commission for the States concludes, "Effective articulation and transfer policies assure the efficient use of education funds, students' time and promote education and social equity for all who pursue a post-secondary education."<sup>84</sup> For transfer and articulation policies to be most

effective at reaching the 65 percent of community college students who will transfer before completing a two-year degree, practitioners suggest that states (a) legislatively require comprehensive agreements between community college and four-year institutions, and (b) establish uniform policies that provide for the transfer and credit of individual courses within a defined set of core course requirements. Currently, some form of legislation exists in 30 states but only three – Illinois, Florida, and Washington – have legislatively defined programs that treat two-year and four-year institutions equally. Other states have commissions to encourage the development of transfer and articulation policies, or have cooperative agreements most often negotiated between institutions.<sup>85</sup>

### **12.2 Targeted Funding for High-Demand Jobs and Disadvantaged Workers.**

One way for states to improve the effectiveness of community colleges at educating and training students for high-wage employment is to target special funding to high-demand fields and disadvantaged students. Given that training resources are often scarce, effective targeting helps to ensure that students and colleges maximize available resources. Using a variety of strategies, including scholarships, grants, incentives, and loan forgiveness, 21 states support worker training in high-demand fields. Eighteen states target disadvantaged students to receive this training at community colleges. Definitions of “disadvantaged” vary in the states but generally include: low-income adults and TANF recipients, displaced workers, veterans, people with disabilities, youth with certain risk factors, and ex-offenders.<sup>86</sup> Specifically, state policy should target funding to a high-demand need particular to local or regional economies (e.g., nursing and information technology) and preserve some funding for disadvantaged groups.

### **12.3 Assessments of Workforce Needs.** States should require and support regular assessments of workforce needs to facilitate the matching of community college curricula to job market and workforce needs.<sup>87</sup>

## **Education Finance Policies**

Despite numerous court cases, financial investments in most states continue to be skewed toward more affluent students and neighborhoods. More affluent neighborhoods and students typically have the best-equipped schools and offer teachers the best working conditions, even though researchers and policymakers concede that low-income students need greater resource investments if they are to achieve education outcomes comparable to their more advantaged peers.<sup>88</sup>

## **POLICY 13** Elementary and Secondary Funding

Evidence suggests state policy should: (1) require equal per-pupil base funding, (2) allocate additional funds to schools in high-poverty areas, and (3) provide full funding per full-time-equivalent student in nontraditional and charter schools.<sup>89</sup> Thus, state public education funding policy should include:

### **13.1 State Investments in Public Elementary and Secondary Education.**

A number of state school financing systems have been ruled unconstitutional because of funding inequity.<sup>90</sup> Nationally, the bulk of education funding is balanced, on average, with local revenue sources contributing nearly 43 percent and state sources nearly 50 percent.<sup>91</sup> In most states, state and local sources account for 85-95 percent of education funding, with federal sources providing the remainder. However, the proportion of total education funding from these sources in some individual states was wide ranging. For example, for the school year ending in 2000, reliance on local funding sources for education ranged from lows of 2.2 percent (Hawaii), 14.4 percent (New Mexico), and 19.6 percent (Vermont) to highs of 65.8 percent (Nevada) and 61.5 percent (Illinois). To create greater school funding equity between students high-poverty and low-poverty communities, states should balance funding for elementary and secondary education between both state and local funds, rather than relying heavily on locally generated property taxes. State funding should account for 50-60 percent of the state and local share of education funding. Twenty-six states maintained this level of investment in the 1999-2000 school year, and another 17 states assumed at least 40 percent of total state education costs.<sup>92</sup>

**13.2 Targeted Funding for Low-Income Communities.** States should provide additional targeted funding support to districts with high concentrations of economically and educationally disadvantaged students. A recent survey found that 30 of 47 responding states provided less rather than more support to the school districts serving the largest enrollments of minority and poor children.<sup>93</sup>

**13.3 Funding for Charter and Nontraditional Schools.** State funding per student enrolled in charter or nontraditional schools should be equal to per-student support for the regular school program. While these schools receive federal and state dollars and must comply with the standards-based requirements, nontraditional schools often do not receive an equitable share of state and local formula funds based on student enrollment and are consequently under-funded. Currently, funding for charter schools and nontraditional schools is generally negotiated as part of their charters, though several states provide state funding at less than 100 percent.<sup>94</sup> Also, states should use the same grade-based

funding adjustment formulas for charter schools that are used for public schools, allow charter schools to build cash reserves, and provide start-up and early implementation grants to non-conversion charter schools.<sup>95</sup>

## **POLICY 14** **Financial Aid for Post-Secondary Education**

The affordability of higher education depends primarily on tuition levels, the level of financial aid from federal and state governments, and individual institutional decisions. Tuition, financial aid, and institutional decisions vary widely by state.

In addition, the availability of state aid is declining nationally. For example, the percentage of state-appropriated aid for post-secondary education allocated on the basis of need fell almost 15 percent between 1982 and 2000.<sup>96</sup> This decline in state investments in post-secondary institutions precipitated a nearly 10 percent increase in family tuition costs, the largest in a decade.<sup>97</sup> To improve the affordability of post-secondary education for low-income students, state policy should include:

**14.1 Need-based Financial Aid for Post-Secondary Education.** States should provide to all academically qualified students (a) need-based financial aid to meet the full tuition costs of attending state institutions of higher learning, and (b) work-study options to assist them in meeting educational and living expenses. For the 2002-2003 school year, four states did not allocate any funding for need-based financial aid. Another four states allocated over three times more in non-need-based aid than to need-based assistance. The shift to greater reliance on tuition costs, and the dwindling of need-based aid, makes it harder for financially needy families to send their children to college. Only two states – Kentucky and Minnesota – appear to offer work/study supports to students in need.<sup>98</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Educational achievement is a critical factor in helping families achieve and maintain independence, stability, and health. For many states, public education tops the list of policy concerns. This brief offers a framework for considering the adequacy of state education policies that focus on a set of key policy issues – quality schools, highly qualified teachers, student achievement, quality post-secondary education, and adequate financial support for education. Implicit in the framework are a number of widely held convictions:

- All students deserve, and schools must offer, a quality education.
- Every teacher should be highly qualified and effective in the classroom.
- Every student should be expected to perform at high levels.
- Higher education and skills development are essential for a productive and competitive American workforce.

The framework is meant to assist state policymakers in determining the best array of policies for meeting these ideals, and for moving disadvantaged children and their families into the nation's social and economic mainstream.

Ensuring student success and achievement is no easy task. Changing demographics, funding limitations, and long-standing practices all pose significant challenges to improving the educational opportunities available to all students. Major reform and improvement efforts are underway, including federal reforms like NCLB, and state and educator led efforts to integrate learning systems like P-16. These initiatives attempt to either re-conceptualize the entire education system or to raise performance-based expectations and standards. Whether these attempts will be successful depends in large measure on the appropriateness and adequacy of the state policies that support them.

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## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Education, *Meeting the Highly Qualified Teachers Challenge* (Washington, D.C.: Author, 2002), p. 25; hereafter cited as U.S. Department of Education, *Meeting the Highly Qualified Teachers Challenge*.
- <sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Education, *Meeting the Highly Qualified Teachers Challenge*, p. 34.
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- <sup>8</sup> U.S. General Accounting Office, *School Finance: State and Federal Efforts to Target Poor Students* (Washington, D.C.: Author, 1998); Richard M. Ingersoll, "Out-of-Field Teaching, Educational Inequality, and Organization of Schools: An Exploratory Analysis" (Seattle, WA: Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, University of Washington, January 2002).
- <sup>9</sup> National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, *No Dream Denied*.
- <sup>10</sup> Cynthia D. Prince, "Higher Pay in Hard-to-Staff Schools," (Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators, June 2002); hereafter cited as Prince, "Higher Pay."
- <sup>11</sup> Prince, "Higher Pay," pp. 21-23. The range and type of bonus awards vary across the states. For example, the Massachusetts' signing bonus program offers \$20,000 over four years to mid-career professionals willing to pursue alternative certification and enter the teaching field. For teaching in low-performing schools, bonuses ranged from \$1,800 per year in North Carolina to a high of \$19,000 and \$20,000 in South Carolina and California, respectively.
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- <sup>13</sup> The National Governors Association provides a review of state approaches to addressing salary scales that reflect performance and skill enhancement. See Dane Linn, "Rewarding Teacher Quality: An Investment in the Future," (Washington, D.C.: National Governor's Association, October 2001), available at [www.nga.org](http://www.nga.org).
- <sup>14</sup> Prince, "Higher Pay," p. 22.

- <sup>15</sup> Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, “Recruiting Teachers for Hard-to-Staff Schools: Solutions for the Southeast and the Nation” (Chapel Hill, NC: Author, January 2002); Price, “Higher Pay,” p. 29-30.
- <sup>16</sup> Prince, “Higher Pay,” pp. 23-29, 33-34.
- <sup>17</sup> American Federation of Teachers, *Survey and Analysis of Teacher Salary Trends* (Washington, D.C.: Author, 2003).
- <sup>18</sup> Prince, “Higher Pay,” p. 2.
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- <sup>24</sup> Horn, Kojaku, and Carroll, “High School Academic Curriculum;” National Research Council, *Learning and Understanding: Improving Advanced Study of Mathematics and Science in U.S. High Schools* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2002); hereafted cited as National Research Council, *Learning and Understanding*.
- <sup>25</sup> Horn, Kojaku, and Carroll, “High School Academic Curriculum;” Jennifer Dounay, “Advanced Placement Courses and Examinations – State-level Policies” (Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States, January 2000).
- <sup>26</sup> Jennifer Dounay, “Advanced Placement Courses and Examinations – State-level Policies.” The report only surveyed those states with legislation addressing advanced placement courses; district or school level policies were not reviewed. The four states mandating course offerings

were Indiana, Ohio, South Carolina, and West Virginia. Financial incentives were established in Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, and West Virginia. Accountability incentives were required in Colorado, Louisiana, Missouri, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Utah, Virginia, and Wisconsin. Programs or funding for teacher training were offered in Arkansas, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Texas, and West Virginia. States providing subsidies for student test fees were Arkansas, California, Florida, Indiana, Massachusetts, and Minnesota, Oklahoma, Texas, and Wisconsin.

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<sup>29</sup> Gene Bottoms, Alice Presson, and Mary Johnson, *Making High Schools Work: Through Integration of Academic and Vocational Education*, summarized by the American Youth Policy Forum on its website, *High Schools That Work*, available at [www.aypf.org/compendium/C1S08.pdf](http://www.aypf.org/compendium/C1S08.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> R. F. Macias et al. *Summary Report of the Survey of States Limited English Proficient Students and Available Educational Programs and Services, 1997-98* (Washington D.C.: National Clearinghouse on Bilingual Education, 2000), available at [www.ncbe.gwu.edu](http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu); National Center for Education Statistics, “Overview of Public Elementary and Secondary Schools and Districts: School Year 2001-02” (Washington, D.C.: Author, May 2003).

<sup>31</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, “Overview of Public Elementary and Secondary Schools and Districts: School Year 2001-02.” In the 2000-01 school year, just over 6 million ELL students were enrolled. In the following year, 6.3 million ELL students received English proficiency services.

<sup>32</sup> *Ask NCBE No. 2* (Washington, D.C.: National Clearinghouse on Bilingual Education, 2001) available at [www.ncbe.gwu.edu](http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu).

<sup>33</sup> Jorge Ruiz de Velasco and Michael Fix, “Overlooked and Underserved: Immigrant Students in U.S. Secondary Schools” (Washington, D.C.: the Urban Institute, December 2000).

<sup>34</sup> The work of Ron Unz and English for the Children typify this approach. “Sheltered” English immersion programs provide limited, usually one year, instruction to ELL students in classes where they do not have to compete with native English-speaking counterparts in mainstream classes. For a general review and more information on bilingual education policy and programs, see the Education Commission of the States website at [www.ecs.org](http://www.ecs.org).

<sup>35</sup> Among these more traditional programs are English as a Second Language (ESL), transitional bilingual education, and dual-language immersion programs. Most of these programs have their genesis in the *Bilingual Education Act (Title VII) of 1968*, which is a part of the *Civil Rights Title VI* prohibiting discrimination, requires schools provide equal education opportunities to language-minority students. The Act requires students remain in adequate programs until they can read, write, and comprehend English well enough to enter mainstream school curriculums. See the Education Commission of the States website at [www.ecs.org](http://www.ecs.org).

<sup>36</sup> U.S. General Accounting Office, *Public Education: Meeting the Needs of Students with Limited English Proficiency* (Washington, D.C.: Author, February 2001).

<sup>37</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, 1999.

- <sup>38</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education 2002* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2002).
- <sup>39</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, “Overview of Public Elementary and Secondary Schools and Districts: School Year 2001-02” (Washington, D.C.: Author, May 2003).
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- <sup>41</sup> Grissmer et al.
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- <sup>46</sup> J. D. Finn, S. B. Gerber, C. M. Achilles, and J. Boyd-Zacharias, “The Enduring Effects of Small Classes,” *Teachers College Record* 103, no. 2 (2001): 145-183. Student achievement was measured using both norm and criterion-referenced achievement tests.
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- <sup>48</sup> Joe Nathan and Daren Febey, *Smaller, Safer, Saner Successful Schools* (Minneapolis, MN: Center for School Change, September 2001); C. B. Howley and R. Bickel, “Small Works: School Size, Poverty and Student Achievement” (Washington, D.C.: Rural School and Community Trust, February 2000); Kathleen Cotton, “New Small Learning Communities: Finding from Recent Literature” (Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Library, December 2001).
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- <sup>56</sup> See *Quick Tables and Figures* available at [www.nces.ed.gov](http://www.nces.ed.gov); U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey (NHES), "Adult Education Interview" (Washington, D.C.: Author, 1999).
- <sup>57</sup> Forrest P. Chisman, *Leading from the Middle: The State Role in Adult Education and Literacy*, (New York: Council for the Advancement of Adult Literacy, August 2002). The report is available at [www.caalusa.org](http://www.caalusa.org).
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- <sup>59</sup> Finn and Petrilli, *State Standards 2000*.
- <sup>60</sup> Source: *Education Week* 17 (January 10, 2002).
- <sup>61</sup> Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, *Student Assessment and Testing*, available at [www.nwrel.org/cnorse/booklets/educate/11.html#2](http://www.nwrel.org/cnorse/booklets/educate/11.html#2).
- <sup>62</sup> Regarding accommodations for students with disabilities, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education at the Council for Exceptional Children notes that many states now make accommodation for the testing of children with disabilities. Their website

provides examples of various approaches at [ericec.org/digests/e564.html](http://ericec.org/digests/e564.html). Also, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation provides information on statewide test accommodations for students whose primary language is not English, suggesting such accommodations as extra time, bilingual dictionaries, and permission to ask teachers for word translations. See ERIC Identifier: ED458289, authored by Charles Stansfield and Charlene Rivera, available at [www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC\\_Digests/ed458289.html](http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed458289.html).

<sup>63</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, *The Effects of Accommodations on the Assessment of LEP Students in NAEP* (Washington, D.C.: Author, September 2001).

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<sup>66</sup> National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of Education, April 1983).

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<sup>68</sup> National Governor's Association, "High School Exit Exams: Setting High Expectations" (Washington, D.C.: Author, 1998).

<sup>69</sup> For example, see U.S. Department of Education, *A Study of Charter School Accountability* (Washington, D.C.: Author, June 2001), available at [www.ed.gov/pubs/studies](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/studies); American Federation of Teachers, *Do Charter Schools Measure Up? The Charter School Experiment After 10 Years* (Washington, D.C.: Author, July 2002), available at [www.aft.org/research/reports/charter/csweb/sum.htm](http://www.aft.org/research/reports/charter/csweb/sum.htm).

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<sup>71</sup> David J. Armour and Brett M. Peiser, *Competition in Education: A Case Study of Interdistrict Choice* (Boston, MA: Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research, 1997), available at [www.pioneerinstitute.org](http://www.pioneerinstitute.org).

<sup>72</sup> Robert A. Moffitt, Jennifer J. Garrett, and Janice A. Smith, *School Choice 2001: What's Happening in the States* (Washington, D.C.: Heritage Foundation); hereafter cited as Moffitt, Garrett, and Smith, *School Choice 2001* available on the Heritage Foundation's website at [www.heritage.org/research/education/schools/](http://www.heritage.org/research/education/schools/).

<sup>73</sup> Moffitt, Garrett, and Smith, *School Choice 2001*.

<sup>74</sup> See for example, Education Commission of the States, "Charter School Finance: Policies, Activities and Challenges in Four States," (Denver, CO: Author, March 1998); Education Commission of the States, "Emerging Issues in Charter School Financing" (Denver, CO: Author, 1996); Gary Miron and Christopher Nelson, "Autonomy in Exchange for Accountability: An Initial Study of Pennsylvania Charter Schools" (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University, October 2000); and RPP International and the University of Minnesota,

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- <sup>81</sup> For a summary of surveys of “best practices” related to improving admissions of minority, low-income, and disabled students to post-secondary education, see Andrea Reeves, “Learning What We Know About Pre-College Outreach Programs,” *PathNotes* (Washington, D.C.: Pathways to College Network, September 2000), available at [www.pathwaystocollege.net](http://www.pathwaystocollege.net).
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- <sup>84</sup> Education Commission of the States, “Overview: Transfer/Articulation,” available at [www.ecs.org](http://www.ecs.org).
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- <sup>92</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>93</sup> Education Trust, “The Funding Gap: The Students Who Need the Most Get the Least” (Washington, D.C.: Author, August 8, 2002), available at [www.edtrust.org/main/news/08\\_08\\_02\\_fundinggap.asp](http://www.edtrust.org/main/news/08_08_02_fundinggap.asp).
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## About the Policy Matters Project

The *Policy Matters* project is an attempt to offer coherent, comprehensive information regarding the strength and adequacy of state policies affecting children, families, and communities. The project seeks to establish consensus among policy experts and state leaders regarding the mix of policies believed to offer the best opportunity for improving key child and family results.

The project focuses on six core results: school readiness, educational success, family economic success, healthy families, youth development, and family maintenance. In each of these areas, a series of briefs, overview publications, self-assessments, and 50-state reports are envisioned.

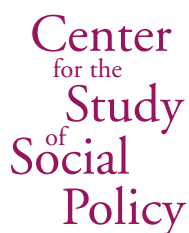
## About the Partners

The Center for the Study of Social Policy is a non-profit, non-partisan policy organization located in Washington, D.C. The Center's mission is to promote policies and practices that improve the living conditions and opportunities of low-income and other disadvantaged persons. The Center works in partnership with federal, state, and local governments and communities to shape new ideas for public policy, to provide technical assistance to states and communities, and to develop and lead networks of innovators.

The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) is a non-profit, non-partisan policy and social science research organization out of Columbia University. NCCP identifies and promotes strategies that prevent child poverty in the United States and that improve the lives of low-income children and their families. The Center conducts and synthesizes research on the causes and consequences of poverty to develop policy solutions that will provide low-income families in the United States with the resources and tools they need to create better lives for themselves.

Child Trends is a non-profit, non-partisan research organization dedicated to improving the lives of children by conducting research and providing science-based information to improve the decisions, programs, and policies that affect children. In advancing this mission, Child Trends collects and analyzes data; conducts, synthesizes, and disseminates research; designs and evaluates programs; and develops and tests promising approaches to research in the field. Child Trends has achieved a reputation as one of the nation's leading sources of credible data and high-quality research on children.

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