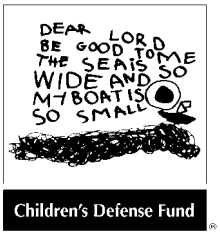
Teacher Quality

Quick Facts



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All children in America deserve to be taught by a highly qualified, engaging teacher who challenges them to succeed. Research confirms that access to quality teaching is one of the most significant factors in improving student achievement and closing the achievement gap between groups of students. Unfortunately, because too often schools are unable to hire, train, and retain quality teachers, too many children are left behind. This problem is particularly acute for low-income and minority children and children with disabilities and limited English proficiency.

Children in low-income, high-minority schools are significantly less likely to be taught by highly qualified teachers:

- Schools with the highest percentages of minority, limited English proficient and low-income students are more likely to employ beginning teachers than those with the lowest percentage of minority, limited English proficient and low-income students.[i]

- Teachers with masters degrees are less likely to teach in high-minority, low-income schools than they are to teach in high-income, low-minority schools.[ii]

- The percentage of out-of-field teachers (those who have neither a major nor certification in the subject in which he or she teaches) in the subject areas of mathematics, English, science, and social studies at high-minority and high-poverty high schools is substantially higher than at low-minority and low-poverty high schools. For example:

    - Mathematics classes in high-poverty high schools are twice as likely to be assigned to an out-of-field teacher as are mathematics classes at low-poverty high schools.[iii]

    - Science classes at high-poverty high schools are three times as likely to be taught by an out-of-field teacher as science classes at a low-poverty high school.[iv]

    - English classes at high-minority high schools are twice as likely to be taught by an out-of-field teacher as at low-minority high schools.[v]

Students with disabilities also face significant shortages of high-quality teachers:

- Among current special education teachers, 10 percent (who teach 600,000 students with disabilities) are uncertified to teach.[vi]

- The President's Commission on Special Education concluded that "the current system of preservice and in-service education is not sufficient to produce personnel who can ensure students with disabilities achieve satisfactory outcomes."[vii]

- 98 percent of schools report special education teacher shortages.[viii]

- The U.S. Department of Education determined that it will be necessary to hire 200,000 new special education teachers in the next five years, but colleges of education will produce graduates to fill only half of those spots.[ix]

High rates of teacher attrition and turnover affect access to quality teaching for poor and minority children and students with disabilities, undermine continuity of curriculum, and unnecessarily drain significant resources from the neediest schools. For example:

- The turnover rate for teachers in high poverty schools is almost one third higher than the rate for all teachers in all schools.[x]

- Teachers are significantly more likely to leave a school because of poor working conditions. Teachers in high-minority, low-income schools report significantly worse working conditions, including inadequate facilities, less availability of textbooks and supplies, fewer administrative supports, and larger class sizes.[xi]

- High turnover is a burdensome cost to school districts and represents a loss of resources to the education system.[xii] For example, a study done in Texas estimates the cost of teacher turnover to be between $216 and $329 million each year.[xiii]

Teachers in high-risk schools (schools with high-minority and low-income student populations) often have inadequate resources, which ultimately hinders their ability to provide quality instruction for their students. For example:

- Teachers in high-risk schools are more likely to report inadequate textbooks and teaching materials. For example, in New York, twice the percentage of teachers in high-risk schools report that they do not have adequate materials for students to use in class than teachers in low-risk schools.[xiv]

- Teachers in high-risk schools are more likely to report scarce and outdated computers and other technology. In California, 39 percent of teachers in high-risk schools report inadequate availability of technology compared to 25 percent of teachers at low-risk schools.[xv]

- Teachers in high-risk schools are more likely to report inadequate science equipment and materials. For instance, in New York, 68 percent of science teachers in high-risk schools reported inadequate science equipment compared to 27 percent of science teachers at low-risk schools.[xvi]

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[i] U.S. Department of Education. National Center on Education Statistics. Condition of Education 2003. Washington, DC.
[ii] U.S. Department of Education. National Center on Education Statistics. Condition of Education 2002. Washington, DC.
[iii] U.S. Department of Education, National Center on Education Statistics. Condition of Education 2004. Washington DC.
[iv] U.S. Department of Education, National Center on Education Statistics. Condition of Education 2004. Washington, DC.
[v] U.S. Department of Education, National Center on Education Statistics. Condition of Education 2004. Washington, DC.
[vi] Twenty-Third Annual Report to Congress (USED, 2001). As cited in President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, *A New Era: Revitalizing Special Education for Children and Their Families* (Washington DC: July 1, 2002):52
[vii] President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, *A New Era: Revitalizing Special Education for Children and Their Families* (Washington, DC: July 1, 2002): 53.
[viii] Fideler, Foster and Schwartz, 2000. As cited in President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, *A New Era: Revitalizing Special Education for Children and Their Families* (Washington, DC: July 1, 2002): 52.
[ix] Kozleski, Mainswer and Deshler, 2000; Smith, et al. (2002). As cited in President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, *A New Era: Revitalizing Special Education for Children and Their Families* (Washington, DC: July 1, 2002): 52.
[x] National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (January 2003) *No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America's Children,* 10*,* Washington, DC: Author.
[xi] National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (January 2003) *No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America's Children.* Washington, DC: Author.
[xii] Texas Center for Educational Research. (November 2000) *The Cost of Teacher Turnover*.
[xiii] Texas Center for Educational Research. (November 2000) *The Cost of Teacher Turnover*.
[xiv] *Ibid*.
[xv] *Ibid.*
[xvi] *Ibid.*