

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT 2014 TEACHER PREPARATION DATA DASHBOARD FOR FUTURE POLICY-MAKING DECISIONS

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Louisiana has been recognized nationally for the comprehensive redesign that occurred from 1999-2010 as the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education increased expectations for teacher licensure and teacher preparation program approval and the Board of Regents required all teacher preparation programs to redesign their teacher preparation programs. Redesigned programs were evaluated by national experts and the Board of Regents and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education only approved redesigned programs that met the higher expectations. All pre-redesign programs were terminated. Thus, programs now being implemented in Louisiana are more rigorous than programs in the past. Outcome data about the effectiveness of teacher preparation are now being voluntarily disseminated to the public through the use of Teacher Preparation Data Dashboards and a Teacher Preparation Program Fact Book at the following URL: <http://regents.louisiana.gov/academic-affairs/teacher-education-initiatives/teacher-preparation-data-dashboards-fact-book/>. These data and other data will be used during the upcoming months as the Louisiana Department of Education uses a Network for Transforming Educator Preparation (NTEP) grant from the Council for Chief State School Officers to identify changes in Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) policies for teacher licensure, teacher preparation program approval, and data reporting. The following identifies observations about the data on the dashboards and feedback from universities that should be considered when developing new policies that impact teacher preparation programs.

A. BASIC PROGRAM INFORMATION

1. State, Regional, and National Approval/Accreditation

Key Observation: All public and private universities have received initial and ongoing state approval, regional accreditation by the Southern Associations of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), and national accreditation by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) or Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC). According to the 2013 CAEP annual report, only 49% of teacher preparation programs nationally were accredited by NCATE or TEAC; thus, all programs in most states are not nationally accredited. *State policies should continue to require initial and ongoing state, regional, and national approval/accreditation for all public and private universities in Louisiana.*

Key Observation: All private providers receive initial state approval from the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to operate in Louisiana; however, BESE policies do not require ongoing review or approval of state approved private providers. *State policies should require as a minimum initial state approval, ongoing state review, and ongoing state approval of private providers. Private providers, private universities, and public universities should all be held to the same state and national expectations.*

2. State, Regional, and National Data

Key Observation: Extensive data are now being gathered on a yearly basis by public and private universities about their programs for regional and national accreditation which occurs every four to seven years. In addition, data for over 220 indicators are collected about teacher preparation programs on a yearly basis by public universities, private universities, and private providers for an annual report submitted by the State to comply with Title II requirements for the Higher Education Act. *State policies should make more effective use of the existing data collection procedures that exist in the State instead of creating additional procedures that take away from preparing more effective new teachers.*

3. Types of Programs

Key Observation: A total of 14 public universities and 5 private universities were operating undergraduate teacher preparation programs as noted by the 2014 Teacher Preparation Data Dashboards. At the time that teacher preparation programs were initially redesigned, the majority of the Secondary (Grades 6-12) programs were offered by Colleges of Education. When BESE changed the Secondary (Grades 6-12) certification to require a major in one content area and reduced the number of credit hours to a minimum of 120 credit hours, many universities changed the programs to offer degrees in the Colleges of Arts/Sciences/Humanities with a major in a content area (e.g., Biology) and a minor in Secondary Education. Movement into a different college reduced the amount of flexibility in assigning credit hours for education courses. *State policies should provide sufficient flexibility in credit hours for education courses to allow Colleges of Arts/Sciences/Humanities to continue to offer minors in secondary education. Failure to do so will increase the number of credit hours to graduate (which is not supported by the legislature) or impact the ability of Colleges of Arts/Sciences/Humanities to continue to offer minors in secondary education.*

B. CANDIDATE SELECTION PROFILE

1. Passage of Assessments for Entry Into Programs

Key Observation: State law and BESE policy require teacher candidates to pass basic skills assessments or equivalents to be admitted to teacher preparation programs. In addition, BESE policy requires passage of content assessments to be admitted to alternate programs. One hundred percent of the 2011-12 teacher candidates passed the basic skills assessments to be admitted to the teacher preparation programs, and 100% passed the content assessments to be admitted to alternate programs. *State law and policies should continue to require candidates to pass basic skills assessments or equivalents to be admitted to programs and content assessments for admission to alternate programs. State policies should identify specific actions that will be taken by the State if programs allow candidates who have not passed the assessments to participate in the programs.*

2. Median Grade Point Average of Candidates

Key Observation: When viewing median Grade Point Averages in the Teacher Preparation Data Dashboards for teacher candidates entering teacher preparation programs, 14 out of 17 undergraduate programs and 14 out of 19 alternate programs had median Grade Point Averages of 3.0 or higher. Members of the public have voiced concerns that candidates entering teacher

preparation programs have low Grade Point Averages but that does not appear to be true for the majority of the programs in Louisiana. *If considering raising Grade Point Averages for entrance into programs, State policies should provide programs with some flexibility for several reasons. First, the same process is not used by each campus to calculate Grade Point Averages resulting in the averages not having a consistent value across programs. Second, courses within certain disciplines (e.g., math, science, etc.) may be more rigorous than other disciplines and Grade Point Averages within those disciplines may be lower than other disciplines resulting in potential candidates not meeting entrance requirements for critical shortage areas. Third, older adults entering alternate programs may have valuable life experiences in specific fields that may be more meaningful than Grade Point Averages when previously attending college.*

C. KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FOR TEACHING OF COMPLETERS

1. Passage of Licensure Assessments

Key Observation: One hundred percent of all new teachers who completed alternate teacher preparation programs and ninety-nine percent of all new teachers who completed undergraduate teacher preparation programs in 2011-12 passed all licensure assessments to be certified to teach in Louisiana. The high percentage did not exist with pre-redesign programs and is a result of campuses making a conscious decision to focus on quality, as compared to quantity of completers, and require candidates to meet state certification requirements to complete teacher preparation programs in Louisiana. In addition, the campus procedures have been implemented to successfully address Louisiana's current accountability requirement regarding passage of licensure assessments to not be labeled as "At-Risk" or "Low Performing" for Title II reporting for the Higher Education Act. *State policies should continue to include passage of licensure assessments as one of multiple indicators in the state's future teacher preparation accountability system for the Higher Education Act.*

2. Clinical Experiences

Key Observation: The Louisiana Department of Education has a policy that recommends 180 clock hours of clinical experiences prior to student teaching and a minimum of 270 clock hours during student teaching; however, it does not address quality of clinical experiences. All public and private universities require more than the minimum clock hours identified by BESE for student teaching. The actual clock hours required by programs for undergraduate student teaching is 489 and ranges from 400 to 600 clock hours. Teacher candidates who are enrolled in alternate teacher preparation programs are allowed to be the teacher of record to teach full time in schools once they obtain a Practitioner license from the Louisiana Department of Education. They complete coursework and participate in a one-year Internship while teaching full time with a Practitioner license. *State policies should place a greater emphasis on the quality of the clinical experiences with effective mentors instead of focusing on just clock hours. Improved student learning needs to become a benefit and incentive for effective teachers to mentor teacher candidates. If full time year-long residencies/internships are considered for undergraduate programs, flexibility should be provided to campuses who want to maintain one semester of student teaching but create higher quality clinical experiences prior to student teaching. As an example, sufficient credit hours may not be available for a minor within College of Arts/Sciences/Humanities degrees for year-long residencies/internships; however, greater flexibility in coursework could allow for higher quality clinical experiences occurring prior to a full semester of full-time student teaching.*

D. PROGRAM PRODUCTIVITY

Key Observation: Limited data are available pertaining to program productivity. Louisiana universities are expected to address regional needs which include preparing new teachers for both public and private schools. Data are available pertaining to persistence in teaching in public schools for up to five years; however, it does not include teachers who began teaching and were retained in private schools in Louisiana. This is an issue considering the high number of private schools in Louisiana compared to other states. Some universities also enroll a greater number of out-of-state students, and data are not available about their employment in schools once they leave the state. *Data pertaining to persistence in teaching should be reported; however, policies should not be developed pertaining to program productivity until additional data can be gathered about this area.*

E. PERFORMANCE AS CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Key Observation: This is the first time the State has had an actual count of de-identified new teachers who are in the “Ineffective” range based upon the Louisiana Department of Education teacher evaluation system. The 2012-13 de-identified Compass teacher evaluation data for teacher preparation programs that were reported in the Teacher Preparation Data Dashboards for all grade levels and all content areas showed that the State had only 66 first and second year teachers who completed “undergraduate” programs who were rated as “Ineffective” and only 61 first and second year teachers who completed “alternate” programs that were rated as “Ineffective” for the Compass Final Evaluation. The LDOE could not release the actual number of teachers included in the Compass teacher evaluation for the state; however, the state newspapers reported that 43,000 teachers were evaluated for Compass and 4% were in the Ineffective range which would be about 1,720 teachers in the Ineffective range. If that is the approximate amount, that would mean that only approximately 7% of the combined undergraduate and alternate completers were among the Ineffective teachers. When looking at data for individual campuses, most campuses had a small number of completers with scores in the “Ineffective” range. The value-added scores for 2011-12 completers were consistent with the Compass Final Evaluation data. Drill down data are now available to help all programs identify strengths and areas in which they can demonstrate further improvement within specific grade spans and specific content areas. *The Louisiana Department of Education needs to continue to provide de-identified Compass data to programs about their completers. They also need to determine if the other 93% of de-identified teachers with Ineffective scores were alternate teacher candidates with Practitioner licenses who had not yet completed their programs or if they were experienced teachers. If they were alternate teachers with Practitioner licenses, State policies for alternate programs may need to be reexamined and strengthened.*

F. GENERAL CONCLUSION

Based upon outcome data, the more rigorous policies adopted by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and Board of Regents and the redesign of the teacher preparation programs by campuses have had a positive impact upon improving the quality of teacher preparation programs in Louisiana. More work still needs to occur; however, programs now have valuable outcome data to help them identify strengths and areas in need of further development within their programs. Other forms of data (e.g., surveys of completers and employers, completion rates of candidates who start programs, etc.) will be gathered in the future to provide even greater clarity about the effectiveness of individual teacher preparation programs in Louisiana.