

PART II SUMMARY AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In the second part of this report, we have examined the systems charged with building the strengths of the existing teacher workforce. We found that California has been aggressively developing and implementing a variety of new programs to address the professional development needs of teachers at various stages of their careers. Despite these efforts, the state has yet to create a system that supports the kind of teacher learning and professional growth that translate into a world-class school system.

California has fully funded an induction program for new teachers that is among the most innovative in the nation. However, many districts around the state lack a sufficient number of mentor teachers to meet the demand created by the flood of new teachers into the system. California has invested in the professional development of the state's teachers and has recently enacted new programs to further improve reading and mathematics instruction. However, the professional development system is cluttered with too many disconnected and time-consuming programs. In addition, California teachers find that too much of their formal professional development is of poor quality, fails to meet their needs, and has little impact on their teaching. To make matters worse, most schools and districts do not provide adequate supports and incentives that would encourage and allow teachers to enhance their own learning. Moreover, far too many of California teachers must work in school conditions that inhibit professionalism.

In response to these findings, the Task Force has made the following recommendations:

Encourage and support teachers to reach high levels of subject matter expertise and instructional skill.

- Commission, on behalf of the Legislature, an independent analysis of existing statutes, regulations, policies, procedures, and guidelines with the intent of eliminating provisions that deflect teachers' professional development time to matters other than the enhancement of subject matter expertise and instructional skills, and that don't reflect the elements of high quality professional development.
- Focus professional development on enabling students to meet the state standards by calling for all appropriate public agencies, including the legislature, State Board of Education, State Department of Education, and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, to take action to ensure that state-sponsored and locally sponsored professional development opportunities are consistent with the elements of high-quality professional development.

- Ensure that all novice teachers, including interns and those on emergency permits and waivers, get the support and guidance they need to enable their students to reach the state standards for student learning.
- Make available to districts incentives of up to \$250 per student (75% new funding with a local match of 25% from existing sources) to restructure the teaching day and year to embed time for teachers to participate in high quality professional development that addresses student standards.
- Create incentives for teacher preparation institutions to offer experienced teachers masters degree programs consistent with standards set forward by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards that culminate in the award of both a master of arts degree and successful completion of the National Board certification assessments.
- By 2005 the Legislature should establish an overall statewide goal in statute of at least one teacher certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards for every school in the state.
- Support for National Board certification candidates should be included annually in the budget with funds authorized for 1) continuing the incentives established in AB 858, 2) subsidizing candidate application fees, and 3) developing candidate support programs. Priority in allocation of these funds should be given to candidates from and programs providing service to inadequately staffed schools.