

TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL IMPROVEMENT ACT

Sponsored by Senator Jack Reed

Decades of research has demonstrated that improving teacher and principal quality is key to raising student academic achievement and turning around struggling schools. To achieve these objectives, the Teacher and Principal Improvement Act would amend Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to provide \$1 billion in targeted assistance to schools to develop and support effective teachers, principals, and school leaders through implementation of the following proven, research-based strategies:

Team-Based, Job-Embedded, Data-Driven Professional Development for All Teachers

Modifies the ESEA's current definition for professional development, with a new focus on—

- Engaging established teams of teachers multiple times per week during the regular work day to evaluate and analyze data on student learning and classroom practice, identify student and teacher learning needs, and develop and implement research-based instructional strategies.
- Regularly evaluating the effectiveness of the professional development in improving classroom practice and student learning.

Comprehensive Multi-Year Induction and Mentoring for New Teachers, Principals, & School Leaders

- Induction program for teachers, principals, and administrators during their first 2 years of teaching/leading.
- Support for new teachers, principals, and school leaders would incorporate elements of effective induction: (1) Rigorous mentor selection; (2) Ongoing mentoring, with paid release time; (3) Professional development for mentors; and (4) Research-based teaching and leadership practices and portfolios, such as the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

High-Quality Support and Professional Development for Principals and School Leaders

Ensuring principals and other school leaders possess the knowledge and skills necessary to raise student achievement and turn around struggling schools, including—

- Planning and articulating a shared vision and clear strategy for school improvement;
- Managing and supporting a collaborative culture of ongoing learning and professional development;
- Communicating and engaging parents, families, and local communities and organizations;
- Collecting, analyzing, and utilizing data on student learning and classroom practice to guide decisions and actions for continuous instructional improvement and ensure performance accountability; and
- Designing and implementing research-based instructional strategies for addressing student needs, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners.

Redesigned Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems

- Implementation of rigorous, transparent, and equitable teacher and principal evaluation systems that would provide individualized feedback and targeted support to teachers and principals on areas of improvement and result in detailed comparisons of performance and growth over time.
- Would require multiple and distinct ratings of teacher and principal performance, classroom observations throughout the year, and an objective decision-making process for documentation and removal of teachers and principals who fail to meet performance standards based on multiple forms of evidence of student learning, classroom practice, and leadership.

Increased Teacher Leadership Opportunities and Compensation

- Opportunities for teachers to take on new roles and responsibilities, including serving as mentors, instructional coaches, or master teachers, or taking on increased responsibility for professional development, curriculum development, or school improvement leadership activities;
- Significant and sustainable stipends for teachers that take on these new roles and responsibilities.

Formal Evaluation of Program Effectiveness

- Would require that an external formal evaluation of the effectiveness of the teacher and principal evaluation, induction and mentoring, and professional development programs be conducted based on program implementation and specific outcomes, including student learning, effective teacher retention, classroom and leadership practice, and parent, family, and community involvement and satisfaction.

Organizational Support for The Teacher and Principal Improvement Act

American Federation of School Administrators; American Federation of Teachers; American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; Center for American Progress; Educational Testing Service; National Association of Elementary School Principals; National Association of Secondary School Principals; National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; National Staff Development Council; National Writing Project; New Teacher Project; and Teacher Advancement Program.

Research Demonstrating the Need for Teacher and Principal Improvement Act

- A report by William L. Sanders and June C. Rivers showed that if two average 8-year-old students were given different teachers, one of them a high performer, the other a low performer, the students' performance diverged by more than 50 percentile points within 3 years.
- A similar study by Heather Jordan, Robert Mendro, and Dash Weerasinghe showed that the performance gap between students assigned three effective teachers in a row, and those assigned three ineffective teachers in a row, was 49 percentile points.
- McKinsey & Company found that studies that take into account all of the available evidence on teacher effectiveness suggest that students placed with high-performing teachers will progress three times as fast as those placed with low-performing teachers.
- A 2003 study by Richard Ingersoll found that new teachers, not just those in hard-to-staff schools, face such challenging working conditions that nearly one-half leave the profession within their first 5 years, one-third leave within their first 3 years, and 14 percent leave by the end of their first year.
- A report by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future estimated that the nationwide cost of replacing public school teachers who have dropped out of the profession is \$7,300,000,000 annually.
- Research by Thomas Smith, Richard Ingersoll, and Anthony Villar has shown that comprehensive mentoring and induction reduces teacher attrition by as much as one-half and strengthens new teacher effectiveness.
- A recent School Redesign Network at Stanford University and National Staff Development Council report by Linda Darling-Hammond, Ruth Chung Wei, Alethea Andree, Nikole Richardson, and Stelios Orphanos found that—
 - a set of programs that offered substantial contact hours of professional development (ranging from 30 to 100 hours in total) spread over 6 to 12 months showed a positive and significant effect on student achievement gains; and
 - intensive professional development, especially when it includes applications of knowledge to teachers' planning and instruction, has a greater chance of influencing teacher practices, and in turn, leading to gains in student learning. Such intensive professional development has shown a positive and significant effect on student achievement gains, in some cases by approximately 21 percentile points.
- Recent reports from the Center for American Progress, Education Sector, Hope Street Group, and the New Teacher Project have collectively demonstrated the significant flaws in current teacher evaluation and implementation, and the necessity for redesigning these systems and linking such evaluation to professional development to ensure effective teaching.
- Research by Kenneth Liethwood, Karen Seashore Louis, Stephen Anderson, and Kyla Wahlstrom found that—
 - leadership is second only to classroom instruction among school-related factors that influence student outcomes; and
 - direct and indirect leadership effects account for about one-quarter of total school effects on student learning.
- Research by Charles Clotfelter, Helen Ladd, Kenneth Leithwood, and Anthony Milanowski has shown that the quality of working conditions, particularly supportive school leadership, impacts student academic achievement and teacher recruitment, retention, and effectiveness.