

Navigating the Road to Equitable Access

Challenges of 2020 reaffirm the need for effective educators

Forecasted workforce trends may further exacerbate the lack of access to effective teachers in underserved communities. The road to increasing equitable access to effective teachers may be bumpy.


The need for effective and diverse teachers and leaders is greater now than ever, particularly for students most affected by the current economic, health, and social crises.


What road bumps are preventing your state from having effective teachers in every classroom?


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Road bumps

 Unemployment in other sectors	Unemployed individuals in other sectors may consider teaching a more desirable occupation, but these career changers may not have the right knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be a teacher.
Decreased interest in joining the profession	With uncertainty about the future of higher education, coupled with uncertainty about K–12 school operations, enrollment in EPPs and interest in teaching may decline.

 EPP enrollment, field experiences, and induction	Due to budgetary and schooling format constraints, districts may deprioritize partnerships with teacher preparation programs. Beginning teachers will start their careers in unprecedented ways and induction programs will be challenged to meet their needs.
State policy about licensure and certification	Many states have already changed policies or have granted emergency licenses to new teachers. While these changes filled a short-term need, they may pose challenges to teacher retention in the long-term.

 District budgets	Many states have considered cutting billions of dollars from state and school districts' budgets which could lead to teacher layoffs.
Working conditions	The conditions posed by distance learning, the health and safety of in-person teaching, and the increased likelihood of students experiencing learning loss and/or social and emotional trauma all contribute to more challenging working conditions.
Early retirement	Experienced and effective teachers may be more likely to retire or leave the profession.

Consideration for SEAs

	Alternative route preparation programs are a promising solution to teacher workforce shifts, and programs have the opportunity to be more selective than ever before given unemployment in other sectors. A recent CEEDAR Center brief encourages SEAs to review alternative certification programs in the state to determine whether or not programs are taking advantage of new candidates and designing training that meets the unique needs of career changers.
	SEA teams can rethink field placements and advocate a new vision of student teachers and novice teachers joining the field to address the challenges created by the pandemic. A CEEDAR Center brief highlights (1) the value of teacher candidates; (2) examples of how teacher candidates can serve as assets in field placements, both in person and virtually; and (3) what SEAs and EPPs must do to ready candidates for these expanded responsibilities.
	SEAs can provide training and supports for teachers and other educators to gain a deeper awareness of the effects of trauma on student behavior and subsequent learning. The GTL Center has a variety of resources available to SEAs , as a starting place for all educators in gaining a deeper understanding of these issues, and tools and resources that can support them in navigating this terrain.

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