

**A Summary of the  
National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality  
Fourth Annual What Works Conference:  
“Beyond Highly Qualified: The Development and Distribution of  
Highly Effective Teachers and Leaders”**

**October 28–30, 2009  
The Fairmont Washington, D.C.**

## **October 28**

### **Welcome and Introduction to the Conference and Opening Keynote Presentation**

Sabrina W.M. Laine, Ph.D., director of the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (TQ Center) and chief program officer at Learning Point Associates, opened the conference with a focus on the TQ Center’s mission and the conference theme, linking the work to the teacher quality themes mentioned in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Dr. Laine highlighted the TQ Center’s impact on states during the last five years as it has worked to implement the highly qualified teacher and equitable distribution provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act. Dr. Laine also presented the TQ Center’s biennial report, *America’s Opportunity: Teacher Effectiveness and Equity in K–12 Classrooms*, and gave an overview of the conference theme and strands.

Anthony Wilder Miller, Deputy Secretary of Education, U.S. Department of Education, then discussed President Obama’s commitment to education, as evidenced by the resources ARRA provides to states. He focused on measuring teacher effectiveness and improving the equitable distribution of teachers.

Sir Michael Barber of McKinsey & Company delivered the opening keynote presentation, emphasizing the importance of public schools in preparing the next generation of thinkers. His overarching question was “What should students in 2020 know?” Sir Barber presented his answer to that question through the following formula: E(K+T+L). In this formula, K stands for knowledge, T denotes thinking, L stands for leadership or confidence, and E denotes ethical underpinning.

Sir Barber also presented the “*known knowns*” and “*known unknowns*” in education. The *known knowns* are as follows:

- Standards of accountability (which include globally benchmarked standards, transparent data, and a focus on continuous challenges to inequities in education)
- Human capital (e.g., strong recruitment, training, and pedagogical skills development; effective school leadership)

- Structure and organization, which entails effective, enabling central departments and agencies, along with the capacity to manage change and engage communities at every level, and the decentralization of operational responsibility and budgets at the school level.

The *known unknowns* in education are as follows:

- What the 21st century curriculum should look like
- What the human capital model should be
- How to incorporate both in-school and out-of-school learning
- The meaning of knowledge management
- The use of technology in instruction

### **Special Topic Concurrent Session: Research and Policy Tools You Can Use**

Tricia Coulter, Ph.D., deputy director of the TQ Center, reviewed the variety of resources available from the TQ Center for use by regional comprehensive centers, state education agency (SEA) staff, and other education stakeholders to improve teacher and leadership quality. These resources include the following:

- A wide variety of print and online products including research syntheses, practical guides, and Research & Policy Briefs
- State policy databases containing policy information on a variety of topics
- Interactive data tools through which users can create customized graphs using data from the Schools and Staffing Survey
- The EQ Technical Assistance Toolbox containing information and resources from technical assistance provided by the TQ Center
- The TQ Connection through which education stakeholders can engage in online discussion forums on issues related to the preparation of educators to address the needs of all students, including students with disabilities
- The TQ Resource Library, a searchable database containing information and links to publications on a broad range of issues related to educator quality
- Presentations, resources, and agendas from TQ Center webcasts, workshops, and conferences

All resources are available through the TQ Center website and can be searched by topic, keyword, and type of resource.

## **Concurrent Workshop Session 1: “Implementation of Response to Intervention: The Preparation and Professional Development of Educators”**

Dan Reschly, Ph.D., of the TQ Center and Vanderbilt University opened the workshop by highlighting the need to increase the quantity and quality of teachers who use response to intervention (RTI) strategies through improved teacher preparation and inservice professional development. He identified reading as a gateway student competency; a lack of reading proficiency often leads students to special education.

David Prasse, Ph.D., of Loyola University Chicago spoke about the need for reforming teacher preparation programs at institutions of higher education (IHEs) with a renewed focus on teacher candidate fieldwork with diverse learners in diverse settings and the tracking of preparation that results in positive student outcomes. He also recommended that professors be held accountable for using a research-based curriculum that supports teacher candidates’ practical application for working with special education students.

Ann Casey, Ph.D., of Minneapolis Public Schools presented a framework for supporting teacher implementation of RTI strategies. The structure of this framework includes content development (e.g., data usage and analysis), process skills (e.g., working in teams), maintaining a master schedule of tiered instruction, and supplying RTI resources (e.g., websites and data management systems).

Next, workshop participants were asked to identify gaps in teacher preparation and professional development on implementation of RTI. The following discussion points resulted:

- Student behavior and academic needs should be considered together, not as unrelated issues.
- RTI training should not be limited to a single teacher preparation course. Training should include a framework for all teaching situations, and the teacher preparation curriculum should be open to revisions as data are collected and analyzed.
- Teacher induction is a critical learning period for using RTI strategies in the classroom, and there is a need to build capacity for RTI implementation by ensuring that there are enough teachers who can train others.

Lynn Holdheide of the TQ Center and Vanderbilt University presented an RTI planning template for analyzing state-level policies leading to collaboration with IHEs to establish a statewide comprehensive approach to RTI implementation. Susan Smartt, Ph.D., of the TQ Center and Vanderbilt University presented innovation configurations, which are used to assess the extent to which IHE faculty’s course syllabi train teachers in domains of reading and offer guidance to improving teacher preparation in this area.

Following an activity in which workshop participants practiced using the innovation configurations with sample syllabi, Dr. Martha Hougen from the University of Texas at Austin presented information on the Texas Reading First Higher Education Collaborative. The goal of this initiative is to establish a collaborative community of teacher preparation providers to assess and improve their training resources to ensure that teachers are adequately prepared in

implementing RTI. Workshop participants then identified the greatest challenge to a comprehensive system of support for RTI implementation in their own state and what they can contribute in their state role to support this effort.

The session closed with a short presentation of tools and resources available on RTI implementation:

- Darren Woodruff, Ph.D., from the National Center on RTI presented resources for educators to increase state-level capacity for RTI implementation.
- Kathleen Whitmire, Ph.D., presented resources from the RTI Action Network, whose target audience includes frontline educators and families. The main objective of the RTI Action Network is to support systems of RTI implementation, primarily by establishing a network for practitioners to share information and support each other in implementing RTI.
- Linda Miller discussed how the Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center provided technical assistance to support statewide efforts to implement RTI strategies. She provided the example of Illinois and its mandate for districts to supply plans for schools implementing RTI, using those plans as a basis to decide what types of professional development are needed for teachers.

### **Concurrent Workshop Session 2: “Systemic Approaches to Maximizing Teacher Effectiveness”**

Jane Coggsall, Ph.D., of the TQ Center and Learning Point Associates introduced the session by discussing the shift in focus from a highly qualified to a highly effective educator workforce in the context of the four reform areas: common standards and assessments, data systems to support instruction, great teachers and leaders for all students, and turning around struggling schools. Dr. Coggsall also highlighted the importance of all stakeholders working together strategically to implement systemic responses to evaluate and support effective teachers and leaders.

Tabitha Grossman, Ph.D., from the National Governors Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices provided an update on the collaboration between NGA and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) to develop common core standards. Following development of the standards, NGA plans to assist states in adopting the standards according to their guidelines, train teachers to use the new standards, and participate in the development of standards-based assessments.

Peter McWalters of CCSSO discussed exemplary cases of standards-based teaching, offering recommendations to align standards with teacher evaluation. McWalters argued that teachers need to be given the opportunity to learn more about their craft within a learning community of other professionals. He recommended that teachers know and understand how to manipulate standards; make instantaneous professional, valid, and reliable judgments about student learning; use technology; and become engaged in feedback loops regarding their teaching practice.

Sarah Kirby Tepera of Teach for America discussed teacher preparation from the Teach for America viewpoint. There are three desired outcomes for selecting and preparing effective teachers:

- Improvement of student achievement

- Teacher success in a challenging environment
- The opportunity to communicate broadly that success in these contexts is achievable

Tepera shared the list of competencies that Teach for America uses when selecting candidates and provided a detailed description of the training and support candidates receive, which is connected to a framework for teaching and leadership—a rubric to evaluate teachers based on professional standards connected to student engagement and learning and measured by proficiency level.

Ellen Cushing of Learning Point Associates and the TQ Center and Monica Bhatt of Learning Point Associates and Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest presented how the METworks<sup>SM</sup> Framework serves as a policy inventory for states and a tool for managing educator talent at the district level. METworks guides policymakers in identifying gaps in policy and practice that disrupt the educator career continuum.

Dan Weisberg, J.D., of The New Teacher Project (TNTP) presented findings from the recent TNTP report on teacher evaluation, *The Widget Effect: Our National Failure to Acknowledge and Act on Differences in Teacher Effectiveness*. The researchers found that the vast majority of teachers are rated above average or excellent in their evaluation ratings, leading to the conclusion that the evaluation system fails to differentiate and subsequently reward effective teachers. The report suggests that more concise evaluation can lead to more accurate assessments of teacher preparation programs, the ability to differentiate professional development, and support for retention of the most effective teachers. Weisberg recommended four strategies for improvement of teacher evaluation systems:

- Add higher stakes to the evaluation system.
- Provide teachers with data to improve their instruction.
- Increase the state’s role in improving teacher pipelines, locating additional funding, and implementing policies to facilitate evaluation reforms.
- Collate reports of results for public visibility.

Rob Weil and Angela Minnici, Ph.D., of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) presented a model of teacher evaluation and the avenues of support that AFT provides to states, districts, foundations, and organizations to pilot the teacher evaluation system. The presenters listed 10 principles to guide the design and implementation of a teacher evaluation system:

- The system’s primary goals should be strengthening the profession of teaching and improving student learning.
- The system should be developed and implemented collaboratively with teachers, not imposed on them.
- The system should focus on providing continuous professional development and growth for teachers by addressing the skills, knowledge, and needs of teachers depending on where they are on the career continuum (e.g., novice, midcareer, veteran).
- The system should promote teacher leadership.

- The system should be both formative and summative.
- The system should be based on a set of standards of practice that takes into account the complexities of teaching.
- The system should include evidence of teaching and student learning from multiple sources.
- The system should address how to build the capacity of districts and schools to implement high-quality evaluation systems.
- The system should consider the context in which teaching and learning take place.
- The system should be subject to continuous updating of instruments and processes as research on practice leading to valued student outcomes becomes available.

A question-and-answer session followed during which panelists discussed the need for annual evaluation, even if some research suggests that it is unnecessary, and indicated that the additional value of annual evaluation resides in providing formative feedback to teachers. Panelists recommended that the evaluation tool is not as important as how it is implemented with the goal of supporting the development of teacher quality. In addition, panelists conveyed that, even under economic duress, teacher evaluation is a high priority that needs to be addressed through systemic reform.

### **Concurrent Workshop Session 3: “Unpacking the Equitable Distribution of Teachers”**

Lisa Johnson, Ed.D., of the TQ Center and Learning Point Associates kicked off the workshop with an overview of the session and introduced several resources available to participants. Laura Goe, Ph.D., of the TQ Center and ETS reminded participants that the equitable distribution of teachers is a key strategy to improving student achievement. Dr. Goe provided an overview about what we *do* know—how some states are faring with the distribution of teachers, including strategies that states employ to identify where inequities exist. However, Dr. Goe also emphasized that we know almost nothing about what actually works to effectively remedy distribution problems.

Eric Hirsch of The New Teacher Center provided an overview of his working conditions survey as well as specific data from several states. Hirsch reminded participants that teachers often come or stay in schools based on factors related to working conditions and leadership and presented data that shows leadership is overwhelmingly “poor” in the lowest performing schools. Furthermore, data indicate that teachers and principals often have different perceptions about the school working conditions. Hirsch also made the case that principals need more time and support in order to lead, coach, and collaborate.

Mike Heffner of the New Teacher Center led participants through an activity to illustrate how effective school leaders address decision making. Heffner also emphasized the importance of principals’ roles in teacher distribution. Ann Maddock rounded out The New Teacher Center presentations with a discussion of the policy implications from the working conditions survey. She discussed the steps that North Carolina took to respond to the data in their working

conditions survey in an effort to address distribution issues such as additional funding for professional development and school leadership training in low-performing schools.

Workshop participants then split up into two groups to discuss teacher distribution issues for special student populations and distribution issues in rural areas. The first group was led by Phoebe Gillespie, Ph.D., of the National Center to Improve Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Personnel for Children with Disabilities and Patricia Gandara, Ph.D., of the University of California–Los Angeles. Dr. Gillespie urged districts and states to collect and manage reliable data on special education teachers. She also promoted partnerships between high-needs local education agencies (LEAs) and IHEs to increase the number and quality of special education teachers specific to local needs. Dr. Gandara shared information from a 2005 study she coauthored titled *Listening to Teachers of English Language Learners*. She made the important point that there is no definition of *highly qualified* for teachers of English language learners (ELLs) and that before a definition of a high-quality, effective ELL teacher can be generated, goals need to be set for the students. Dr. Gandara also noted that distribution issues for ELL teachers are most extreme at the secondary level.

The rural breakout group focused on teacher recruitment, which both presenters and participants agreed upon as the most critical issue affecting teacher distribution. The group agreed that states and districts must develop more multifaceted incentives for rural areas. Furthermore, rural schools and districts should receive more state and federal attention and programming.

#### **Concurrent Workshop Session 4: “Leveraging School and Teacher Leadership to Recruit, Develop, and Retain the Best Talent in the System”**

This presentation addressed teacher and school leadership and how it can be used to provide differentiated career paths for teachers, ease the burden on school administrators, and help novice teachers grow. Presenters also discussed challenges in promoting teacher leadership in practice, including establishing credibility as a leader with one’s colleagues and not being ostracized by colleagues.

Katherine Bassett of the TQ Center and ETS kicked the session off by presenting some of the research behind and current efforts on using teacher leadership as a strategy for recruitment and retention. She mentioned the work of the ETS Teacher Leadership working group; this task force has been meeting for a year to draft model teacher leader standards.

The first panel discussion featured policymakers from the state and local levels as well as others from various stakeholder groups. To begin, Charlotte Danielson presented participants with a rationale for growing teacher leaders within schools and also shared her findings in this arena. Danielson discussed the difference between “formal” and “informal” teacher leadership and urged audience members to consider the importance and utility of both. Following Danielson, Joellen Killion of the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) spoke on the potential of teacher leadership to improve schools. She introduced participants to the NSDC efforts to prepare the next generation of professional learning leaders.

For the state perspective, Nathan Estel of the West Virginia Department of Education presented the department's Standards for Teacher Leaders, which are linked across the educator career continuum to teacher preparation, professional development, evaluation, and educator advancement. Teacher leaders from throughout the state were brought together as teams to develop these standards. Professor Mark Smylie, Ph.D., of the University of Illinois at Chicago presented lessons from the research on developing and promoting teacher leadership. Among them, he discussed the presumption of goodness (effectiveness), the myth of "the natural," the paradox of administrative leadership in teacher leadership, and redefining the "we's" and the "they's." Next, Dr. Smylie reflected on the role of universities as actors (among a web of actors) in developing and supporting teacher leadership. To conclude the panel, Brad Jupp of the U.S. Department of Education expressed his view that this is potentially a revolutionary time of change for the development of teacher leadership. He took questions regarding Race to the Top funds and the Investing in Innovation fund and gave a few comments on the possible recompetition and redesign of the Comprehensive Centers Program.

The workshop concluded with Marguerite Izzo, New York State Teacher of the Year 2007, and Patricia Park, Office of the Superintendent of the North Central Complex, Hawaii State Department of Education, discussing their views on teacher and school leadership as a means of recruiting, retaining, and developing talent. Izzo suggested that states and districts should consider what they are (or are not) doing to make the most of their teachers of the year once they return to the district, having gained significant professional development and perspective from their position. Park stressed the importance of having systemwide commitment for reform, based on a pilot that she conducted with the universal commitment of the 21 principals in her complex area.

### **Dinner and Keynote Session: "Straight From the Classroom: Defining an Effective Teacher"**

Session moderator Ninive Calegari, cofounder of 826 National, opened with an introduction to *The Teacher Salary Project*, a documentary film under development with producer/director Vanessa Roth. The documentary intends to highlight the struggles of teachers who are inadequately compensated to do such a high-stakes and important job. Calegari and Roth shared clips from the documentary highlighting teachers and their viewpoints on the issue. Following the film presentation, two students from Washington, D.C., Public Schools answered questions about what they believe makes an effective teacher. Overall, the students indicated they experience varying degrees of teaching quality during the course of their school day. They defined an effective teacher as one who truly cares about students, is invested in their learning, and wants them to perform their best. The students also agreed that they prefer honesty from their teachers, especially when discussing their performance. The students were quick to add, however, that feedback should be shared in a constructive manner to encourage students rather than discourage them. Both students indicated that the race, gender, and ethnicity of their teachers did not change their impression or influence them in any particular way. They stated that they, in fact, appreciate teachers whose backgrounds are different from theirs as a way to learn from and appreciate differences. Finally, the student panel implored teachers to listen to their students and not "teach at them." Engagement is crucial to learning, and establishing a dialogue between teachers and students will allow teachers to more effectively reach their students.

**October 29**

**Special Topic Concurrent Session 1: “Preparing and Supporting the Next Generation of Educators”**

Presenters discussed the characteristics, workplace expectations, and career perspectives of the four different generations of educators currently working in our nation’s schools. These generations include the Veteran Generation, the Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y. Presenters highlighted research and strategies for managing educator talent across the four generations. Presentations covered the following specific issues.

Ellen Behrstock of the TQ Center and Learning Point Associates reviewed the research on different generations of educators in our schools. For example, by 2020, 44 percent of the U.S. workforce is projected to be made up of Generation Y. Members of Generation Y are creative, innovative, and self-confident. They also desire constant feedback and are drawn to flexible schedules and customized jobs. Behrstock also highlighted a recent TQ Center policy brief on Gen Y teachers, *Leading Gen Y Teachers: Emerging Strategies for School Leaders*.

Jean Johnson of Public Agenda provided a sneak peek into soon-to-be released public opinion data collected and analyzed by Public Agenda and Learning Point Associates. The survey data reflect responses from nearly 900 teachers, including an oversample of teachers under the age of 32 (i.e., Generation Y teachers). The data show a variety of trends; for example, Generation Y teachers are idealistic, and many envision a future in education beyond the classroom. Also, most teachers of all ages are receptive to forms of differentiated compensation, but it is not their top priority. Teachers of all ages worry about the fidelity of implementation when it comes to initiatives, including differentiated pay. They want to be involved in program design and implementation, and they consider leadership to be vital to high-quality implementation of reform efforts.

Elizabeth Foster from the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF) highlighted the other end of the generational spectrum: boomers approaching retirement. Foster noted that many of these soon-to-be retirees want to keep working in some way, desire a life-work balance and meaningful engagement, and want to make a difference. She described a NCTAF project on cross-generational learning and teaching teams that pairs experienced top-notch teachers with new teachers to engage in collaborative methods of instruction that draw on each person’s experience and expertise.

Anne Weisberg, J.D., of Deloitte Consulting concluded this session by discussing a pilot project that Deloitte engaged in as a response to the changing demographics in their workforce. The Deloitte pilot, called “mass career customization,” centered on a new method of performance management, considering ways to offer a more flexible workplace, and responding to workers’ varying needs. Weisberg drew many parallels between the Deloitte pilot and the teacher workforce. For example, Deloitte learned that to lower attrition rates, the company had to find better methods for creating loyalty among its employees, such as providing different opportunities for growth and development. Results from the Deloitte pilot show improved retention among participants and improved career-life satisfaction.

## **Special Topic Concurrent Session 2: “Strategies and Resources for Supporting Rural Educator Quality”**

This panel presentation focused on the importance of addressing rural educator quality and presented promising practices currently being implemented by states. Presenters on the panel included Mark Bounds, deputy superintendent for Educator Quality and Leadership at the South Carolina Department of Education; Doris Williams, Ed.D., executive director of the Rural School and Community Trust; Tammy Tiong, New Mexico State Teacher of the Year 2007; and Lisa Johnson, Ed.D., of the TQ Center and Learning Point Associates.

Dr. Johnson set the stage by outlining the characteristics of rural area communities and schools, which included a description of some commonly encountered challenges and advantages when teaching in rural schools. Challenges include lower salaries and less support for students with special needs. Advantages include increased autonomy and influence and smaller class sizes. Doris Williams of the Rural School and Community Trust talked about developing targeted preparation programs and recruitment and retention strategies for building educator quality in rural communities. She stressed the limitations of grow-your-own programs that do not include an international or substantial “other-than-rural” experience, and she offered a number of state-level and local level strategies that have been implemented to build rural educator quality. She also noted that the funding formulas that federal and state governments use for poverty adjustments can put rural impoverished communities at a disadvantage due to their small size. Tammy Tiong talked about the practical realities of teaching in a rural area school and outlined some pros (e.g., collective communities, safer environments) and cons (e.g., high teacher turnover, lack of anonymity) that she had encountered during her eight years of teaching in a rural school. Mark Bounds, South Carolina Department of Education, presented four foci in his state: reinventing teacher compensation, recasting the teacher profession, improving teacher working conditions, and improving community infrastructure and support for teachers.

## **Special Topic Concurrent Session 3: “Addressing Educator Quality for English Language Learners”**

This session included a presentation of the challenges associated with meeting the needs of the growing population of ELLs. Michael Guerrero, Ph.D., of the University of Texas–Pan American, discussed strategies that universities, LEAs, SEAs, and the federal government can use to improve teacher preparation programs to better prepare teachers for working with ELLs. He recommended that teacher preparation programs more effectively coordinate fieldwork with local school districts, offer more explicit training in reading instruction for ELLs, and validate programs by measuring student achievement over time. Next, Gary Appel of the Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center presented an overview of technical assistance provided to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to equip LEAs to meet the needs of low-incidence ELLs. Dennis Terdy of the Center for Applied Linguistics and Linda Forward of MDE reviewed the strategies and training local Michigan educators received to increase their capacity to meet the learning needs of ELLs. This effort involved a three-pronged approach: establishing an advisory committee; instituting a focus on program administration, assessment, and professional development; and building capacity outside of the SEA. This strategy resulted in the

dissemination of ELL-related resources and information, increased professional development opportunities, and increased regional leadership in ELL instruction.

#### **Special Topic Concurrent Session 4: “The Past, Present, and Future of the Teaching Profession”**

Dana Markow, Ph.D., of Youth & Education Research, Harris Interactive, highlighted some of the findings from the 25th MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, *Past, Present and Future: A Survey of the Teachers, Principals and Students*, including data that suggest teachers are more satisfied with their jobs and that the state of the teaching profession has improved. Furthermore, data indicate that academic standards and curriculum are stronger. Markow also highlighted some areas for future focus, including the need to educate students to be globally competitive, an increased use of technology, and making new teacher training and support a priority.

Molly Lasagna of the TQ Center and Learning Point Associates presented a Learning Point Associates paper she coauthored titled *Toward the Structural Transformation of Schools: Innovations in Staffing*. The premise of the paper is that the current climate demands innovation in the education system. The paper illustrates the idea of unbundled education, which moves educational experiences out of the classroom and into the community. Lasagna suggested getting teachers more involved in policy discussions, removing glass ceilings within the classroom, and instituting bifurcated roles for teachers.

Joellen Killion of the National Staff Development Council suggested that certain state policies may create barriers to reform and school success. She suggested allowing more local site decisions that are guided and supported through a district’s central office.

#### **Luncheon and Keynote Presentation: “Changing the Course of America’s Teachers and Leaders: The Impact of ARRA and ESEA Reauthorization”**

Larry Shumway, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Utah State Office of Education, opened the luncheon by discussing Utah’s emphasis on “high-quality instruction” to achieve state education goals. Shumway suggested that policymakers need a clear definition of high-quality instruction to measure instructional practice more effectively and efficiently. He then introduced the keynote speaker, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. Secretary Duncan discussed teacher quality under the lens of ARRA priorities, focusing on the importance of having great teachers and leaders in our schools and what we should do to reach this goal. Key points include the following:

- Schools of education need to be challenged to do a dramatically better job and improve the teacher pipeline.
- Teacher candidates need more practical experience in the classroom, especially with disadvantaged students, before becoming teachers of record.
- There should be more widespread use of formative assessments and alternative routes to certification.
- Teacher policies must focus less on input and more on output.

- Teachers need more support in the classroom (e.g., induction, mentoring, and systemic support).
- We need new strategies to systemically recruit hardworking and committed teachers.
- Teacher evaluation policy in most districts needs to be reformed—too many teachers are rated good or excellent; evaluations should be feedback loops for continuous improvement.
- We need to figure out how to harness technology to improve instruction and change the way students learn.
- We need to focus on closing achievement gaps, which are large and insidious and perpetuate poverty and social failure. Having a string of high-quality teachers would help alleviate these issues.
- We need to challenge everyone, including ourselves, to move from a bureaucracy to an engine of innovation.

Secretary Duncan then took a few questions from the audience. Highlights from the question-and-answer session include the following:

- There is a need to focus on rural school districts to better understand their unique challenges and tailor strategies accordingly. Some examples include teacher housing assistance, providing significant financial incentives, and using technology creatively.
- Every teacher needs to be a special education teacher—all teachers should be able to work with all types of learners.