

TOPIC: UPDATE ON LINKING TEACHERS TO PREPARATION PROGRAMS AND OUTCOMES-BASED PROGRAM EVALUATION: REPORTING REQUIREMENTS OF S.B. 10-036

PREPARED BY: IAN MACGILLIVRAY, ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

I. SUMMARY

This information item explains how the Department, in collaboration with Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and institution of higher education-based educator preparation programs, are linking their data systems and beginning to evaluate educator preparation program effectiveness in accordance with S.B. 10-036.

II. BACKGROUND

The Legislative Landscape

S.B. 10-036 [§22-68.5-102.5, C.R.S.] states in part:

...The [Colorado Department of Education] shall prepare a report on the effectiveness of educator preparation programs using the aggregate data collected pursuant to this article. For purposes of this section, the [CDE] shall use data collected from an educator in his or her first three years of placement as the educator of record. The report shall include, but need not be limited to, the correlation between different educator preparation programs in the state, including alternative educator preparation programs, and student academic growth, educator placement, and educator mobility and retention...The information shall be shared with educator preparation programs to inform curriculum and program improvements.

S.B. 11-245 amended §23-1-121, C.R.S., *Commission directive – approval of educator preparation programs – review*, section (6), to place responsibility for the above reporting requirements for institution of higher education-based preparation programs with the Department of Higher Education. The Department is already responsible for an annual report on educator preparation to the General Assembly and S.B. 11-245 added to that report “...data on the outcomes of graduates of educator preparation programs pursuant to section 22-68.5-102, C.R.S. S.B. 11-245 also added the following language to §23-1-121(6), C.R.S, which now reads in part:

...For purposes of completing the report required pursuant to this subsection (6), as well as the report required pursuant to section 22-68.5-102.5, C.R.S., the

department of higher education and the department of education shall share any relevant data that complies with state and federal regulations with the other agency. The department shall provide notice to the education committees of the senate and the house of representatives, or any successor committees, that the report is available to the members of the committees upon request.

The Scope of Work

To begin the important work of linking the data in CDE's Human Resources File with the Department's SURDS Educator Preparation File and then comparing the data on "program completers" to each institutions' own records to ensure clean data, the Department enlisted the services of researchers from the University of Northern Colorado's Education Innovation Institute, the University of Colorado Boulder's School of Education and the University of Colorado Denver. The researchers' questions were:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of Colorado teachers who recently received their initial teacher preparation at Colorado IHEs? How do these demographics vary by IHE?
2. How do recent completers' placement rates in Colorado school districts compare across IHEs?
3. How do the K-12 schools where recent completers from Colorado IHEs are placed differ in terms of demographic and achievement characteristics?
4. How do the answers to the prior three questions differ for recent completers who earned initial licenses only versus those who earned an initial license with an additional endorsement in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) or Special Education Generalist (SPED)?

The research resulted in two final reports that contain the answers to the questions above. The major findings in those reports are highlighted below.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

Report #1

The first report, *Enhancing Colorado Data Systems: Linking Teachers to Preparation Programs* (Appendix A), examined how IHEs generate and report the key "completer" variable that is used to link preparation programs to practicing K-12 teachers. This variable identifies candidates who have officially completed requirements for initial licensure, as well as the methods IHEs use to identify candidates obtaining two popular add-on endorsements: Linguistically Diverse Education (8.22) and Special Education Generalist (9.06). (The numbers in parentheses refer to the endorsements' descriptions in the *Rules for the Administration of the Educator Licensing Act* and are always used with the name of the endorsement to prevent confusion.)

Carefully delineated data gathering and reporting practices are essential in order to accurately match each teacher to the right preparation program as the state builds an extensive, multi-year database spanning all levels of education. As of 2011 each IHE has begun providing the state with values for a completer variable (in the SURDS Educator Preparation File). In the project documented in this report, researchers worked directly with each IHE to establish and validate a historical completer variable for teachers who received their preparation between the years 2004–2010. Complications included incomplete data collection and/or retention by universities, teacher candidates who attended multiple preparation programs, as well as changes in universities' data management systems that made data for some years inaccessible. Lessons learned from the process used to validate the completer variable will be important for future data collection efforts.

Report #2

The second report, *An Initial Exploration of Colorado-Trained Teachers: Providing Context for Outcomes-Based Teacher Preparation Program Evaluation* (Appendix B), found that:

1. The demographics of new teachers and the K-12 schools that hire them are strongly influenced by regional factors. Half of the institutions of higher education (IHEs) in the study send at least two-thirds of their graduates to only five districts, though not necessarily the same five.
2. The relationship between a postsecondary program's location and the location of the district that employed graduate from the program was stronger in the Denver metro region than in rural areas of the state.
3. Preparation programs located in areas with higher than average numbers of citizens from minority groups were more likely to send graduates to school districts with higher than average enrollments of students from minority groups.

This second report concluded that:

The tendency of teachers to select – or be selected by – preparation programs and schools with certain characteristics complicates the task of evaluating preparation programs based on performance of students taught by their graduates. This is because test scores tend to track with certain student characteristics, particularly family income, and children in rural and inner-city schools are most likely to be low-income. Thus, to the extent that increases in K-12 student achievement will be used as the predominant indication of successful teaching and teacher preparation, disentangling how much of a child's performance is due to his teacher's preparation and how much to other factors becomes a very challenging task.

Limitations

While the reports produce important new information they do have notable limits. The research study did not include information about alternative training routes, which are growing in popularity. They also only track data on teachers trained by IHEs in Colorado, though about half the state's teachers are trained elsewhere. In addition, some IHEs provided incomplete data, thus further limiting the number of teachers included in the analyses. This final limitation points to the need for the Department to provide precise instructions and training on data production, retention, storage, and reporting if efforts to build a robust database for future uses are to be successful. The Department has begun this process by working with representatives of the Data Advisory Group (DAG) to ensure institutions have input into and understand the reporting requirements of the SURDS Educator Preparation File and by including data production, retention, storage, and reporting requirements in state reauthorization visits.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

No action required. This is an information item only.

V. STATUTORY AUTHORITY

23-1-121(6), C.R.S.: The department shall annually prepare a report concerning the enrollment in, graduation rates from, and effectiveness of the review of educator preparation programs authorized by the commission. In addition the report shall include data on the outcomes of graduates of educator preparation programs pursuant to section 22-68.5-102, C.R.S. The report shall also state the percentage of educator candidates graduating from each program during the preceding twelve months that applied for and received an initial license pursuant to section 22-60.5-201, C.R.S., and the percentage of the graduates who passed the assessments administered pursuant to section 22-60.5-203, C.R.S. For purposes of completing the report required pursuant to this subsection (6), as well as the report required pursuant to section 22-68.5-102.5, C.R.S., the department of higher education and the department of education shall share any relevant data that complies with state and federal regulations with the other agency. The department shall provide notice to the education committees of the senate and the house of representatives, or any successor committees, that the report is available to the members of the committees upon request.