

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE STUDY GROUP ON TEACHER QUALITY

The Teacher Quality sub-group has continued its work since the last meeting of the Executive Committee in February. Through bi-weekly phone conferences and frequent emails, we have undertaken to help NCTE take a position on teacher quality as a means of focusing future activities of the Council in support of teachers of English language arts. Toward this end, we have taken on the following activities:

- Development of a narrative definition of a “highly qualified” teacher of English language arts (see attached)
- Creation of a matrix that identifies challenges of teachers at two critical points in their careers along with needed supports (see attached). This matrix has been particularly useful for focusing the efforts of the Study Group.
- Creation of “advisory statements” on the issue of high quality teachers of the English language arts addressing different groups (e.g., politicians and policy makers; school administrators; parents; urban educators) (see attached).
- Through these activities helped to spur an NCTE initiative to create Teacher Induction Academies.
- Development of a future survey to investigate both NCTE members’ perceptions of the challenges they face as they endeavor to provide excellent instruction for their students and members’ sense of the kind of support they require to better meet students’ needs over the course of their careers.

Below we summarize our work in terms of **ends statement**; **identification of areas where we believe NCTE should focus its future efforts**; and, **executive limitations**.

Ends Statement

The education and professional development of highly-qualified teachers of the English language arts is an ongoing project that must be considerate of the context in which teachers work. It begins in sound teacher preparation programs that focus on both content and pedagogical knowledge, continues in guided induction and mentoring programs, and extends throughout career-long professional development activities that practicing teachers undertake in formal and informal collaborations with professional colleagues locally and nationally. The professional development needs of Pre-service, New, Mid-career, and Late-career teachers are different and different kinds of programs must be developed and available to meet the needs of teachers at different stages of their careers. Similarly, teacher preparation programs and professional development must consider the cultural, socio-economic, and linguistic context within which teachers teach (or will teach).

Executive Limitations:

- In advancing high quality induction programs NCTE will not support professional development activities that diminish the professionalism of teachers of English language arts by reducing teaching into a technical activity.
- NCTE’s professional development efforts should focus on collaborative efforts that take advantage of a broad range of local, regional, and national expertise in the English language arts.
- Although it may be desirable for NCTE to extend its lobbying efforts beyond the national level to the state and local levels, it does not currently possess the resources for doing so.

Identification of where we should focus our attention

The Study Group identified three areas of pressing need consistent with NCTE's mission:

- 1) Support for teachers of the English language arts in the early phase (i.e., induction) of their careers. These initiatives must support teachers' efforts to take control over their own professional development and not duplicate the kind of "technical" support offered by publishers. NCTE should work to nurture, explore, extend local expertise by working with local language arts professionals and surveying the local scene to be sure we're building on what people already know/want to know. CoLEARN is a good model for this kind of support. Finally, NCTE should provide a range of research-based resources for answering questions or dilemmas that teachers themselves pose (vs. legislators, etc.). NCTE professional developments may respond to the requests of administrators but should never violate the professionalism of teachers.
- 2) Support for professional development efforts of local schools and school districts in ways that are respectful of local knowledge and the professionalism of teachers; and,
- 3) Increased efforts to influence federal policies that affect the ability of high quality teachers of the English language arts to provide excellent instruction for their students.

— *Curt Dudley Marling, Chair*
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