

Recommendations from *Career Changers in the Classroom: A National Portrait*

For Teacher Preparation Programs:

- § Recruit career changers carefully and select them competitively, to ensure focus, subject-area knowledge, and commitment.
- § Design teacher preparation for career changers to meet the needs of adult learners, recognizing prior education and experiences, and offering courses at times and places convenient for those with jobs.
- § Provide deep and extensive experience in real-world classrooms by building on-site classroom experience into the teacher preparation curriculum from the outset.
- § Incorporate extensive faculty supervision and support, as well as regular assessment of teacher candidates' knowledge and skills.
- § Start treating such subjects as instruction of English language learners and individualized learning as core preparation for all teachers, rather than as niche subjects, given the prevalence of classroom populations with individual language and learning needs.

For Schools and Districts:

- § Find and focus resources for consistent, high-quality, teacher support systems, as a priority—above and beyond buddy systems and drop-in support.
- § Emphasize early and frequent assessment of in-class performance conducted by trained observers, with results used to guide professional growth.

For Policymakers:

- § Support incentives that attract talented professionals into teaching, including stipends and other forms of financial aid, high-quality preparation programs, and well-structured mentoring or induction.
- § Treat all teacher education programs the same in terms of oversight and accountability policies, doing away with distinctions between “traditional” and “alternate” routes that are not functional.
- § Focus state program approval and teacher licensure policies on evidence of outcomes: K-12 student learning gains, objective measures of successful classroom teaching performance, and persistence in teaching—especially in high-need schools.
- § Simplify or eliminate outmoded state regulations that impede a relentless focus on these outcomes for every program and every teacher.

For Skeptics About Career Changers in the Classroom:

- § Note that, like all new teachers, career changers demonstrate commitment to their new careers—regardless of the quality of their preparation and support.
- § Be aware that career changers are as likely to be effective in the classroom as “traditional” teachers, as measured by the learning gains of their pupils, with the overall effectiveness of both groups dependent on good academic preparation, intensive clinical practice, careful oversight and support from program faculty, and the chance to learn how to teach in schools similar to the ones where they later hope to work.