

SEPTEMBER 2010

# CRACKS IN THE IVORY TOWER?

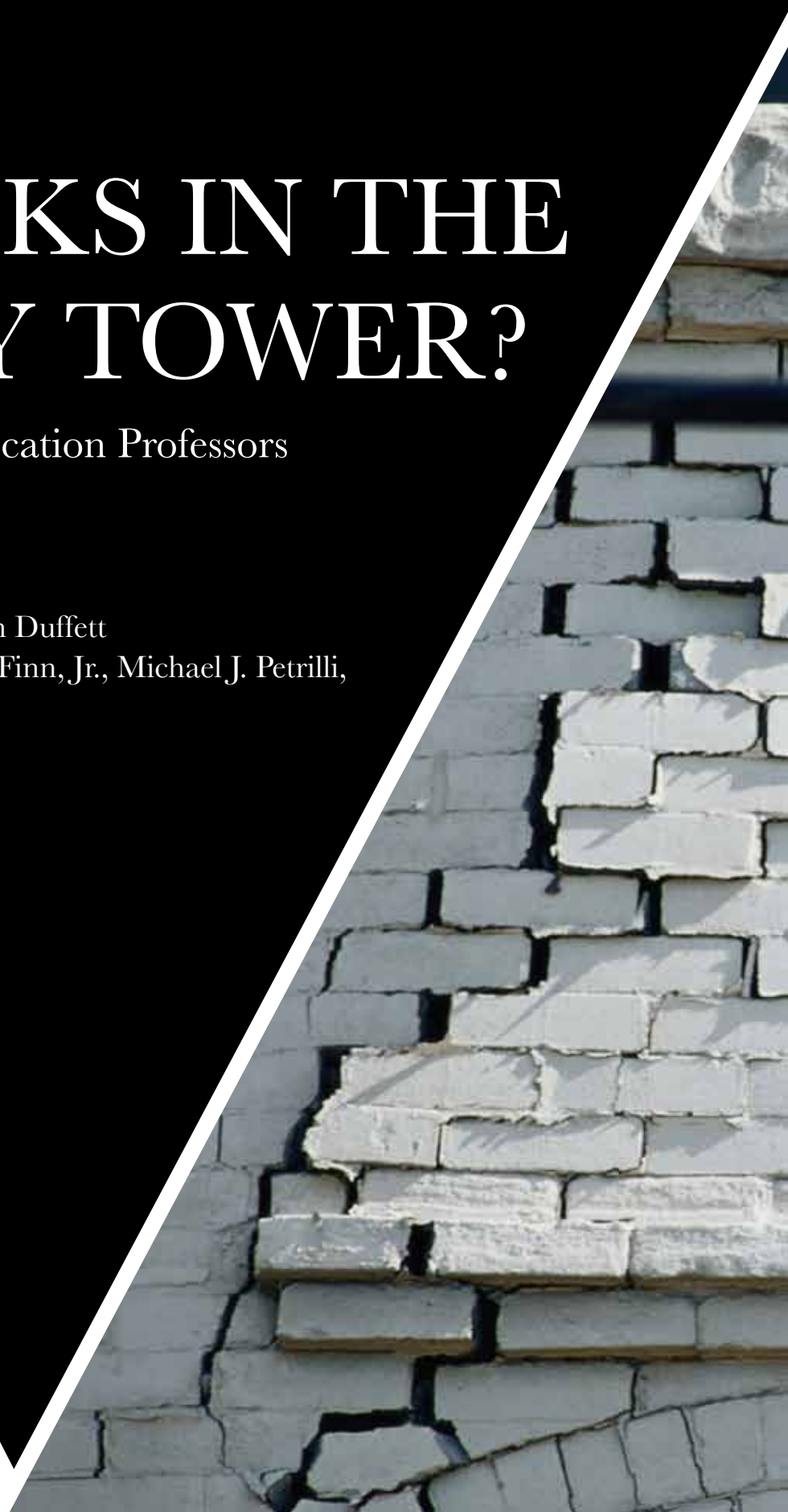
The Views of Education Professors  
Circa 2010

By Steve Farkas and Ann Duffett  
Foreword by Chester E. Finn, Jr., Michael J. Petrilli,  
and Janie Scull

**FDR GROUP**  
*When Research Matters.*

**THOMAS B.  
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*Advancing Educational Excellence*

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## FOREWORD

By Chester E. Finn, Jr., Michael J. Petrilli,  
and Janie Scull

Doug Lemov's *Teach Like a Champion: 49 Techniques That Put Students on the Path to College* is a publishing phenomenon. Since its release earlier this year, it has hovered within or near the top 100 books on Amazon.com, in the same league as Malcolm Gladwell's *The Tipping Point* and Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*. What Lemov is selling is clearly in high demand. But why is it in such short supply? The sobering data in this study, drawn from an elaborate survey of education school professors, shed much light on that question.

Lemov's book provides some important context. His forty-nine techniques—culled from observing uber-effective teachers—seem commonsensical, even obvious. But they are precisely the nitty-gritty tips and practical tools that can keep a new teacher afloat in her first year in the classroom—and can make her much more effective much more quickly. For instance, when discussing “engaging students in your lessons,” Lemov details Technique 24, “Pepper”:

For decades baseball players have warmed up for games and practices by playing a game called Pepper. In a group of four or five players, one holds a bat, and the rest stand in a ring in front of the batter, a few yards away, gloves at the ready. One player tosses the ball to the batter. Without stopping to catch it, the batter taps it back toward the group using the bat; the nearest player fields it and, again, without stopping, tosses it back to the batter, who hits the toss back to another player. The game is fast, providing dozens of opportunities to practice fielding and hitting skills in a short period of time and in a fast-paced and energetic environment. Unlike formal practice, it doesn't propose to teach new skills or game strategy; it's a reinforcement of skills.

Pepper, the teaching technique by the same name, also uses fast-paced, group-oriented activities to review familiar information and foundational skills. A teacher tosses questions to a group of students quickly, and they answer back. The teacher usually does not slow down to engage or discuss an answer; if it's right, she simply asks another student a new question. If it's wrong, she asks the same question of another student, though sometimes the same student, always keeping moving. That's Pepper: a fast-paced, unpredictable...review of fundamentals with lots of chances for participation in rapid succession.

Within the category “setting and maintaining high behavioral expectations,” Lemov details Technique 41, “Threshold”:

The most important moment to set expectations in your classroom is the minute when your classroom students enter...The first minute, when students cross the threshold into the classroom, you must remind them of the expectations. It's the critical time to establish rapport, set the tone, and reinforce the first steps in a routine that makes excellence habitual...Ideally you will find a way to greet your students by standing in the physical threshold of the classroom—astride the door, taking the opportunity to remind students where they are (they are with you now; no matter what the expectations are elsewhere, you will always expect their best), where they are going (to college), and what you will demand of them (excellence and effort).

Parents, voters, and taxpayers—and would-be teachers—might well suppose that such tips and tools are exactly what aspiring teachers acquire in our colleges of education and other teacher preparation programs. After all, isn't the whole point of teacher training programs to take reasonably knowledgeable, caring, charismatic, and organized people and turn them into effective classroom practitioners?

So you might well think. But you would be wrong, at least in the eyes—and according to the priorities—of most actual education professors.

The pages that follow report on the first national survey of education school professors in a dozen years.<sup>1</sup> The key finding: A majority of the professoriate shrugs off the mission of transmitting Lemov-style tips and tools to aspiring teachers. For example:

- Only 24 percent believe it “absolutely essential” to produce “teachers who understand how to work with the state’s standards, tests and accountability systems.”
- Just 37 percent say it is “absolutely essential” to focus on developing “teachers who maintain discipline and order in the classroom.”
- Just 39 percent find it “absolutely essential” to “create teachers who are trained to address the challenges of high-needs students in urban districts.”

To be fair, many professors also think these things are important—just not *that* important. What’s *more* important to them is forming “change agents”—new teachers who push back against school practices and resist modern reforms, reforms that have little to do with the romantic view of schooling that so many of Dewey’s descendents so ardently espouse. The professors see themselves as philosophers and evangelists, not as master craftsmen sharing tradecraft with apprentices and journeymen.

This is nothing new. Stanford University’s David Labaree, a respected historian of education, explains that as far back as the early twentieth century, school system reformers were pushing for efficiency and utility, while education school professors wanted schools to help individual children blossom and develop a lifelong love of learning. Eventually the professors lost that argument and the K–12 system embraced the efficiency movement. But this outcome cast education professors as little more than vocational instructors, preparing their charges to enter a uniform teaching force and school system—a system which eschewed the professors’ idealistic educational values.

And they didn’t much like it. As Labaree writes, “It was a job, to be sure, but not much of a mission.” So the professors clung to the “individual child” ideology, no matter for what the system was calling, and no matter what children actually needed. By assigning a higher purpose to their work—instilling in new teachers the romantic belief that every child’s path is unique—they sought to legitimize their own profession in the eyes of the public.<sup>2</sup>

1. That survey is Farkas, Steve and Jean Johnson, with Ann Duffett. 1997. *Different Drummers: How Teachers of Teachers View Public Education*. New York: Public Agenda.  
2. Labaree, David F. 2005. “Progressivism, Schools and Schools of Education: An American Romance.” *Paedagogica Historica* 41: 275–288.

In 2010, the United States has grown very practical and very demanding when it comes to K–12 education. Measurable academic achievement and college readiness are the coin of the realm. So is economic competitiveness. Teacher effectiveness in the classroom is beginning to influence key personnel decisions. Schools’ failure to narrow achievement gaps may well lead to total restructuring, including replacement of staff. Families have more control over which schools their children attend. Elected officials and employers are watching schools like hawks. Technology is coming of age in education—and threatening to displace some flesh-and-blood instructors. And in a time of flat or shrinking school budgets, efficiency and productivity count more than ever.

There’s very little margin for error—and little space for romanticism. That’s why real-world insights and practical tips such as Lemov’s are in such demand. That’s why “alternate routes” into classrooms are gaining popularity. That’s also why criticism is mounting of traditional education schools and teacher-preparation programs. Americans now demand that new teachers hit the ground running—and continue running, dodging all obstacles in their path, so as to boost student achievement and help schools realize their learning objectives.

As you will see in these pages, most of the professoriate simply isn’t there yet. But there’s modest good news here, too. We find a sizable minority of professors that is both critical of standard education school practice and also willing to see their role as preparing teachers for the real world of today’s schools. For instance, about 40 percent of respondents believe that it’s “absolutely essential” to train teachers “in pragmatic issues of running a classroom such as managing time and preparing lesson plans.” We also find “adjunct” faculty members (versus the full-time, tenured ones) to be more concerned about teaching lesson planning and classroom management. Minority professors tend to be more focused on the challenges of high-needs students. And those with recent classroom experience of their own are more attuned to weeding out unqualified teacher candidates than those who have been out of school classrooms for twenty-plus years.

Some of the professors’ views are also surprisingly reform-minded. They favor tougher policies for awarding tenure to teachers, financial incentives for those who work in tough neighborhoods, a core curriculum that teaches the classics—even Teach For America. Most also assert that their institutions should be held accountable for the quality of the teachers they graduate and that teachers should be made to pass tests demonstrating proficiency in key subjects before

they are hired. And the study even identifies a 12 percent segment—labeled “Reformers”—that is strongly dissatisfied with the status quo and is agitating for change.

Not that the professoriate is ready to back everything the reform camp proposes. They are divided in their support of value-added measures to evaluate teacher effectiveness, for instance, and barely one-third want to see financial incentives for extraordinarily effective teachers.

Still, what’s clear is that education school campuses already contain some potential allies for reformers. There are cracks in the Ivory Tower—cracks that might be widened with a little encouragement from the outside.

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This isn’t the first time we have examined the views of the education professoriate. In 1997, Fordham initiated and supported a groundbreaking Public Agenda report. *Different Drummers: How Teachers of Teachers View Public Education* surveyed education school professors at a time when Teach For America was cutting its teeth, the charter movement was crawling, and standards-based accountability was getting its learner’s permit. We wanted to know how professors viewed their role as teacher educators and what, if any, impact these new developments were making on teacher preparation. We learned a lot—much of it troubling.

Keen to find out which of their views, if any, had changed over the past dozen years and what they think of some big developments that have taken place in American K–12 policy and practice during that period, we engaged The FDR Group, led by veteran survey researchers Steve Farkas and Ann Duffett, who also crafted the 1997 study. They surveyed over 700 education school professors across the land and held focus groups in the Midwest, the Northeast, and on the West Coast. This report, like so many conducted by Farkas and Duffett, showcases their diligence, accuracy, and reader-friendly analyses. They’ve again done superb work and we’re grateful indeed.

Generous support for this project was provided by The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, The Louis Calder Foundation, and William E. Simon Foundation. This study was also supported in part by our sister organization, the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. Shannon Last served as our adept copy editor and House9 Design created the nifty layout. Thanks also go to Fordham research director Amber Winkler, public affairs staffers Amy Fagan and Daniela Fairchild, policy analyst Stafford Palmieri, and intern Amanda Olberg.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The American K–12 education system is under fire—and schools of education are no exception. Even the U.S. Secretary of Education and the presidents and deans of many teachers colleges and education schools themselves number among the critics. Alternative certification programs are blossoming in every corner of the land, competing for the bread and butter of these once-dominant institutions. Even as efforts to improve the teaching profession stretch beyond the walls of education schools, professors who teach within those walls have a clear stake in the policies that will affect their students.

*Cracks in the Ivory Tower?*, therefore, goes to the source—our nation’s teacher educators, responsible for preparing most of our children’s classroom teachers—and asks for their perspectives on the pressing questions surrounding teacher education and school reform today. How do they view their own roles and those of their institutions? How do they respond to criticism? What do they think about the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), teacher tenure, state and national standards, measures of accountability, and alternative certification programs—their competition?

Results show that education professors hold divided views on many issues. Balanced against a remarkable willingness to criticize their own preparation programs is a fair degree of defensiveness. In several areas, the views of teacher educators conflict with the policies that school districts and states pursue in today’s public schools—and with the express needs of teachers themselves. Many attitudes have shifted since an original iteration of this study in 1997,<sup>3</sup> even as other attitudes have barely budged. Two particular subsets within the professoriate are so intensely different that we have named them Reformers and Defenders.

### KEY FINDINGS

1. Idealism, good intentions, and progressivist thinking suffuse what education professors strive to impart to prospective teachers, despite tension between these values and the policies pursued by school districts and states. Teacher educators show only modest concern for real-world challenges such as managing classrooms and student discipline, implementing differentiated instruction, and working with state standards—even though K–12 teachers often say these are among the most difficult elements of teaching.
- The vast majority of education professors (82 percent) think it is absolutely essential to develop teachers who are themselves lifelong learners.

3. Farkas, Steve and Jean Johnson, with Ann Duffett. 1997. *Different Drummers: How Teachers of Teachers View Public Education*. New York: Public Agenda.



- They are far more likely to believe that the proper role of teacher is to be a “facilitator of learning” (84 percent) not a “conveyor of knowledge” (11 percent).
- Asked to choose between two competing philosophies of the role of teacher educator, 68 percent believe preparing students “to be change agents who will reshape education by bringing new ideas and approaches to the public schools” is most important; just 26 percent advocate preparing students “to work effectively within the realities of today’s public schools.”
- Only 24 percent believe it is absolutely essential to produce “teachers who understand how to work with the state’s standards, tests, and accountability systems.”
- Just 39 percent find it absolutely essential “to create teachers who are trained to address the challenges of high-needs students in urban districts.”
- Just 37 percent say it is absolutely essential to focus on developing “teachers who maintain discipline and order in the classroom.”
- The vast majority of education professors (83 percent) believe it is absolutely essential for public school teachers to teach 21st century skills, but just 36 percent say the same about teaching math facts, and 44 percent about teaching phonics in the younger grades.

2. Most professors of education believe their field needs to change. Sizable majorities point to serious deficiencies with teacher-preparation programs, prospective teachers, and even their colleagues. Yet they are ambivalent about alternatives that recruit teachers through nontraditional paths. Teach For America is one exception to this ambivalence.

- Sixty-six percent believe that the present system of university-based teacher education has some good qualities but “also needs many changes.”
- Half (50 percent) agree that “teacher education programs often fail to prepare teachers for the challenges of teaching in the real world.”
- Seventy-three percent favor “holding teacher education programs more accountable for the quality of the teachers they graduate.”
- A strong majority (73 percent) believes that “most professors of education need to spend more time in K–12 classrooms.”
- Only 7 percent say that institutional accreditation is a guarantee of quality—they are far more likely to say it merely assures a baseline of acceptable quality (46 percent) or procedural compliance (41 percent).
- Regarding alternative teaching routes, 42 percent oppose recruiting candidates based on their success in other fields and 51 percent oppose programs run by school districts or charter management organizations. Sixty-three percent, however, favor programs like Teach For America.

3. Professors of education offer some support for a number of policy initiatives aimed at improving the teaching corps—e.g., holding educators more accountable, changing salary structures and incentives, and loosening tenure protections. They evince support for academic standards and even tepidly endorse *national* standards. Overall, however, professors oppose the use of student assessment data to evaluate teachers.
  - *Loosening tenure protections:* Seventy-nine percent support “requiring a minimum of five years for tenure and strengthening formal teacher evaluation,” and 86 percent favor “making it easier to terminate unmotivated or incompetent teachers—even if they are tenured.”
  - *Changing salary structures and incentives:* Eighty-three percent favor financial incentives for teachers who work in tough neighborhoods with low-performing schools; but just 30 percent favor financial incentives for teachers whose students routinely score higher than similar students on standardized tests.
  - *Holding educators and students more accountable:* Seventy-eight percent favor requiring public school teachers to pass tests demonstrating their proficiency in key subjects before they are hired; 61 percent feel the same about testing students in key subjects before they can graduate.
  - *High standards:* Seventy-eight percent support a core curriculum with specific knowledge and skill standards spelled out for each grade, K–12.
  - *National standards:* Forty-nine percent believe state governments should adopt the same set of educational standards and give the same tests in math, science, and reading nationwide; 36 percent think different standards and tests in each state are acceptable.

## METHODOLOGY

The study is based on survey findings from a nationwide, randomly selected sample of 716 teacher educators in four-year colleges and universities. The margin of error for the overall sample is plus or minus four percentage points; it is higher when comparing percentages across subgroups. Findings are also based on qualitative data from three focus groups conducted in Ohio, North Carolina, and California, which serve to contextualize the survey data. The complete methodology is included in Appendix A, and the entire questionnaire and survey results may be found in Appendix B.

“We only think when we are confronted with a problem,” John Dewey once said. The professors who walk the halls of our nation’s education schools must be thinking a lot these days. For such institutions and professors, these are challenging times.

The very essence of their mission—training tomorrow’s K–12 classroom teachers—has come under fire. President Obama’s Secretary of Education says that schools of education need “revolutionary change.” A study led by Arthur Levine, former president of Columbia University Teachers College, concludes that “taken as a whole, the nation’s teacher education programs would have to be described as inadequate.”<sup>4</sup> Nor are such challenges confined to the speeches and research studies of policymakers and education leaders. Alternative teacher preparation and certification programs are launching across the country, directly challenging the bread and butter of these institutions.

This is an excellent time, therefore, to go to the best informants possible—education professors themselves—and ask for their perspectives on the challenges they confront. How do they view their own roles and those of their institutions? How do they respond to criticism? How open are they to reform ideas? What do they think about alternative programs—their competition?

Much of what we find reveals a great deal of churn, ambivalence, and even confusion. Education professors evince divided opinions on many issues, some defensiveness, and a remarkable willingness to criticize educator-preparation programs such as their own. Many of the questions we pose are repeated from a 1997 Fordham-initiated survey of professors of education and reveal shifts in attitudes that are fairly unusual in their size and consistency of direction.<sup>5</sup> Other attitudes have barely budged. Two subsets within the professoriate are so intensely different that we have named them Reformers and Defenders. In several areas, the views of teacher educators conflict with the policies that school districts and states pursue in today’s public schools—and with the express needs of new teachers themselves.

This is a study of teacher educators—that is, the instructors and professors who prepare our children’s classroom teachers. The survey that informs *Cracks in the Ivory Tower?* covered a wide variety of topics, including the quality of teacher-education programs; preferences in terms of pedagogy; opinions on NCLB, teacher tenure, state and national standards, and other measures of accountability for students and teachers; as well as views on alternatives to the traditional system of teacher education.

4. Levine, Arthur. 2006. *Educating School Teachers*. Washington, D.C.: The Education Schools Project. [http://www.edschools.org/pdf/Educating\\_Teachers\\_Report.pdf](http://www.edschools.org/pdf/Educating_Teachers_Report.pdf).
5. Farkas, Steve and Jean Johnson, with Ann Duffett. 1997. *Different Drummers: How Teachers of Teachers View Public Education*. New York: Public Agenda.

## STUDY METHODS

The FDR Group’s approach to opinion research is to include qualitative research at the initial phase of a project before designing closed-ended survey questions. In this case, by interviewing teacher educators face to face—whether in focus groups before the survey was crafted or during the pre-testing stage, or via telephone after the survey was fielded—we placed great emphasis on giving teacher educators a chance to talk in their own words about the things that matter to them. As a result of their participation, the questionnaire was improved, the topics covered more pertinent, and the word choice more appropriate.

Two things made this study unusually tricky to accomplish. First, the issues covered in the survey are complicated; inevitably, some professors felt that a survey with closed-ended questions would result in over-simplification of complex viewpoints. As one professor wrote after completing the survey, “There were many questions where the answer I would have given lies somewhere in the middle.” Consequently, many reported that they chose the “not sure” category rather than be forced into answers that didn’t capture their complete views. We take these concerns seriously; thus, we make sure to report “not sure” responses in the text when their percentages are unusually large, and we include direct quotes from the focus groups to illustrate survey findings and tease out finer distinctions.<sup>6</sup> Second, a few study participants suspected that the research was politically inspired and would be used to assault education schools. It is certainly true that these are politically charged times for education in general and schools of education are no different. Throughout the study, we sought to reassure those professors who had doubts. We believe that this report stands on its own as a fair, nonpartisan rendering of the views of education professors.

The study is based on survey findings from a nationwide, randomly selected sample of 716 teacher educators from four-year colleges. While they may not teach exclusively in education departments, each teaches college students who are training to be elementary, middle or high school teachers. The margin of error for the overall sample is plus or minus four percentage points; it is higher when comparing percentages across subgroups. The findings also are based on qualitative data from three focus groups conducted in Ohio, North Carolina, and California. In general, the findings from the focus groups serve to contextualize the survey data and provide illustrative examples of professors’ personal experiences. The complete methodology is included in Appendix A, and the entire questionnaire and survey results are included in Appendix B.

6. Appendix B includes “not sure” responses for all questions on the survey.

## Education Professors' Goals and Values

Idealism, good intentions, and progressivist thinking suffuse all that education professors strive to impart to prospective teachers. Their primary goal is preparing future instructors to be both change agents and lifelong learners. But these values, which are sincere and intensely held, are often in tension with policies that school districts and states pursue in their public schools. Further, teacher educators show only mild concern for real-world challenges such as managing classrooms and student discipline, implementing differentiated instruction, and working with state standards—even though K–12 teachers often say these are among the most difficult elements of teaching.

### ACTIVE, LIFELONG LEARNING

Professors of education convey a deep-seated idealism about their work. Strongly held and longstanding progressivist values, such as a love of learning and child-centered education, drive the lessons they hope to impart to prospective teachers. To them, education is more than just a vehicle for shaping students into functioning members of society; it is an enduring passion, a purpose unto itself. For example, 82 percent say it is absolutely essential to develop teachers who are themselves lifelong learners. As one professor in our focus groups put it, “I want my students to walk away knowing that it’s a continual process. They will have to become lifelong learners....It doesn’t just stop when you leave college.”

Teachers of teachers also believe that learning requires active participation and engagement. The proper role of the teacher is to be a “facilitator of learning” (84 percent), not a “conveyor of knowledge” (11 percent). “I’ve seen the curriculum change from when memory was all you had to do. If you had a good memory, you could survive in college anywhere in the world,” one education professor explained. “Today, it’s more critical thinking. That’s what we are trying to produce, teachers who are critical thinkers who can teach their students to be critical thinkers.”

In the minds of professors, education is a subtle, complex, and continuous enterprise, not something that can be easily reduced to a simple set of goals, standards, and metrics. When asked whether they would rather have students struggle with the process of finding the correct answers than actually know

the right answers, a vast majority (66 percent to 20 percent) would rather that students struggle. (Another 14 percent are unsure.)

These views define the core values and fundamental orientation of professors toward teaching and have shifted very little since the questions were first posed more than a decade ago (see Figure 1).<sup>7</sup> This stability and continuity in values contrasts sharply with sizable shifts in views toward hot-button issues, which we discuss in Chapter 2.

### VALUES CONFLICT WITH REAL-WORLD EXPECTATIONS

Because they feel so strongly about fostering student engagement and a love of learning, professors' views are often at odds with today's dominant policy trends and educational practices.

State standards are one example. Since 2002, NCLB has required states to set and implement standards, tests, and accountability systems. Moreover, as of August 2010, more than three-quarters of the states had adopted *common* academic standards in English language arts and mathematics, as put forth by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers.<sup>8</sup> Yet only 24 percent of professors participating in this survey believe it absolutely essential to produce “teachers who understand how to work with the state’s standards, tests and accountability systems.”

### CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT—NOT A PRIORITY

New K–12 classroom teachers sometimes complain about getting too much theory and not enough training in classroom management or student discipline.<sup>9</sup> But such practical matters are not a top priority for education professors:

7. Farkas, Steve and Jean Johnson, with Ann Duffett. 1997. *Different Drummers: How Teachers of Teachers View Public Education*. New York: Public Agenda.

8. See Common Core State Standards Initiative, <http://www.corestandards.org/>.

9. In a recent national survey of first-year teachers, 45 percent reported that their education training put too much emphasis on the theory and philosophy of education, 3 percent said it put too much emphasis on handling the practical challenges of teaching, and 50 percent said it struck the right balance between the two. National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality and Public Agenda. 2007. *Lessons Learned: New Teachers Talk About Their Jobs, Challenges and Long-Range Plans*, Washington, D.C. and New York: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality and Public Agenda. [http://www.publicagenda.org/files/pdf/lessons\\_learned\\_1.pdf](http://www.publicagenda.org/files/pdf/lessons_learned_1.pdf).

Figure 1

ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL QUALITIES OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS

Teacher education programs can impart different qualities to their students. Which of the following qualities do you think are most essential and which are least essential? (Percent responding “absolutely essential”)



Percentages in figures may not equal 100 percent due to rounding or omission of answer categories. Question wording may be edited for space, but full question wording is available in Appendix B. Small discrepancies between percentages in the text and those in the appendix are due to rounding.

## 1. Political Identification and its Impact on Professors' Point of View

Education professors view their work through a broader ideological and political lens. Democrats outnumber Republicans among survey respondents by a 4-to-1 ratio (65 percent to 16 percent), and partisan leanings show higher correlations with survey responses than any other demographic variable:

- About a third of both groups have a positive view of alternative teacher certification programs, with 35 percent of Republican and 33 percent of Democratic professors agreeing that such programs are “a good way to attract unconventional talent to the public schools.” But when the issue is framed as an Obama administration initiative to open up as many avenues as possible to recruit new teachers, differences emerge: 51 percent of Republicans oppose the idea compared with 35 percent of Democrats.
- Fifty-nine percent of Republican professors, compared with 29 percent of their Democratic counterparts, believe that public schools’ primary goal for students who are new immigrants should be to “absorb America’s language and culture as quickly as possible,” even if it means neglecting their native language and culture.
- Far more Republicans than Democrats (63 percent to 44 percent) believe that teacher tenure is an obstacle to improving schools.

So long as teachers rely on engaging instructional techniques that tap their students’ allegedly innate love of learning, behavior and classroom management will happen naturally. Fewer than half (42 percent) say it is absolutely essential for teacher education programs to produce “teachers trained in pragmatic issues of running a classroom such as managing time and preparing lesson plans.” Even fewer (37 percent) believe it is absolutely essential to focus on developing “teachers who maintain discipline and order in the classroom.”

As one Ohio professor explained: “If you are engaging the students, and the students are considered members of a learning community, then you don’t need to worry that much about the discipline. It takes care of itself.” Half of the professors surveyed (50 percent) believe that “when a public school teacher faces a disruptive class, it probably means that he or she has failed to make lessons engaging enough.”

## PHONICS AND MATH FACTS—NOT A PRIORITY

Most education professors are reluctant to endorse instructional strategies such as phonics or memorization of math facts, likely because these conjure images of students engaged in “rote” work or dull repetition. Just 36 percent of education professors say it is absolutely essential to “teach math facts such as memorization of the multiplication tables” in the early grades and only 44 percent say it is absolutely essential, in the early grades, to “teach phonics and phonemic awareness when teaching literacy” (see Figure 2). Not only do these attitudes likely put professors at odds with conventional wisdom, but they contradict the recommendations of national panels that have explicitly endorsed these instructional techniques for the early grades.<sup>10</sup>

In the same vein, teaching “21st century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and global awareness” in the public schools is absolutely essential, according to 83 percent of professors. But just 23 percent say it is absolutely essential to impart to their students “the importance of stressing correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.” Interpersonal and critical skills clearly trump practical knowledge in terms of professors’ priorities.

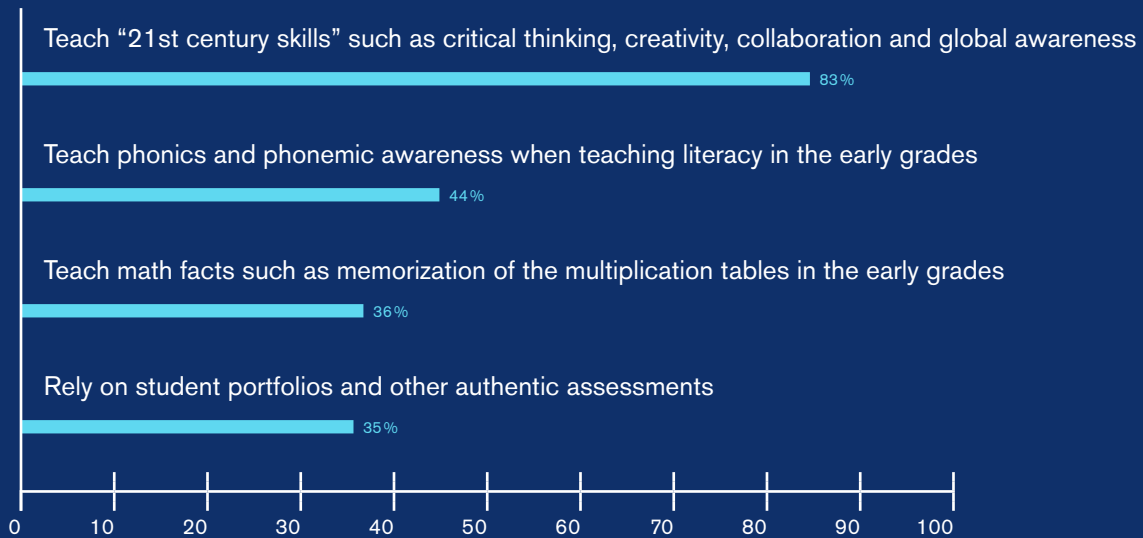
10. National Reading Panel. 2000. “Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction.” *Report of the National Reading Panel*, 9. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education. See also, National Mathematics Advisory Panel. 2008. “The Final Report of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel,” xiv. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.



Figure 2

## ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL PRIORITIES FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS

How important is it for teachers in public schools to do the following in their classes?  
(Percent responding “absolutely essential”)



Percentages in figures may not equal 100 percent due to rounding or omission of answer categories. Question wording may be edited for space, but full question wording is available in Appendix B. Small discrepancies between percentages in the text and those in the appendix are due to rounding.

### 1. Political Identification and its Impact on Professors' Point of View (continued)

On issues of pedagogy, political identifications drive sharp rifts in the data:

- Republican professors are more likely to believe that it is absolutely essential for public school teachers to teach math facts, such as memorization of the multiplication tables, in the early grades (50 percent versus 33 percent of Democrats) and that early use of calculators can hamper math learning in the elementary school grades (52 percent versus 37 percent).
- Similarly, Republican professors are more likely to believe that it is absolutely essential to teach phonics and phonemic awareness in the early grades (56 percent versus 41 percent of Democrats) and that “competition for rewards such as spelling bees or honor rolls is a valuable incentive for student learning” (54 percent versus 27 percent).
- Professors who identify as Democrats, however, are more likely to think it absolutely essential for public school teachers to rely on “student portfolios and other authentic assessments” (40 percent of Democrats versus 21 percent of Republicans) and for teacher education programs to prepare teachers to address the challenges of high-needs students in urban districts (41 percent versus 25 percent).

Even age-old, seemingly innocuous, school activities like “competition for rewards such as spelling bees or honor rolls” run into resistance, with only 35 percent of professors willing to say they can be valuable incentives for student learning. Professors want school-age students to seek knowledge because they are curious and love to learn, not because of a seemingly crass desire for rewards. Encouraging team work and collaboration is preferable to competition that results in winners and losers.

### HIGH-NEEDS, URBAN SCHOOLS

Since improving low-performing, inner-city schools is arguably the chief education challenge presently facing policymakers and the nation, one might expect education professors to emphasize teaching strategies as they relate to disadvantaged students. But this is not the case: Just 39 percent think it absolutely essential “to create teachers who are trained to address the challenges of high-needs students in urban districts.” In addition, by a larger than three to one margin (73 percent to 20 percent), they say that, for the U.S. to live up to its ideals of justice and equality, it is more important for public schools to “focus equally on all students, regardless of their backgrounds or achievement levels” rather than to “focus on raising the achievement of disadvantaged students who are struggling academically” (see Figure 3).<sup>11</sup>

In fact, discussion of the “achievement gap” was not initiated by professors in any of the focus groups. When moderators asked the Ohio group why this was so, one professor explained it thusly: “We discuss the achievement gap so much among ourselves....Behind every single comment that was made, was really the schools that are struggling the most are urban schools and the achievement gap is certainly greater in those areas.”

Nor are education professors keen on the idea of a “scripted” approach to teaching inner-city students, a current trend in some low-performing schools and districts. More than half (54 percent) reject the view that “lower-income students in inner-city schools have a greater need for structured, teacher-directed instruction than middle class or suburban students.” (Almost four in ten [39 percent], however, say the statement comes close to their view.) One Los Angeles

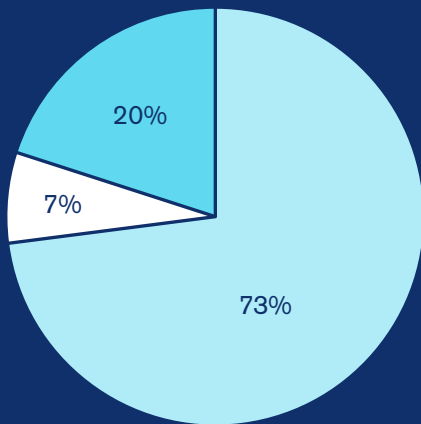
11. A survey of third through twelfth grade public school teachers shows a margin that is even wider: 86 percent versus 11 percent. See Steve Farkas and Ann Duffett. 2008. *High Achieving Students in the Era of NCLB: Results from a National Teacher Survey (Part 2)*. Washington, D.C.: Thomas B. Fordham Institute.

Figure 3 COMPETING PRIORITIES OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

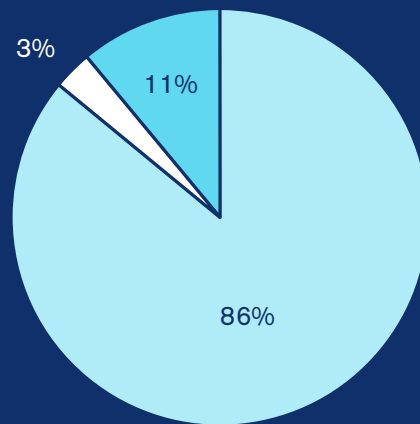
For the public schools to help the U.S. live up to its ideals of justice and equality, do you think it's more important that they:

- Focus on raising the achievement of disadvantaged students who are struggling academically
- Focus equally on all students, regardless of their backgrounds or achievement levels
- Not sure

Education Professors



Public School Teachers



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## 2. Minority Education Professors

About one in ten education professors responding to the survey are minority—that is, mostly African American and Hispanic. Their views differ from those of their white colleagues across a number of questions related to disadvantaged students:

- Minority education professors are more focused on training teachers to address the challenges of high-needs students in urban districts (58 percent versus 37 percent of whites).
- They are much more likely to want public schools to focus on raising the achievement of struggling, disadvantaged students rather than on raising the achievement of all students (45 percent versus 17 percent).
- And they are more likely to say it is absolutely essential for teachers to have high expectations of all their students (78 percent versus 68 percent).

Minority professors are also more likely than their white peers to:

- Believe that the public schools should maintain the language and culture of students who are immigrants rather than focus on absorbing American culture and language (65 percent versus 44 percent).
- Support the idea of alternative certification—that is, to think alternative programs “are a good way to attract unconventional talent to the public schools” (46 percent versus 31 percent), and to think the Obama administration’s initiative to “open up every avenue possible to recruit new teachers” is on the right track (59 percent versus 38 percent).
- Support Teach For America (75 percent versus 62 percent).

participant remarked, “Part of being a teacher is the intuitive understanding of where a kid is and just kind of holistically where they are in the process of gaining knowledge. And if you are tied to a script, tied to a lock-step pattern, there isn’t any movement for being able to adjust to the needs of your class.”

## TEACHING YOUNG IMMIGRANTS

When asked about how best to approach teaching students who are new immigrants, education professors stand apart from a different group of “experts”—the immigrants themselves. Professors are more likely to believe that public schools should help young immigrants maintain their original language and culture (47 percent) rather than “absorb America’s language and culture as quickly as possible, even if their native language and culture are neglected” (36 percent).<sup>12</sup> Another 18 percent say they are not sure. These results differ sharply from a national survey of immigrants, in which 74 percent thought it more important for schools to teach new immigrants English “as quickly as possible,” even if that meant falling behind in other subjects.<sup>13</sup>

## DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Half of the education professors surveyed (51 percent) say it is absolutely essential to train teachers to differentiate instruction in their classrooms. But here again the ideal appears disconnected from the practical—and the professors appear to know it. The vast majority (81 percent) acknowledge that it is difficult to tailor instruction to match the individual needs of students on a daily basis in the classroom.<sup>14</sup>

The disparity between the ideal and the real leads education professors to sympathize with the plight of classroom teachers. As one professor explained, “We are asking teachers to be more integrative, to be more focused on the interests of the children, to be more focused on individualizing.... Yet we are still talking twenty-

12. Interesting divides appear in these data when broken out by political affiliation. Fifty-nine percent of Republican professors—compared with 29 percent of their Democratic counterparts—believe that public schools’ primary goal for students who are new immigrants should be to “absorb America’s language and culture as quickly as possible, even if their native language and culture are neglected.”

13. Bittle, Scott, and Jonathan Rochkind, with Paul Gasbarra and Amber Ott. 2009. *A Place to Call Home: What Immigrants Say Now About Life in America*, 53. New York: Public Agenda and Carnegie Corporation. <http://www.publicagenda.org/files/pdf/Immigration.pdf>.

14. A similar number of third through twelfth grade public school teachers (84 percent) report that differentiated instruction is difficult for them to implement in their own classrooms.

five kids in a classroom and one teacher....We don't have homogeneous classrooms anymore and our teachers are still being treated as if everybody is homogeneous, so it doesn't work." In the focus groups, some called for more money or smaller classes to make differentiated instruction more feasible—both of which seem unlikely in tight economic times. No professor asked whether education schools need to change their ways, and no one suggested a modified approach to make differentiated instruction more workable in today's classrooms.

## AGENTS OF CHANGE

From state standards to classroom management, from technology to pedagogical issues, education professors pursue objectives that sometimes ignore—and even contradict—the policies and challenges that their students will face as actual teachers.

The K–12 school system sometimes resists. In the focus groups, for example, a few education professors reported that districts and classroom teachers are refusing to work with their student teachers, concerned that the agenda of the education school will hinder efforts to meet accountability requirements. One professor said, "We are trying to get our students to get out and do what research is showing to be best practice....But the teachers are [saying], 'I still have to do this chapter in the math book. I have to do this topic in science because that's what the Ohio standards say I have to do this year.'" Another said, "We are having school districts refuse to have us come in because of the accountability and the assessment process. Because the teachers are saying, 'I'm held responsible for this student, for my class. My scores are what are published.' [sic]"

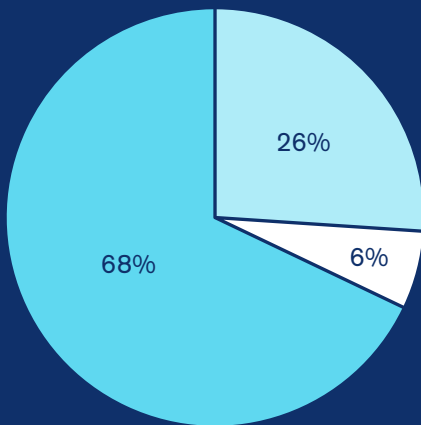
But despite this pushback, most education professors appear comfortable with their approach, perhaps because they do not define their mission as training teachers for actual classrooms. For instance, when asked to choose between two competing philosophies regarding the role of teacher educator, just 26 percent prefer that of preparing their students "to work effectively within the realities of today's public schools"; the majority (68 percent) choose the philosophy of preparing students "to be change agents who will reshape education by bringing new ideas and approaches to the public schools" (see Figure 4).

Professors appear to be saying that it is the real world that needs to change, not them. As they see it, each wave of new teachers they send into the nation's classrooms should challenge the status quo and provoke change. Thus, the disconnect between the real world and the ivory tower is not only one of their own making, but conscious and purposeful.

Figure 4 TEACHER-EDUCATOR PHILOSOPHIES

Which comes closer to your own philosophy of your role as teacher educator? To prepare future teachers to:

- Be change agents who will reshape education by bringing new ideas and approaches to the public schools
- Work effectively within the realities of today's public schools—e.g., state mandates, limited budgets, and beleaguered administrators
- Not sure



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## 2.

## Education Professors Assess Their Field

### 3. Attitudinal Shifts: A Signal of Emergent Pragmatism?

This study repeats many questions from the original Fordham-initiated survey of education professors, conducted in 1997. These trend questions reveal a series of provocative shifts in perceptions, typically in a more “pragmatic” direction.

Although still deeply attached to a romantic concept of learning, more professors take concrete, practical stands than before (see [Figure B](#)). For example, the pool of professors who believe it more important for kids to struggle with the process than end up with the right answer has dropped 20 percentage points (66 percent from 86 percent in 1997). Meanwhile, the percentage saying it is absolutely essential to produce teachers well-versed in theories of child development and learning has declined to 35 percent from 46 percent. Today, fewer professors would blame a disruptive class on the teacher’s failure to make the lessons engaging (50 percent from 61 percent).

Their sensibility toward teaching methods also may be shifting in a more pragmatic direction (see [Figure B](#)). For example, only 37 percent of professors believe that early use of calculators will improve children’s problem-solving skills, a 20 percentage point drop from 57 percent in 1997. Even the view that schools should avoid competitive events such as spelling bees and honor rolls has declined to 48 percent from 64 percent.

Many professors of education believe their field needs to change (see [Figure 5](#)). Sizable majorities point to serious problems with teacher-preparation programs, prospective teachers, and even their colleagues. Yet they are ambivalent about alternatives that recruit teachers through nontraditional paths. Teach For America is one exception.

Although the values and priorities of education professors often render them out of sync with the real-world challenges facing teachers and schools, some professors do examine their programs with a critical eye. Self-reflection and openness to change and reform are no longer uncommon. Calls for change have even come from insiders like Arthur Levine, former president of Columbia University Teachers College, who wrote in a recent report that “a majority of teachers are prepared at the education schools with the lowest admission standards and least accomplished professors.”<sup>15</sup> Such self-scrutiny has increased over the past decade, as revealed by dramatic shifts in responses to the 1997 and current surveys (see sidebar “Attitudinal Shifts: A Signal of Emergent Pragmatism?”). Consequently, whereas Chapter 1 depicts how some professors are often out of step with the real world, this chapter illustrates that many among their ranks acutely realize that not all is right with their field.

### CRITICISM FROM WITHIN

Some education professors themselves have joined the chorus of skeptics and would-be reformers. True, only about one in ten (9 percent) call for “fundamental overhaul” of university-based teacher education, but the majority (66 percent) says that, while there are many good things about the present system, “it also needs many changes.” Relatively few (22 percent) report that the system “only needs minor tinkering.” In focus groups, they spoke openly about uneven quality in their field. One veteran education professor in Los Angeles remarked, “There’s a huge discrepancy between teacher education programs. I’ve taught at many schools, and there’s a huge difference. It’s a mixed bag.”

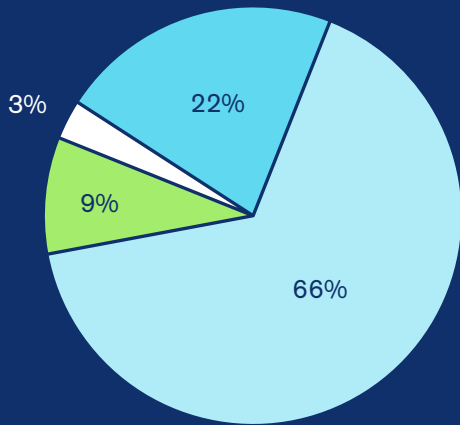
15. Levine, Arthur. 2006. *Educating School Teachers*, 26. Washington, D.C.: The Education Schools Project. [http://www.edschools.org/pdf/Educating\\_Teachers\\_Report.pdf](http://www.edschools.org/pdf/Educating_Teachers_Report.pdf).

Figure 5

### QUALITY OF UNIVERSITY-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION

Thinking about the U.S. system of university-based teacher education, which comes closest to your overall view?

- On the whole the system works very well—it only needs minor tinkering
- There are many good things about the system but it also needs many changes
- The system has so much wrong with it that it needs fundamental overhaul
- Not sure



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Another veteran—this one in Ohio—said much the same thing: “I have taught in higher education in four different states, and frankly I think most teacher ed programs do a good job, but some do a pretty bad job.”

Many professors acknowledge that future teachers are not getting the practical tools they will need to succeed outside the campus gates. Half (50 percent) say “teacher education programs often fail to prepare teachers for the challenges of teaching in the real world.” In the focus groups, professors were very specific about the kinds of things that they think starting teachers lack. “I have talked with people in special ed who go through a four-year program and never wrote an IEP,” said an Ohio professor. “I find that appalling. How could you send somebody out who has not done the central piece of paperwork that people have to do?” Others called for education programs to put more focus on substance. A Texas education professor who took part in the survey was outraged by the number of classroom teachers she sees teaching science in the public schools “who don’t know science. . . . They didn’t have to take real science classes. People who go through ed programs don’t have the science right. It’s scary.”

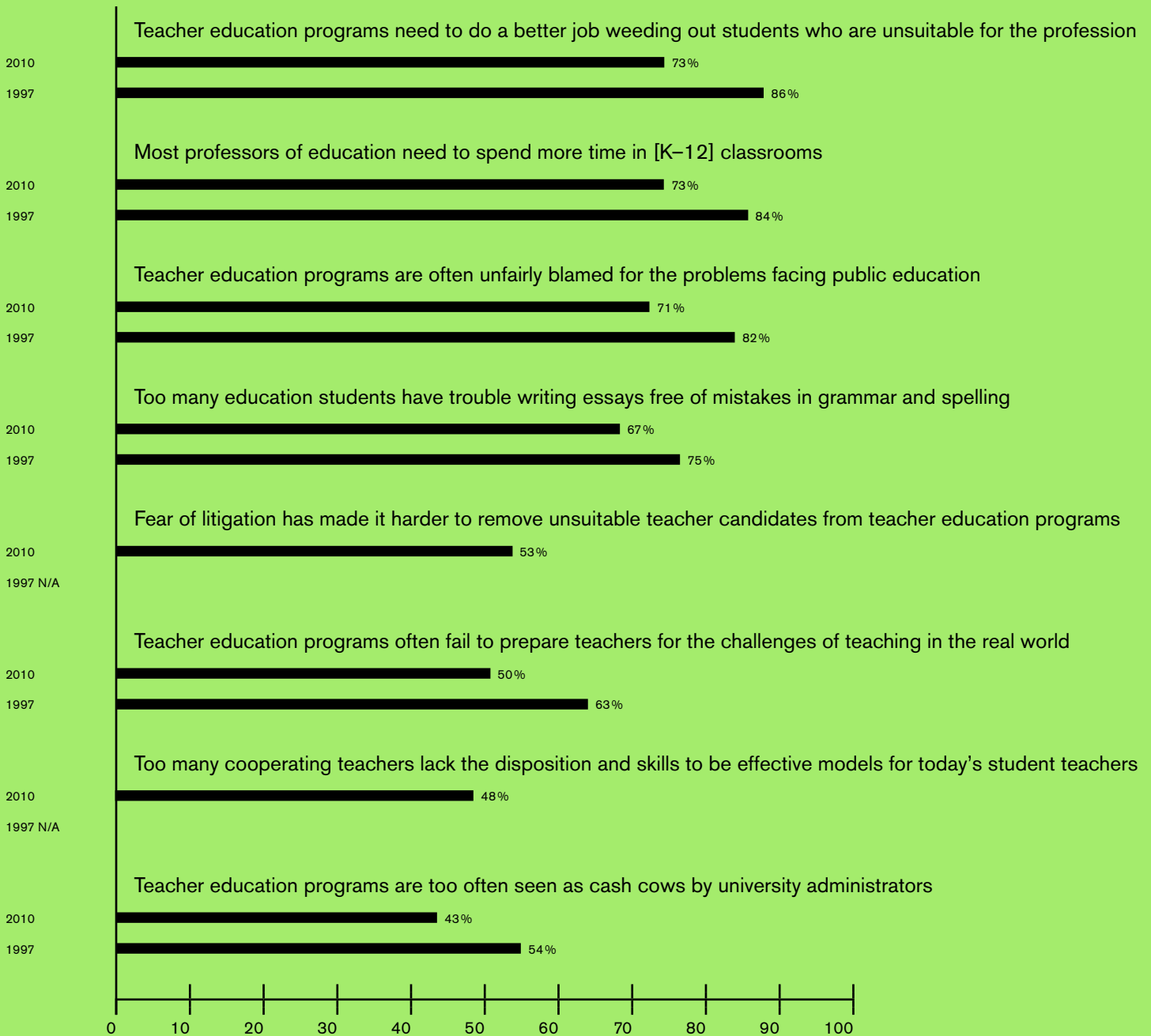
## STUDENT QUALITY IS AN ISSUE

Professors also point to concerns about the quality of students who enter their programs. They say that some are weak candidates for teaching, and more needs to be done either to improve the quality of entering students or to make it easier to remove unsuitable prospects once they are enrolled. More than seven in ten (73 percent) say that teacher education programs “need to do a better job weeding out” less suitable students. Remarked one professor, “There are some schools’ teacher education programs that are really big on retention—‘We are going to retain these students whether they are capable of doing anything or not.’ I have a big problem with that.” Most education professors say they “sometimes” (62 percent) or “often” (15 percent) run across students who they seriously doubt have what it takes to be a teacher. One professor commented, “I feel it is vitally important to pre-screen teacher candidates for basic skill competencies before allowing them to enter a teaching preparation program.”

Professors are specifically concerned about students’ writing skills. Two out of three (67 percent) report that too many of their students “have trouble writing essays free of mistakes in grammar and spelling.” (Ironically, only 23 percent say it is absolutely essential to impart to their college students “the importance of stressing correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.”)

Figure A TRENDS IN EDUCATION-PROFESSOR OUTLOOK, 1997 TO 2010  
(Sidebar 3)

How close does each of the following come to your own view?  
(Percent responding “very close” or “somewhat close”)



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Figure B  
(Sidebar 3)

EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES, 1997 AND 2010

Which comes closer to your view on the role of teachers?

2010 1997

*When teachers assign specific questions in such subjects as math or history, is it more important that:*

|  | 2010 | 1997 |
|--|------|------|
| The kids end up knowing the right answers to the questions or problems | 20   | 12   |
| The kids struggle with the process of trying to find the right answers | 66   | 86   |
| Not sure   | 14   | 3    |

Which is closer to your view on using calculators?

2010 1997

|  | 2010 | 1997 |
|--|------|------|
| Early use of calculators in elementary school grades can hamper children from learning basic arithmetic skills     | 42   | 38   |
| Early use of calculators will improve children's problem-solving skills and not prevent the learning of arithmetic | 37   | 57   |
| Not sure   | 21   | 6    |

Which is closer to your own view?

2010 1997

|   | 2010 | 1997 |
|---|------|------|
| Competition for rewards such as spelling bees or honor rolls is a valuable incentive for student learning | 35   | 33   |
| Schools should avoid competition among children and foster cooperation                                    | 48   | 64   |
| Not sure  | 17   | 3    |

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### 3. Attitudinal Shifts: A Signal of Emergent Pragmatism? (continued)

Trends also indicate that professors are finding less to fault when they evaluate education programs—perhaps a signal from insiders that things are improving (see [Figure A](#)). For example, 50 percent of professors in this survey say education programs often fail to prepare teachers for teaching in the real world; in 1997, it was 63 percent. And while the proportion reporting that their programs “need to do a better job weeding out students who are unsuitable for the profession” is still high (73 percent), it is significantly lower than it was in 1997 (86 percent). The percentage that indicates “most professors need to spend more time in K–12 classrooms” has declined to 73 percent from 84 percent. Only 43 percent now say teacher education programs “are too often seen as cash cows by university administrators”—down from 54 percent. These shifts are statistically significant, meaningful, and consistently in the “we think things are getting better” direction.

But are things really improving? We can't be sure from these data. The movement toward greater accountability in K–12 education might have shed light on the flaws in teacher-preparation programs, prompting their improvement. Or the barrage of education school criticism might have led to self-reflection and change. Of course it is also possible that today's professors, leery of adding to the cacophony of complaints they already hear, have merely become more reluctant to openly criticize their field.<sup>16</sup>

Contributing to the critique of student quality is the haphazard manner in which many preparation programs identify and remove unsuitable students. Fewer than half (46 percent) report that their own program has a formal and systematic process in place for removing weak teacher candidates. Rather, 23 percent report having an “informal process” that relies on professors to “counsel out” students and 11 percent indicate that their program relies on students themselves to drop out. Another 17 percent cannot define the process (see [Figure 6](#)).

One Ohio professor described her personal aversion to ejecting students: “There [are] always students that you really don't think can do the job, but it's really hard to have someone not finish. It's really hard to kick them out of the program.” But another described how the standard operating procedure in her program makes collective self-regulation possible: “We police our own.... We have ‘candidate concerns’ forms. Anybody who has a student in a class or a field setting can fill out one of these.... There's a person in charge who sees that there is a pattern. And then each semester the leadership team of the department reviews the concerns that have been submitted.”

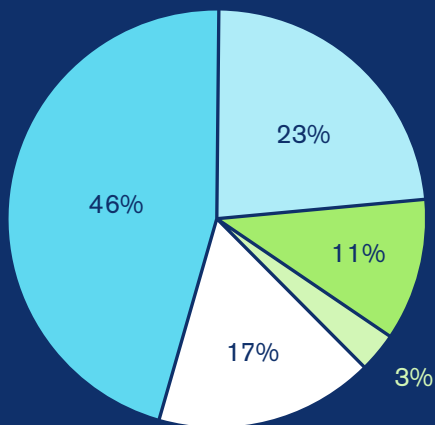
Additional external forces may discourage program selectivity. More than half (53 percent) of education professors say that “fear of litigation makes it harder to remove unsuitable teacher candidates.” Concerns that unsuccessful students might sue first came up spontaneously in a focus group with North Carolina professors. One participant described it this way: “You also have to think about legal issues. How do you document that and be able to prove to the university that you have done everything.... It's not widespread, but it's enough to be a pain in the posterior.” Another Los Angeles professor shared her own experience: “I had a student who plagiarized. She said the reason she plagiarized was because I didn't tell her that she couldn't. They wanted to retain her in the program and said I had to change her grade.... They just wanted it to go away, because she threatened to sue them. The schools don't want the bad publicity. Because it will get out. If someone sues you, even if you win, it's going to be very expensive.”

16. One data point argues against this notion of reflexive self-defense: The percentage of professors saying teacher education programs are unfairly blamed has declined by 11 percentage points, to 71 percent from 82 percent.

Figure 6 REMOVAL OF UNSUITABLE TEACHER CANDIDATES

When it comes to removing unsuitable teacher candidates, does your program mostly rely on:

- Formal and systematic process for identifying and removing unsuitable candidates
- Informal process that relies on individual professors to counsel out unsuitable candidates
- Students themselves to drop out when they realize they're not suited for teaching
- Something else
- Not sure



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#### 4. Professors Fresh from Working in K–12 Classrooms Are More Critical

Education professors who have taught in K–12 classrooms within the past five years tend to be more critical of education schools than those who have been away from the classroom for more than twenty years and those who have no classroom teaching experience. Professors with recent experience in the classroom are more likely to say:

- The system of university-based teacher education in the U.S. “needs many changes” (79 percent of those who have been out of the classroom for five years or less, versus 61 percent of those who have been out for more than 20 years, versus 63 percent of those with no classroom experience).
- “Most professors need to spend more time in K–12 classrooms” (87 percent versus 68 percent versus 62 percent, respectively).
- “Teacher education programs need to do a better job weeding out students who are unsuitable to the profession” (82 percent versus 73 percent versus 68 percent, respectively).

#### “HAVEN’T SEEN THE INSIDE OF A PRACTICAL CLASSROOM FOR 20 YEARS”

Many education professors are willing to critically assess their colleagues as well as their students. A strong majority (73 percent) believes that “most professors of education need to spend more time in K–12 classrooms.” One instructor in the Los Angeles area simply said, “Most of the teachers in teacher education have not been in the classroom for a long time.” Another in the same group—a relatively new teacher educator—said that some of his colleagues “haven’t seen the inside of a practical classroom for 20 years.” The survey data buttress these sentiments: More than four in ten (42 percent) say either that they have never been a classroom teacher or that they haven’t been one in more than twenty years.

Some survey participants did note in their written comments that they make efforts to visit schools and classrooms as guest teachers or volunteers, or that they are frequently in the schools observing their student teachers. “Although I have not been a classroom teacher for many years,” wrote one professor, “I make sure I teach a class of students at the elementary level in music every year so that I do not lose touch with the children or with the public school system.”

#### ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The current system for evaluating and accrediting schools of education is no bulwark of excellence, according to education professors (see Figure 7). Only 7 percent say that accreditation means the program is top-notch; they are far more likely to say it assures just a base-line of acceptable quality (46 percent) or procedural compliance (41 percent). An education dean interviewed in preparation for this study had just completed an exhaustive process for re-accreditation but described it as little more than paperwork and compliance. In the focus groups, many professors expressed concern about the time it took to complete accreditation. “I donate a lot of my time not just here but nationally to the accreditation process,” said an Ohio professor. “But the amount of time that it takes to do this definitely takes away from my ability to prepare for the classes that I teach.”

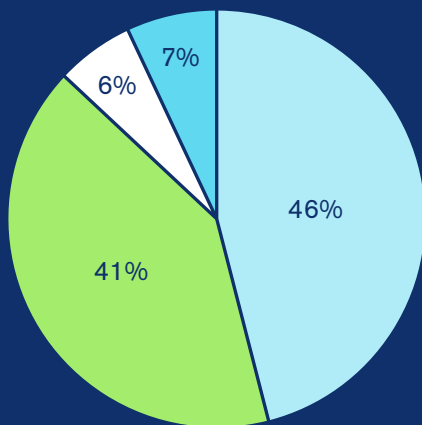
In Ohio, a focus group participant noticed a recent change in what the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) required his university to provide for certification—namely data—and he viewed this as an improvement. “The numbers have to be there this time. It’s like they want

Figure 7

## VALUE OF EDUCATION PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

From what you know or have heard about the process of professional accreditation of education programs—for example, through organizations like NCATE or TEAC—is it your sense that receiving accreditation means:

- A guarantee of top-notch quality
- A base-line of acceptable quality
- Very little other than procedural compliance
- Not sure



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to know what the failure rate is. And they want to know the percentages. I feel like it's a good thing. There's a certain level of accountability that I think we all need. I am perfectly in favor of us policing our own rather than some politician out there deciding what is better for education."

Ultimately, suspicion that things are not quite right on multiple fronts leads professors to suggest that their programs should be held more accountable for the professionals they produce. In fact, more than seven in ten (73 percent) favor "holding teacher education programs more accountable for the quality of the teachers they graduate."

#### AMBIVALENCE ABOUT ALTERNATIVES

While many teacher educators critique their own programs, the outside world has been busy fashioning alternative paths to teaching (and school leadership) that sidestep traditional education schools altogether. How do professors regard these alternatives? Their responses are surprisingly varied, suggesting openness in the minds of at least some professors toward a new way of doing things (see Figure 8).

Nearly half (47 percent) say that alternative certification programs not run by traditional schools of education "threaten to compromise the quality of the teaching force in the public schools." But the lack of a clear majority is notable, and nearly one-third (32 percent) call such alternative routes "a good way to attract unconventional talent to the public schools." (Another 21 percent say they are unsure.) The survey also asks education professors for their take on "recruiting people for school leadership who have proven track records of success from other fields such as business, law, and the military." Here again, professors are divided—although more say it's a bad rather than good idea by a 42 percent to 33 percent margin. An additional 24 percent are in the "not sure" category.

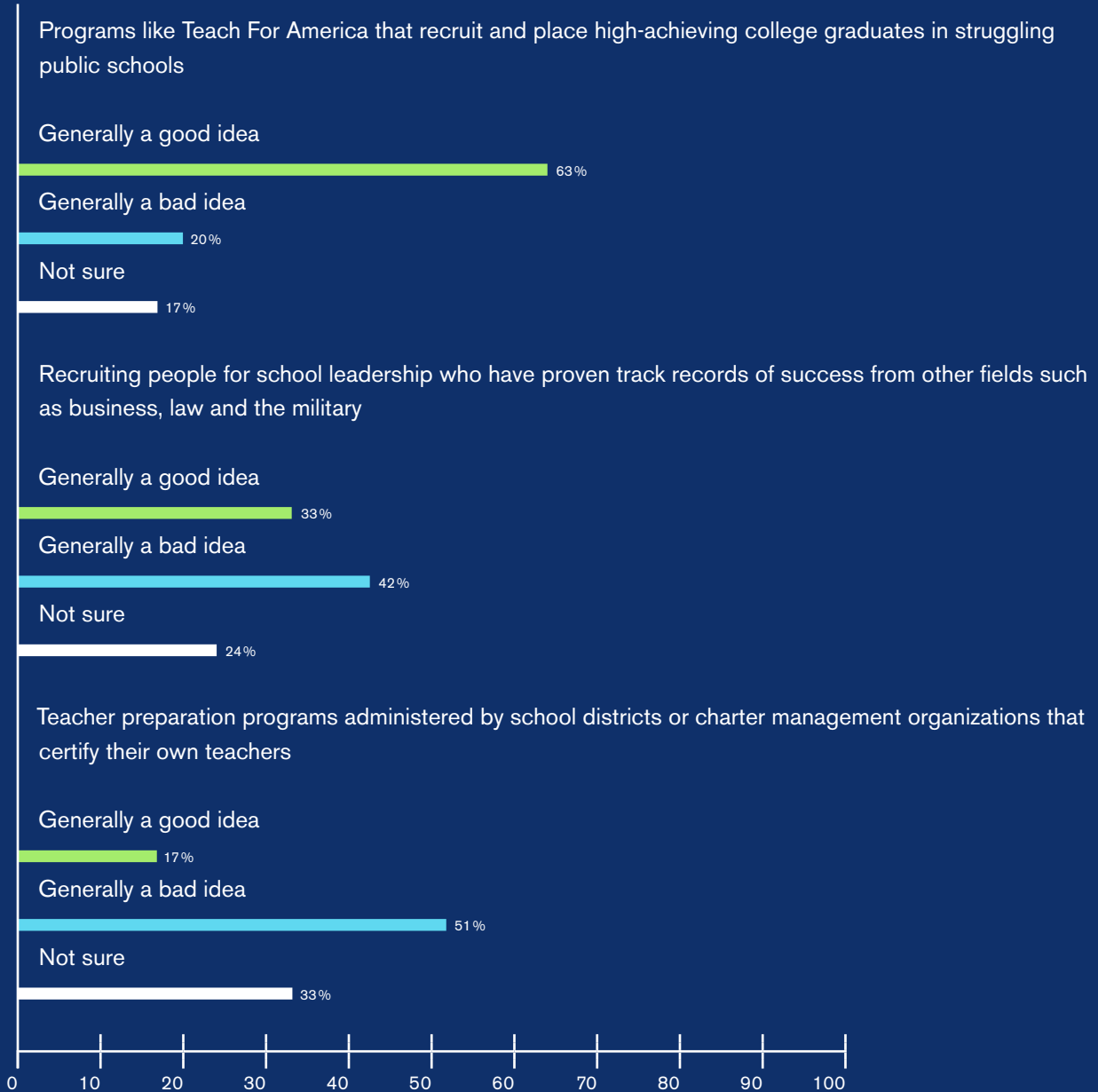
The survey queries education professors further on this issue by framing a question in the context of an Obama administration initiative to "open up every avenue possible to recruit new teachers." The result is a split decision, with 40 percent agreeing because "we need to do whatever it takes to draw qualified people to the teaching profession from nontraditional sources," and 39 percent dissenting because "only university-based education programs provide



Figure 8

ALTERNATIVE ROUTES TO THE EDUCATION FIELD

How do education professors view alternative routes to teaching and administration?



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the theory, pedagogy, and clinical experiences necessary to produce the highest quality teachers.” Again, a relatively large number are unsure (22 percent).

Focus group discussions illustrated these equivocal sentiments. A professor in an Ohio education school was convinced that alternative routes to licensure were a bad idea, saying that they “require minimal preparation...especially for school districts of poverty, [which] tend to get a very large percentage of people who come through those alternative paths...helping to exacerbate the problems. They just don’t have as deep a knowledge base on which to draw to make those teaching decisions.” But a North Carolina professor thought that the two parallel systems could learn from each other: “There are some components to alternative certification programs that actually we could incorporate that might be useful. But I also think there are things that we do that could be incorporated into alternative certification programs.”

Professors of education appear especially concerned about teacher preparation programs run “by school districts or charter management organizations that certify their own teachers.” They are far more likely to say such programs are generally a bad idea (51 percent) than a good one (17 percent). One-third of professors (33 percent) say they don’t know enough about them to offer an opinion (see Figure 8). One focus group participant pulled no punches in discussing her local school district’s alternative teacher-preparation program: “I think it’s horrible. It’s kind of a joke....Most of the teachers...are not getting their credential through the university now; they are getting it through the school district....[The district] is taking money from the state and the federal government to run this program, and it’s a joke.”

#### ACCOLADES FOR TEACH FOR AMERICA

In sharp contrast to the skeptical attitudes regarding most alternative approaches to teacher preparation, a majority of education professors have a high opinion of Teach For America. Fully 63 percent characterize as a good idea “programs like Teach For America that recruit and place high-achieving college graduates in struggling public schools.” Only 20 percent say they are a bad idea. In Los Angeles, one educator with direct experience with Teach For America called it “such an incredible model. They take people who are really passionate about it, who really want to do something. They probably have the best training program in that 12 weeks....It is residential. You don’t get to leave. You have to stay there. It’s 24/7. It is so well-thought-out. It is so well-developed. It’s a way

to get the best.” Still, several professors in the focus groups and in individual interviews expressed concerns about Teach For America. It is a stopgap measure, they say, that churns out young people who are not necessarily interested in teaching careers and who may leave after just two years in the classroom.

## OF MULTIPLE MINDS

The array of responses to alternative teacher preparation reveals that, as with many topics in this report, professors are not of one mind. Many of them feel that an investment of several years in traditional teacher training is the best and correct approach. But many also acknowledge that the traditional path to classroom teaching is no guarantee of excellence. While it is easy for them to dismiss some alternative programs as thoughtless and ineffective, many accept that alternatives can create new entry points for fresh talent, especially for potential educators who would not ordinarily consider traditional education schools.

It is important to note that these survey questions ask professors to generalize about programs that are exceptionally varied, and that differ from district to district, state to state, and campus to campus. The difficulty of rendering across-the-board judgment helps to explain why this particular set of questions has unusually high “not sure” responses. In this realm of teacher training, change and uncertainty prevail.

## FEELING UNDER SIEGE

Results in this chapter suggest that education professors are self-reflective and may have become more practical in recent years. Even opinions regarding alternative paths to classroom teaching—which directly challenge the heart of their profession—are more muted than shrill. Still, most education professors, perhaps understandably, respond defensively to external criticism. More than seven in ten (71 percent) believe their programs are under siege, and “often unfairly blamed for the problems facing public education.” As one professor put it: “...education schools are blamed for any failure within society. It’s always accountability—‘Why aren’t our students scoring better? Why aren’t they doing better? It must be because we don’t have effective teachers in the classroom’—when the problems are much more comprehensive and often can’t be addressed within a six-and-a-half hour school day.”

## Opinions on Various Policy Initiatives

Professors of education offer some support for a number of policy initiatives aimed at improving the teaching corps—e.g., holding educators more accountable, changing salary structures, and loosening tenure protections. They evince support for academic standards and even tepidly endorse *national* standards. Overall, however, professors oppose awarding financial incentives to teachers whose students score higher than similar students on standardized tests (see Figure 9).

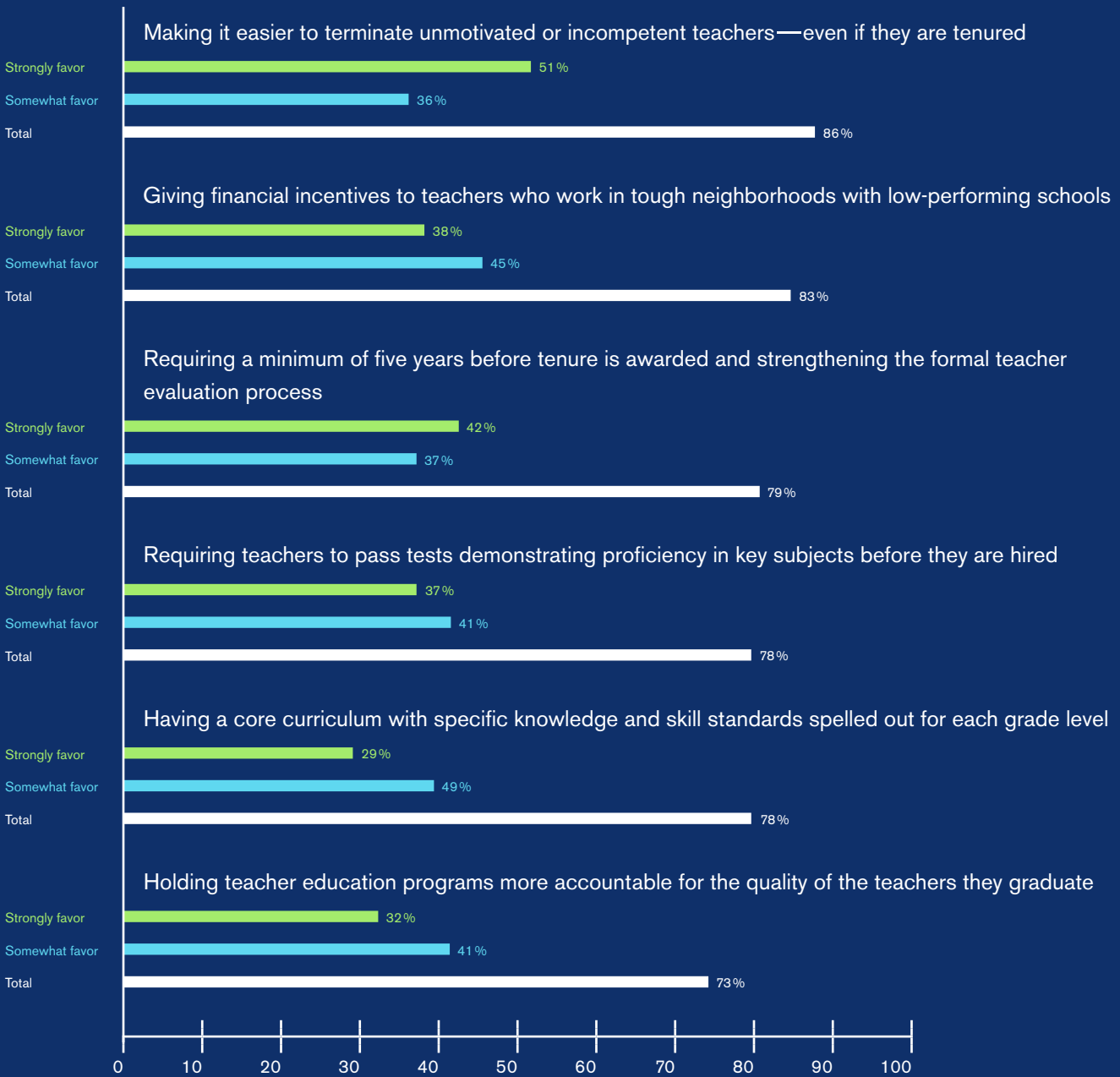
### TENURE REFORM

Professors are surprisingly open to limiting protections for teacher tenure. A wide majority (79 percent) supports “requiring a minimum of five years for tenure and strengthening formal teacher evaluation,” as opposed to a three-year norm in most states. An even broader majority (86 percent) favors “making it easier to terminate unmotivated or incompetent teachers—even if they are tenured,” with slightly more than half (51 percent) strongly favoring this proposal. Fewer, however, believe that teacher tenure deserves all the blame for what ails public schools: Forty-eight percent say that “more often than not, teacher tenure is an obstacle to improving the schools” while 47 percent reject that view (see Figure 10).

Though professors are generally sympathetic toward teachers, they can imagine—and sometimes see—classroom instructors who should not be teaching: individuals who graduated from their programs when they shouldn’t have, were granted tenure without a proper evaluation, or are still teaching despite losing passion for their craft. When this happens, they wonder, why should the K–12 students suffer? An adjunct professor who also teaches middle school in Los Angeles explained, “[In] the school where I work...tenure occurs after two years as a probationary teacher. [They should] make that five years. Make the tenure process harder to obtain, make tenure reviewable every five years...I am not saying get rid of due process.”

Figure 9 EDUCATION REFORM INITIATIVES

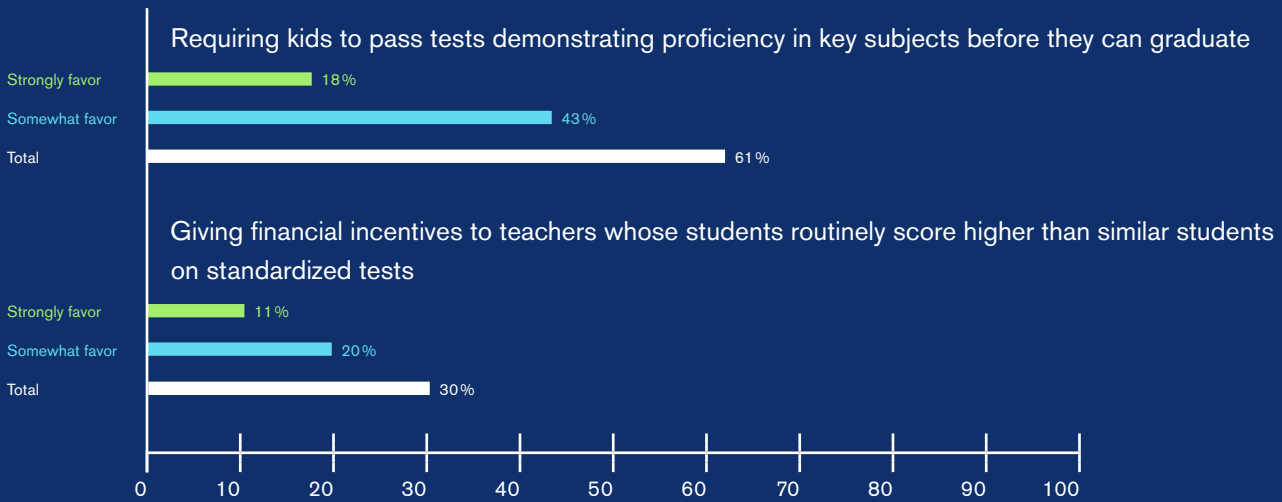
How much do you favor or oppose the following education reforms?  
(Percent responding “strongly favor” or “somewhat favor”)



Percentages in figures may not equal 100 percent due to rounding or omission of answer categories. Question wording may be edited for space, but full question wording is available in Appendix B. Small discrepancies between percentages in the text and those in the appendix are due to rounding.

Figure 9 EDUCATION REFORM INITIATIVES (continued)

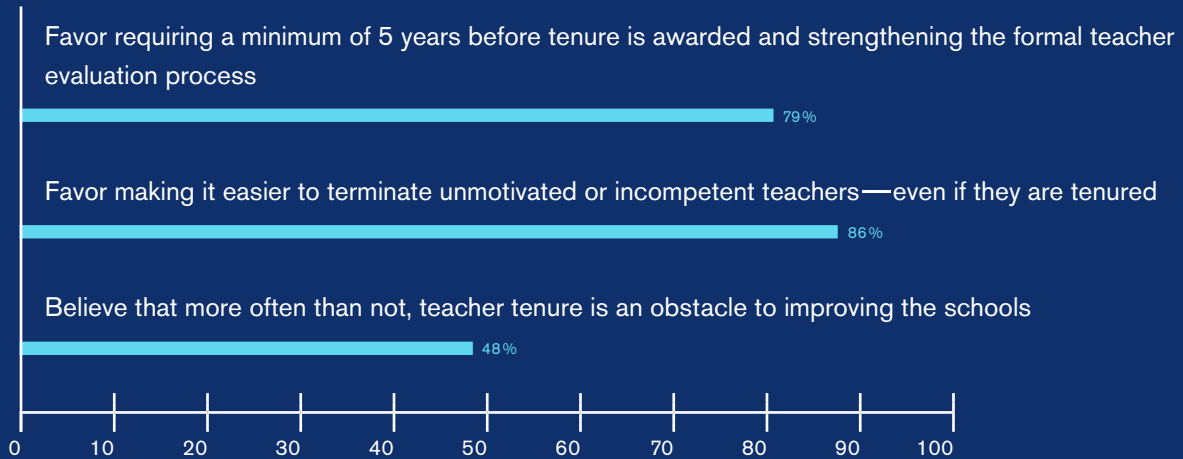
How much do you favor or oppose the following education reforms?  
 (Percent responding “strongly favor” or “somewhat favor”)



Percentages in figures may not equal 100 percent due to rounding or omission of answer categories. Question wording may be edited for space, but full question wording is available in Appendix B. Small discrepancies between percentages in the text and those in the appendix are due to rounding.

Figure 10 TEACHER TENURE REFORM

(Percent saying they)



Percentages in figures may not equal 100 percent due to rounding or omission of answer categories. Question wording may be edited for space, but full question wording is available in Appendix B. Small discrepancies between percentages in the text and those in the appendix are due to rounding.

## 5. Adjunct Professors More Practical?

Adjunct professors have a more accommodating posture toward teaching in the K–12 system than do tenured professors—plausibly because adjuncts are more likely to be former K–12 teachers now employed as clinical faculty. Based on several comments, many are simultaneously teaching in colleges and in district classrooms. Fully 26 percent of the sample consists of adjunct or non-tenure track faculty.

Adjunct professors are more likely than tenured professors to believe that education programs “often fail to prepare teachers for the challenges of teaching in the real world” (59 percent versus 44 percent). They are also more likely to report that it is absolutely essential for schools of education to impart the following to teacher education students:

- Training in pragmatic issues of running a classroom, managing time, and preparing lesson plans (50 percent versus 39 percent);
- Training in how to implement differentiated instruction in the classroom (62 percent versus 46 percent);
- How to maintain discipline and order in the classroom (44 percent versus 34 percent); and
- An understanding of how to work with the state’s standards, tests, and accountability systems (31 percent versus 20 percent).

## TEACHING: CHANGE SOME RULES

Education professors embrace ideas that would help ensure quality among their graduates. An expansive majority (78 percent) favors requiring public school teachers to pass tests demonstrating their proficiency in key subjects before they are hired—a component of the original NCLB legislation. And more than six in ten (62 percent) believe that it is absolutely essential for teacher education programs to produce classroom instructors who are “deeply knowledgeable about the content of the specific subjects they will be teaching.” When focus group participants were asked for recommendations for improving education programs, one professor volunteered, “Someone *has* to say content....I want my teachers to go out and be very well grounded in what they know.” Another professor reiterated the importance of subject-specific methods courses: “If you are going to be a physics teacher, you take a physics methods course, not a generic science methods course.”

Because the stakes for children are so high, many professors see value in adding another quality-control bar besides graduation or passing the Praxis exams. “Fundamentally there are ethical, moral components to all of this,” an education professor told us. “We have to be ethical in terms of who we send out there.... There is no way to absolutely guarantee who is going to be a quality educator. We get as close as we can; we document as much as we can.”

Contemporary efforts to improve teaching sometimes link salaries to teacher quality or effort, and professors of education show some support for these initiatives. For example, they broadly favor (83 percent) financial incentives for teachers who work in tough neighborhoods with low-performing schools. But they resist tying teacher pay to student test scores, with just 30 percent in favor and 65 percent opposed. When not explicitly tied to salaries, the initiative sees slightly more support: Almost half (47 percent) say that measuring progress by assessing students’ skills and knowledge when they first come to a teacher and again when they leave—a “value-added” method of measuring teacher effectiveness—is an excellent or good idea. To be sure, virtually the same proportion (48 percent) describes that idea as only fair or poor.

## STANDARDS FOR ALL—OR SHAKESPEARE RAP?

Professors of education are strong, consistent believers in some of the core tenets of the standards movement. They speak its language and approve of its assump-



## 6. Mirroring Public School Teachers

When it comes to ways of compensating and evaluating teachers, professors of education and classroom teachers have remarkably similar views. For example, most professors (83 percent) broadly favor financial incentives for teachers who work in tough neighborhoods with low-performing schools, as do 80 percent of public school teachers.<sup>17</sup> Both groups oppose tying teacher pay to student test scores: Just 30 percent of teacher educators favor financial incentives for teachers whose students routinely score higher than similar students on standardized tests, as do 34 percent of teachers.<sup>18</sup> Finally, when it comes to the “value-added” method of measuring teacher effectiveness, education professors are divided between those who think it’s a positive versus negative approach (47 percent versus 48 percent). Classroom teachers are equally divided, at 49 percent versus 48 percent.<sup>19</sup>

tions. And they do not shy away from defining appropriate content or from testing to determine whether it has been learned. Almost four out of five (78 percent) support what many would consider to be a radical change in American education: a core curriculum with specific knowledge and skill standards spelled out for each grade level in the K–12 system. More than three out of five (61 percent) also favor requiring students to pass tests demonstrating proficiency in key subjects before they can graduate. One professor remarked, “We need accountability. Perhaps there was not enough accountability in the education system back prior to the whole standards-based movement.”

Although critics may charge education professors with cultural relativism, most education professors say that they welcome a healthy dose of traditional Western and American culture. Two out of three (67 percent) say “students must gain a shared understanding” of a “core body of knowledge such as Shakespeare, the Constitution and great books like *To Kill a Mockingbird*.” Only 18 percent say “this unfairly imposes one group’s cultural values on others and it’s irrelevant to many students.” Another 15 percent are not sure.

Still, some professors remain sensitive to cultural relativism through their pedagogical approaches. Here’s how one Ohio professor would harness the classics in inner-city schools: “It can be Shakespeare, but let’s think creatively about how we are going to write a rap and how we are going to use that Shakespeare in a rap kind of way and write our own story....So that you make sure your content and your style of teaching is relevant to your students and what interests and engages them.”

### BUT WHAT ABOUT NCLB?

While some core elements of the standards movement resonate with professors—specifically testing teachers and students for content knowledge and having explicit grade-by-grade standards for K–12 students—they report little confidence in the nation’s most visible policy initiative on standards: NCLB (see Figure 11). Only 10 percent would renew the current version of NCLB “as is” or “with minimal changes.” By contrast, about half of the U.S. general public (49 percent)

17. Duffett, Ann, Steve Farkas, Andrew J. Rotherham and Elena Silva. 2008. *Waiting To Be Won Over: Teachers Speak on the Profession, Unions, and Reform*. Washington, D.C.: Education Sector. [http://www.educationsector.org/usr\\_doc/WaitingToBeWonOver.pdf](http://www.educationsector.org/usr_doc/WaitingToBeWonOver.pdf).

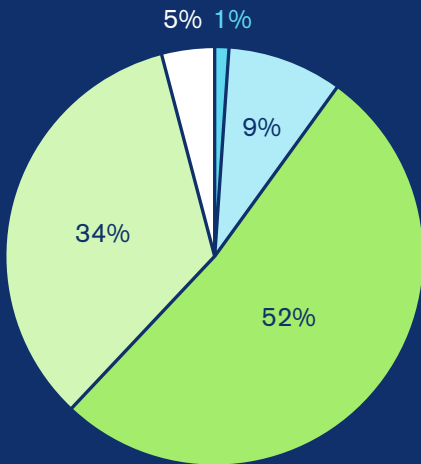
18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*

Figure 11 NCLB REAUTHORIZATION

NCLB requires states to set standards in math and reading and to test students each year to determine whether schools are making adequate progress, and to intervene when they are not. This year, Congress is deciding whether to renew NCLB. What do you think Congress should do?

- Renew the legislation as is
- Renew with minimal changes
- Renew with major changes
- Not renew at all
- Not sure



Percentages in figures may not equal 100 percent due to rounding or omission of answer categories. Question wording may be edited for space, but full question wording is available in Appendix B. Small discrepancies between percentages in the text and those in the appendix are due to rounding.

## 7. Perceptions of Charter Schools

Sizeable discrepancies set apart the attitudes of education professors and those of the public on a number of issues; their respective views about charter schools are no exception. Although the origins of charter schools are independent of NCLB, their trajectory was affected by the law's emphasis on alternative options to failing schools. Americans have demonstrated a lack of familiarity with the nuances of charter schools, but they consistently favor the general idea—most recently by a 64 percent to 33 percent margin.<sup>20</sup> By comparison, education professors are far less receptive to charter schools, favoring them only by a tepid 44 percent to 34 percent margin (23 percent are not sure).

would do so, a difference of 39 percentage points. And while a majority of professors (52 percent) think that the act should be renewed “with major changes” just 30 percent of Americans agree with that position.<sup>20</sup> It seems that education professors favor NCLB's focus on standards in principle, but reject “NCLB” as a brand. This may reflect an overall judgment that it has not lived up to expectations, or may mirror general dissatisfaction with the impact that the testing regimen and “adequate yearly progress” have had on the K–12 school system.

More than a few professors in the focus groups felt that good instruction has suffered because school districts are paying too much attention to improving test scores and preparing for assessments. Accountability is important, they believe, and assessments are useful. But as districts implement policies around standards, a single-minded focus on “hitting the numbers” may subvert good teaching. “I believe we need to know how our students are gaining knowledge, but...our administrators are so keyed in to scores being raised...they are even saying to [K]indergarten teachers, ‘We do not do developmentally appropriate teaching; we prepare them for what is coming up next, the assessment,’” said one focus group participant. “Forget about the instructional procedures, we’ve got to get ready for the test....When our student teachers go in [to the schools], all they are doing is test preparation.”

A few education professors even suspect that tests might be manipulated for political advantage. A teacher educator in Los Angeles, for instance, described questionable motives that influence the shifting of school populations. “When the lower-achieving students are...being diverted out, two things happen. One, the test scores in the district schools rise. That benefits the mayor. In addition, the Latino students are put into this charter school where they are getting all of this specialized support. Naturally, they are going to be improving as well.”

Still, education professors in the focus groups did point to what they deemed to be positive effects of NCLB, particularly the tracking of test scores by student subgroups. “[NCLB] has raised awareness of achievement levels among certain populations. It was definitely hidden and it wasn't important to a lot of people. I think sometimes those kids did get overlooked,” said one professor. Another was even more direct: “I'll say something good—it put a spotlight on demographic groups that previously administrators and districts would bury. You can't hide them [now].”

20. *Education Next*-PEPG. 2009. “Survey of Public Opinion.” Cambridge, MA: *Education Next* and the Program on Education Policy and Governance, Harvard University. <http://educationnext.org/files/pepg2009.pdf>.

21. Bushaw, William J. and John A. McNee. 2009. “Americans Speak Out: Are Educators and Policy Makers Listening?: The 41st annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools,” 8-23. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 91, no. 1 (September).

## COMMON, NATIONWIDE STANDARDS

One source of tension surrounding NCLB is the state-by-state variability in content and testing standards that it left intact—and to some extent fostered. This, along with Race to the Top funds, likely helped convince states to adopt a common set of English language arts and mathematics standards put forth recently by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers; as of August 2010, more than three-quarters of the states had signed on. Still, professors are less enthusiastic about common standards than standards in general (see Figure 12). Although almost eight in ten of them favor “having a core curriculum with specific knowledge and skill standards spelled out for each grade level,” they indicate only moderate—yet significant—support for a national system of standards and tests in the core subject areas. Forty-nine percent believe that “all state governments [should] adopt the same set of educational standards and give the same tests in math, science and reading” while 36 percent would have “different standards and tests in different states”; 16 percent were not sure. While education professors are lukewarm in their support, the American public is comparatively enthusiastic. Seventy-two percent support the adoption of a national system of standards; only 19 percent prefer state-level benchmarks and assessments.<sup>22</sup>

## THE PROFESSORS AND EDUCATION REFORM

Given their position as teachers of teachers, it is critical to understand the views of our nation’s education school professors. When it comes to many proposed education reforms, they are far from naysayers—in fact, they are sometimes even forceful advocates. Some balk at using test scores to evaluate teacher quality and are far less optimistic than the public about NCLB and national standards, but are nonetheless strong believers in standards-based measures and in high-stakes testing of teachers and students to ensure content knowledge. They are unexpectedly vigorous supporters of tenure reform and efforts to facilitate the removal of inadequate teachers. In the end, though, it is difficult to characterize their perceptions with a broad brush since they often reveal schisms among the ranks (see “Reformers and Defenders,” Special Analysis, p. 46).

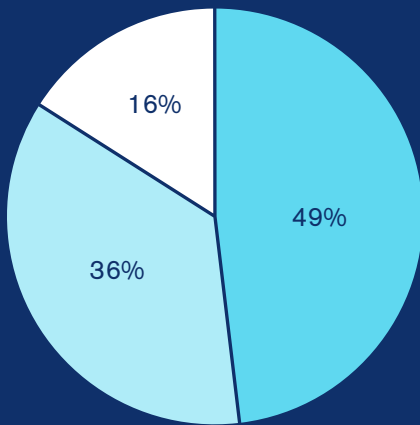
22. *Education Next*-PEPG. 2009. “Survey of Public Opinion.” Cambridge, MA: *Education Next* and the Program on Education Policy and Governance, Harvard University. <http://educationnext.org/files/pepg2009.pdf>.

Figure 12

### COMMON STANDARDS

Should all state governments adopt the same set of educational standards and give the same tests in math, science, and reading, or should there be different standards and tests in different states?

- Adopt the same set of educational standards and give same tests
- Should be different standards and tests
- Not sure



Percentages in figures may not equal 100 percent due to rounding or omission of answer categories. Question wording may be edited for space, but full question wording is available in Appendix B. Small discrepancies between percentages in the text and those in the appendix are due to rounding.

## PROFESSORS WITH COMPETING WORLD VIEWS

The nation's system for training teachers is in flux—and full of controversy. A special analysis of the survey results reveals two small but distinct groups of education professors whose starkly divergent thinking embodies some of the key fissures, tensions, and choices facing the system—to the point of meriting special attention. One segment—Reformers—is strongly dissatisfied with the status quo; they point to weaknesses in education programs and agitate for change. Another segment—Defenders—sees criticism as without merit and is mostly comfortable with the status quo. A close look at these two groups reveals opposing forces at work in teacher education.

To be sure, Reformers and Defenders are small sub-groups of the overall sample of teacher educators—12 percent and 13 percent, respectively—and we caution the reader to keep sample size in mind when contemplating the following results. That said, the differences between the two groups on key items reported here are meaningful and statistically significant.

## DEFINING REFORMERS AND DEFENDERS

Reformers are unhappy with the current state of teacher education—particularly with its overall quality, prospective teachers, and even fellow professors. Reformers are stronger advocates for change. To be categorized as a Reformer, a professor must hold the following beliefs:

- That the teacher education system needs fundamental overhaul or many changes (i.e., rejecting the view that the U.S. system of university-based teacher education works very well and needs only minor tinkering);
- That the statement “Teacher education programs often fail to prepare teachers for the challenges of teaching in the real world” comes very close to their view; and
- That the statement “Teacher education programs need to do a better job weeding out students who are unsuitable for the profession” comes very close to their view.

Defenders, in contrast, are mostly content with traditional teacher training and schools of education as they are. They are far more sanguine about their colleagues and the students that come through their programs. As a segment, Defenders resist education reform, especially alternative pathways to classroom teaching. To be categorized as a Defender, a professor must hold the following beliefs:

- That the system of university-based teacher education, on the whole, “works very well—it only needs minor tinkering”;
- That the statement “Teacher education programs are often unfairly blamed for the problems facing public education” comes very close to their view; and

- That the statement “Teacher education programs often fail to prepare teachers for the challenges of teaching in the real world,” is not too close or not close at all to their view.

#### THE SYSTEM IS SERIOUSLY OFF COURSE. OR DOING GREAT.

Reformers are far more disapproving of university-based teacher training when compared with Defenders and the rest of the sample. As their defining characteristics (above) suggest, Reformers are more likely to be dissatisfied with their colleagues, their programs, and the quality of both prospective teachers and existing public school teachers. Note how Reformers stand apart when compared to Defenders and the rest of the sample (see Figure 13).

In stark contrast, Defenders are optimistic or at least contented. They believe that the majority of the prospective teachers they encounter will go on to become great teachers. Most Defenders have faith in the professional accreditation process for education schools. And they think that education programs are scapegoats for the problems facing education today (see Figure 14).

#### EDUCATION REFORMS: RIGHT TRACK OR WRONG TRACK?

The data show Reformers to be energetic supporters of teacher-tenure reform, while Defenders are far less critical of the tenure system. Similarly, Reformers are avid supporters of academic standards and formal measures of accountability, while Defenders show a lack of enthusiasm for such initiatives. For their part, Defenders are worried about alternative paths to teaching that bypass schools of education, believing they will undermine the quality of teachers and undercut the traditional system of teacher education (see Figure 15).

The wide range of responses from Reformers, Defenders, and the rest of the sample show that education professors are strikingly divided over the future of their profession and their schools. In terms of the most divergent views, Reformers and Defenders may be competing internally over the direction of the nation’s education schools. Or they may be quietly co-existing. But their presence suggests that stakeholders looking either to reform the public schools or to uphold the status quo will each find allies within the academy.

Figure 13

## REFORMERS TAKE AIM

|   | Reformers<br>(n=85) | Defenders<br>(n=98) | All Others<br>(n=555) |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly favor “holding teacher education programs more accountable for the quality of the teachers they graduate”                              | 66                  | 15                  | 29                    |
| “Most professors of education need to spend more time in K–12 classrooms” is very close to their view   | 65                  | 20                  | 33                    |
| “Too many cooperating teachers lack the disposition and skills to be effective models for today’s student teachers” is very close to their view | 57                  | 4                   | 13                    |
| “Fear of litigation has made it harder to remove unsuitable teacher candidates from teacher education programs” is very close to their view     | 52                  | 17                  | 22                    |
| “Often” come across students who they “seriously doubt have what it takes to be a teacher”  | 37                  | 3                   | 15                    |

Figure 14

## DEFENDERS STAND STRONG

|   | Reformers<br>(n=85) | Defenders<br>(n=98) | All Others<br>(n=555) |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| “Most” or “virtually all” graduates from their programs will be “great” teachers  | 25                  | 78                  | 48                    |
| Professional accreditation of education programs guarantees a level of quality that is “top-notch” or at least “a baseline of acceptable quality” | 46                  | 66                  | 51                    |
| “Teacher education programs are often unfairly blamed for the problems facing public education” is very close to their view                       | 35                  | 63                  | 36                    |

Differences are statistically significant at the .05 confidence level.



Figure 15

## EDUCATION REFORM THROUGH THE EYES OF PROFESSORS

|   | Reformers<br>(n=85) | Defenders<br>(n=98) | All Others<br>(n=555) |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>On teacher tenure</i>  |                     |                     |                       |
| “More often than not, teacher tenure is an obstacle to improving the schools” is very close to their view   | 37                  | 8                   | 13                    |
| Strongly favor “Making it easier to terminate unmotivated or incompetent teachers—even if they have tenure”   | 78                  | 39                  | 49                    |
| Strongly favor “Requiring a minimum of five years before tenure is awarded and strengthening the formal teacher evaluation process”                       | 60                  | 40                  | 39                    |
| <i>On academic standards and accountability</i>   |                     |                     |                       |
| Strongly favor “Having a core curriculum with specific knowledge and skills standards spelled out for each grade level”                                   | 45                  | 27                  | 26                    |
| Strongly favor “Requiring teachers to pass tests demonstrating proficiency in key subjects before they are hired”   | 54                  | 26                  | 37                    |
| Support adopting the same standards and exams in math, science, and reading for all states  | 60                  | 41                  | 49                    |
| <i>On alternative paths to teaching</i>   |                     |                     |                       |
| Alternative certification programs not run by schools of education “threaten to compromise the quality of the teaching force in the public schools”       | 38                  | 72                  | 43                    |
| “Teacher preparation programs administered by school districts or charter management organizations that certify their own teachers” are a bad idea        | 42                  | 72                  | 48                    |
| “Recruiting people for school leadership who have proven track records of success from other fields such as business, law and the military” is a bad idea | 35                  | 60                  | 40                    |

Differences are statistically significant at the .05 confidence level.

## CONCLUSION

Stepping back to consider this study as a whole, we see an array of views depicting a profession in flux and under stress. Focus-group conversations proved revealing: Professors were sometimes divided among themselves, and occasionally suspicious of the researchers. Some were reflective, chastened by the challenge of responding to real-world problems, while others spoke as if nothing could be more distant from their reality than the K–12 public school system. Clearly, education professors are trying to find their way in challenging times, and the findings captured in this survey mirror their struggle.

This was revealed in numerous ways. For example, many of the questions yielded near 50-50 splits, indicating a profession that is increasingly segmented into opposing camps. In fact, mining the data more deeply, we uncover two segments—Reformers and Defenders—holding views that are diametrically opposed. The former is a constituency advocating for change; the latter, stalwart advocates for the status quo. Such divisions might portend continued tension within the field. Many of the survey questions also garner an unusually high percentage of “not sure” responses, as if respondents are asking, “How do you expect us to settle on a response when things are complicated, the jury is still out, and more information is necessary?”

We also see trends in identically-worded questions that show shifting views since 1997. The profession—or at least portions of it—is evolving, perhaps in response to real-world changes, perhaps as a consequence of generational replacement.

Finally, the content of the survey itself reflects the changing times facing schools of education. Topics such as alternative teacher training programs were barely at issue during the 1997 iteration. In the end, the response of schools of education and their professors to the changes occurring in their field—and their own view of the role they should play in its transformation—will determine whether they remain the dominant players in the teacher training arena.

## Methodology

These findings are based on data from a nationwide, randomly selected sample of 716 teacher educators at four-year colleges in the United States. The survey was conducted by the Farkas Duffett Research Group (FDR Group) for the Thomas B. Fordham Institute. It was fielded between November 9, 2009, and March 8, 2010. The margin of error for the overall sample is plus or minus four percentage points; it is higher when comparing percentages across subgroups.

The survey was preceded by three focus groups of teacher educators, which were held in Ohio, North Carolina, and California, and moderated by the FDR Group (more below). Direct quotes from participants in the focus groups serve to contextualize the survey findings and provide illustrative examples of professors' experiences and views.

### THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The survey instrument was designed for three modes: paper, Internet, and telephone. The research process proceeded as follows:

- A first-class letter was mailed to a national random sample of 5,977 teacher educators on November 9, 2009. The letter described the research and provided a link to the Web-based version of the survey.
- E-mail messages were sent to approximately 3,600 teacher educators (the number for which e-mail addresses were available out of the original 5,977). Three e-mail messages were sent between November 19 and December 3, 2009, inviting teacher educators to participate and providing a link to the Web-based version of the survey.
- A first-class postcard was mailed to the original 5,977 teacher educators on December 14, 2009, reminding them about the survey and providing a link to the Web-based version. A total of 482 surveys were submitted online.
- Between January 11 and January 28, 2010, follow-up telephone calls were made to non-respondents, who were encouraged to complete the survey online; those who preferred to respond via telephone were encouraged to call a toll-free number to complete the survey at a time convenient for them. A total of forty interviews were completed via telephone.
- A paper version of the questionnaire (along with a letter describing the research and a postage-paid envelope) was mailed to non-respondents on February 8, 2010, via first-class mail. Surveys received through March 8, 2010, are included in the results. A total of 216 surveys were submitted in hard copy.

The systematic, non-stratified random sample of teacher educators was drawn from a comprehensive database of names and school addresses of current teacher educators in four-year colleges throughout the United States. A small oversampling of professors teaching in the nation's top-ranked education programs was included to ensure that the sample would include enough of this sub-group for comparison purposes. Of the 125 who ultimately participated,<sup>23</sup> 103 came from the original sample and twenty-two from the oversample. No meaningful differences were found. The response rate, calculated by dividing the total number of completed interviews (738) by the 5,424<sup>24</sup> teacher educators who were ultimately invited to participate, is 14 percent.

The sample was provided by Market Data Retrieval, a subsidiary of Dun & Bradstreet; data collection and tabulation services were provided by Robinson & Muenster Associates.

## TREND DATA

The survey instrument included more than seventy items and was extensively pre-tested with teacher educators prior to fielding. This survey is a follow-up to an earlier one conducted in 1997 by Public Agenda for the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation entitled *Different Drummers: How Teachers of Teachers View Public Education*.<sup>25</sup> Many of the questions in the current survey have been repeated, permitting an analysis of trends over the past dozen years. The demographic characteristics of the 2010 and 1997 samples were quite similar except for gender; the 2010 sample consisted of a comparatively smaller proportion of male teacher educators (38 percent unweighted compared with 50 percent in 1997). To ensure that the two samples would be comparable, the data in the current study were weighted to align the male/female breakdown to that of the original sample (50 percent male and 50 percent female). The sample weights applied were as follows: male, 1.311; female, 0.808.

## FOCUS GROUPS

Prior to the design of the survey, three focus groups were conducted with teacher educators, one in Dayton, Ohio, another in Raleigh, North Carolina, and the third in Los Angeles, California. The purpose of the focus groups was to gain a firsthand understanding of the views of teacher educators, to develop

23. Top-ranked education programs defined by *U.S. News & World Report* "Best Education Programs" (ranked in 2009).

24. Total mailed (5,977) minus undeliverable sample (553) equals the number who were ultimately invited to participate (5,424).

25. The two principal researchers of the FDR Group, Steve Farkas and Ann Duffett, are co-authors of *Different Drummers* (along with Jean Johnson of Public Agenda).

new hypotheses based on their input, and to design the survey items using language and terms with which education professors are comfortable. Quotes in this report are drawn directly from focus group discussions. Participants were recruited to the FDR Group's specifications to ensure a proper mix of participants; all groups were moderated by the FDR Group.

#### SEGMENTATION ANALYSIS—CREATING REFORMERS AND DEFENDERS

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on a host of attitudinal variables and it revealed groupings of highly correlated items. These were reduced to two segments, Reformers and Defenders. These groups and the remainder of the sample were divided into mutually exclusive categories based on particular survey responses (below).

Respondents were categorized as Reformers (n=85) if they responded in the following manner to these three survey items:

- The teacher education system needs “fundamental overhaul” or “many changes” (Question 1);
- The statement that “Teacher education programs need to do a better job of weeding out students who are unsuitable for the profession” came very close to their view (Question 17); and
- The statement that “Teacher education programs often fail to prepare teachers for the challenges of teaching in the real world” came very close to their view (Question 19).

Respondents were categorized as Defenders (n=98) if they responded in the following manner to these three survey items:

- The teacher education system “works very well—it only needs minor tinkering” (Question 1);
- The statement that “Teacher education programs are often unfairly blamed for the problems facing public education” came very close to their view (Question 15); and
- The view that “Teacher education programs often fail to prepare teachers for the challenges of teaching in the real world” is not too close or not close at all to their view (Question 19).

Respondents who were neither Reformers nor Defenders (n=555) were placed in the third category.

## National Survey of Education Professors: Final Data

The survey is based on a nationwide, randomly selected sample of 716 teacher educators at four-year colleges in the United States. It was conducted by mail, Internet, and telephone between November 9, 2009, and March 8, 2010. The margin of error for the 2010 data is four percentage points. Many questions in the survey were originally asked in a 1997 study called *Different Drummers: How Teachers of Teachers View Public Education*, which was based on a telephone survey of 900 professors of education conducted in the summer of 1997; these data are also included here. The margin of error for the 1997 data is three percentage points. In addition, data from other surveys of teachers, parents, and the general public are included for several questions where the comparisons are appropriate.

Numbers may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding. The 2010 data presented here are weighted by gender. An asterisk indicates less than one percent and a dash indicates zero. N/A indicates a question did not appear on the 1997 survey.

**Q1.** Thinking about the U.S. system of university-based teacher education, which comes closest to your overall view:

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |  |
|-------------|-------------|--|
| 22          | N/A         | On the whole the system works very well—it only needs minor tinkering      |
| 66          |             | There are many good things about the system but it also needs many changes |
| 9           |             | The system has so much wrong with it that it needs fundamental overhaul    |
| 3           |             | Not sure   |

*Teacher education programs can impart different qualities to their students. Which of the following qualities do you think are most essential and which are least essential? Use a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 means it is least essential and 5 means it is absolutely essential.*

**Q2.** Teachers who are themselves life-long learners and constantly updating their skills

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                          |
|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| *           | *           | 1 — Least essential      |
| *           | 1           | 2                        |
| 2           | 2           | 3                        |
| 15          | 13          | 4                        |
| 82          | 84          | 5 — Absolutely essential |
| 1           | -           | Not sure                 |

**Q3.** Teachers who are deeply knowledgeable about the content of the specific subjects they will be teaching

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                          |
|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| *           | *           | 1 — Least essential      |
| 1           | 1           | 2                        |
| 7           | 8           | 3                        |
| 30          | 34          | 4                        |
| 62          | 57          | 5 — Absolutely essential |
| 1           | -           | Not sure                 |

**Q4.** Teachers who maintain discipline and order in the classroom

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                          |
|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| *           | 1           | 1 — Least essential      |
| 4           | 3           | 2                        |
| 18          | 21          | 3                        |
| 39          | 38          | 4                        |
| 37          | 37          | 5 — Absolutely essential |
| 1           | *           | Not sure                 |

**Q5.** Teachers trained in pragmatic issues of running a classroom such as managing time and preparing lesson plans

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                          |
|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| 1           | 1           | 1 — Least essential      |
| 3           | 3           | 2                        |
| 17          | 17          | 3                        |
| 38          | 39          | 4                        |
| 42          | 41          | 5 — Absolutely essential |
| 1           | -           | Not sure                 |

**Q6.** Teachers who are well-versed in theories of child development and learning

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                          |
|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| 1           | *           | 1 — Least essential      |
| 4           | 4           | 2                        |
| 19          | 13          | 3                        |
| 40          | 37          | 4                        |
| 35          | 46          | 5 — Absolutely essential |
| 1           | *           | Not sure                 |

**Q7.** Teachers who will have high expectations of all their students

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                          |
|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| *           | 1           | 1 — Least essential      |
| *           | 1           | 2                        |
| 4           | 5           | 3                        |
| 25          | 22          | 4                        |
| 69          | 72          | 5 — Absolutely essential |
| 2           | *           | Not sure                 |

**Q8.** Teachers who stress correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                          |
|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| 2           | 3           | 1 — Least essential      |
| 10          | 12          | 2                        |
| 28          | 33          | 3                        |
| 37          | 34          | 4                        |
| 23          | 19          | 5 — Absolutely essential |
| 1           | -           | Not sure                 |



**Q9.** Teachers who understand how to work with the state’s standards, tests, and accountability systems

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                          |
|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| 5           | N/A         | 1 — Least essential      |
| 9           |             | 2                        |
| 20          |             | 3                        |
| 42          |             | 4                        |
| 24          |             | 5 — Absolutely essential |
| 1           |             | Not sure                 |

**Q10.** Teachers trained in and committed to implementing differentiated instruction in their classrooms

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                          |
|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| 1           | N/A         | 1 — Least essential      |
| 2           |             | 2                        |
| 9           |             | 3                        |
| 34          |             | 4                        |
| 51          |             | 5 — Absolutely essential |
| 3           |             | Not sure                 |

**Q11.** Teachers who actively use technology and online resources to improve instruction

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                          |
|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| 2           | N/A         | 1 — Least essential      |
| 5           |             | 2                        |
| 19          |             | 3                        |
| 44          |             | 4                        |
| 29          |             | 5 — Absolutely essential |
| 2           |             | Not sure                 |

**Q12.** Teachers who are trained to address the challenges of high-needs students in urban districts

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                          |
|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| 1           | N/A         | 1 — Least essential      |
| 3           |             | 2                        |
| 15          |             | 3                        |
| 39          |             | 4                        |
| 39          |             | 5 — Absolutely essential |
| 4           |             | Not sure                 |

*How close does each of the following come to your own view—very close, somewhat close, not too close, or not close at all?*

**Q13.** Teacher education programs are too often seen as cash cows by university administrators

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                  |
|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 17          | 25          | Very close       |
| 26          | 28          | Somewhat close   |
| 43          | 54          | Total            |
| 22          | 23          | Not too close    |
| 21          | 18          | Not close at all |
| 44          | 41          | Total            |
| 13          | 6           | Not sure         |

**Q14.** Most professors of education need to spend more time in [K–12] classrooms

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                  |
|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 35          | 48          | Very close       |
| 38          | 36          | Somewhat close   |
| 73          | 84          | Total            |
| 15          | 11          | Not too close    |
| 8           | 3           | Not close at all |
| 23          | 14          | Total            |
| 4           | 2           | Not sure         |

**Q15.** Teacher education programs are often unfairly blamed for the problems facing public education

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                  |
|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 39          | 41          | Very close       |
| 32          | 41          | Somewhat close   |
| 71          | 82          | Total            |
| 16          | 13          | Not too close    |
| 8           | 4           | Not close at all |
| 24          | 18          | Total            |
| 5           | *           | Not sure         |

**Q16.** Too many education students have trouble writing essays free of mistakes in grammar and spelling

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                  |
|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 34          | 34          | Very close       |
| 33          | 41          | Somewhat close   |
| 67          | 75          | Total            |
| 22          | 19          | Not too close    |
| 7           | 5           | Not close at all |
| 29          | 24          | Total            |
| 4           | 1           | Not sure         |

**Q17.** Teacher education programs need to do a better job weeding out students who are unsuitable for the profession

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                  |
|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 39          | 52          | Very close       |
| 34          | 35          | Somewhat close   |
| 73          | 86          | Total            |
| 19          | 10          | Not too close    |
| 6           | 3           | Not close at all |
| 24          | 13          | Total            |
| 3           | 1           | Not sure         |

**Q18.** Fear of litigation has made it harder to remove unsuitable teacher candidates from teacher education programs

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                  |
|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 25          | N/A         | Very close       |
| 28          |             | Somewhat close   |
| 53          |             | Total            |
| 21          |             | Not too close    |
| 14          |             | Not close at all |
| 35          |             | Total            |
| 12          |             | Not sure         |

**Q19.** Teacher education programs often fail to prepare teachers for the challenges of teaching in the real world

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                  |
|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 19          | 22          | Very close       |
| 31          | 41          | Somewhat close   |
| 50          | 63          | Total            |
| 32          | 24          | Not too close    |
| 15          | 12          | Not close at all |
| 47          | 36          | Total            |
| 4           | 1           | Not sure         |

**Q20.** Too many cooperating teachers lack the disposition and skills to be effective models for today's student teachers

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                  |
|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 17          | N/A         | Very close       |
| 31          |             | Somewhat close   |
| 48          |             | Total            |
| 29          |             | Not too close    |
| 15          |             | Not close at all |
| 44          |             | Total            |
| 8           |             | Not sure         |

**Q21.** Which comes closer to your own philosophy of the role of teachers?

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |  |
|-------------|-------------|--|
| 84          | 92          | Teachers should see themselves as facilitators of learning who enable their students to learn on their own |
| 11          | 7           | Teachers should see themselves as conveyors of knowledge who enlighten their students with what they know  |
| 5           | 1           | Not sure   |

**Q22.** Which comes closer to your own philosophy of your role as teacher educator? To prepare future teachers to:

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |   |
|-------------|-------------|---|
| 68          | N/A         | Be change agents who will reshape education by bringing new ideas and approaches to the public schools                                |
| 26          |             | Work effectively within the realities of today's public schools—e.g., state mandates, limited budgets, and beleaguered administrators |
| 6           |             | Not sure  |

**Q23.** For the public schools to help the U.S. live up to its ideals of justice and equality, do you think it's more important that they:

| <b>2010</b> | <b>2008<sup>A</sup></b> |  |
|-------------|-------------------------|--|
| 20          | 11                      | Focus on raising the achievement of disadvantaged students who are struggling academically |
| 73          | 86                      | Focus equally on all students, regardless of their backgrounds or achievement levels       |
| 7           | 3                       | Not sure   |

**Q23A.** Which comes closer to your own view about the philosophy of schools in high-poverty neighborhoods? That these schools should:

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |   |
|-------------|-------------|---|
| 17          | N/A         | Encourage disadvantaged students to challenge the larger society, whose rules are stacked against them                          |
| 69          |             | Focus on teaching social, math, and literacy skills to help disadvantaged students succeed within the rules of society as it is |
| 14          |             | Not sure  |

A. Comparison data are from Farkas, Steve and Ann Duffett. 2008. High-Achieving Students in the Era of NCLB (Part 2), 77, question 26 (Washington, D.C.: Thomas B. Fordham Institute). This was a survey of third through twelfth grade public school teachers.

*From your professional perspective, how important is it for teachers in public schools to do the following in their classes? Is it absolutely essential, important but not essential, or not important?*

**Q24.** Teach “21st century skills” such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and global awareness

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                             |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| 83          | N/A         | Absolutely essential        |
| 15          |             | Important but not essential |
| 2           |             | Not important               |
| 1           |             | Not sure                    |

**Q25.** Teach math facts such as memorization of the multiplication tables in the early grades

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                             |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| 36          | N/A         | Absolutely essential        |
| 51          |             | Important but not essential |
| 11          |             | Not important               |
| 3           |             | Not sure                    |

**Q26.** Rely on student portfolios and other authentic assessments

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                             |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| 35          | N/A         | Absolutely essential        |
| 51          |             | Important but not essential |
| 11          |             | Not important               |
| 3           |             | Not sure                    |

**Q27.** Teach phonics and phonemic awareness when teaching literacy in the early grades

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                             |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| 44          | N/A         | Absolutely essential        |
| 41          |             | Important but not essential |
| 7           |             | Not important               |
| 8           |             | Not sure                    |

**Q28.** In your judgment, how easy or difficult a mission is it to implement differentiated instruction on a daily basis in the classroom?

| <b>2010</b> | <b>2008<sup>B</sup></b> |                    |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 29          | 35                      | Very difficult     |
| 52          | 48                      | Somewhat difficult |
| 81          | 84                      | Total              |
| 11          | 12                      | Somewhat easy      |
| 4           | 4                       | Very easy          |
| 15          | 16                      | Total              |
| 4           | 1                       | Not sure           |

**Q29.** Which comes closer to your own view? Generally speaking, new teachers are more likely to be effective if they teach classes where the students are:

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |  |
|-------------|-------------|--|
| 33          | N/A         | Grouped homogeneously by ability                                       |
| 28          |             | Mixed in ability   |
| 28          |             | Neither—grouping doesn't have an impact on new teachers' effectiveness |
| 11          |             | Not sure   |

*How close does each of the following come to your own view—very close, somewhat close, not too close, or not close at all?*

**Q30.** More often than not, teacher tenure is an obstacle to improving the schools

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                  |
|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 15          | 18          | Very close       |
| 33          | 34          | Somewhat close   |
| 48          | 52          | Total            |
| 28          | 29          | Not too close    |
| 20          | 18          | Not close at all |
| 47          | 47          | Total            |
| 5           | 1           | Not sure         |

B. Comparison data are from Farkas, Steve and Ann Duffett. 2008. *High-Achieving Students in the Era of NCLB* (Part 2), 76, question 22 (Washington, D.C.: Thomas B. Fordham Institute). This was a survey of third through twelfth grade public school teachers.

**Q31.** Lower-income students in inner-city schools have a greater need for structured, teacher-directed instruction than middle class or suburban students

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                  |
|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 13          | N/A         | Very close       |
| 26          |             | Somewhat close   |
| 39          |             | Total            |
| 26          |             | Not too close    |
| 29          |             | Not close at all |
| 54          |             | Total            |
| 7           |             | Not sure         |

**Q32.** When a public school teacher faces a disruptive class, it probably means he or she has failed to make lessons engaging enough to the students

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                  |
|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 12          | 17          | Very close       |
| 38          | 44          | Somewhat close   |
| 50          | 61          | Total            |
| 30          | 27          | Not too close    |
| 17          | 12          | Not close at all |
| 47          | 39          | Total            |
| 3           | *           | Not sure         |

**Q33.** Which is closer to your own view?

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |   |
|-------------|-------------|---|
| 35          | 33          | Competition for rewards such as spelling bees or honor rolls is a valuable incentive for student learning |
| 48          | 64          | Schools should avoid competition among children and foster cooperation                                    |
| 17          | 3           | Not sure  |

**Q34.** Which is closer to your view about teaching a core body of knowledge such as Shakespeare, the Constitution, and great books like *To Kill a Mockingbird*?

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |   |
|-------------|-------------|---|
| 67          | N/A         | Students must gain a shared understanding of this core body of knowledge—it's wrong to let them graduate without it |
| 18          |             | This unfairly imposes one group's cultural values on others and it's irrelevant to many students                    |
| 15          |             | Not sure  |

**Q35.** When teachers in grades [K–12] assign their kids specific questions in such subjects as math or history, is it more important that:

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |  |
|-------------|-------------|--|
| 20          | 12          | The kids end up knowing the right answers to the questions or problems |
| 66          | 86          | The kids struggle with the process of trying to find the right answers |
| 14          | 3           | Not sure   |

**Q36.** Which is closer to your view?

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |  |
|-------------|-------------|--|
| 42          | 38          | Early use of calculators in elementary school grades can hamper children from learning basic arithmetic skills     |
| 37          | 57          | Early use of calculators will improve children’s problem-solving skills and not prevent the learning of arithmetic |
| 21          | 6           | Not sure   |

**Q37.** When it comes to students who are new immigrants, what should the public schools’ primary goal be? To help new immigrants:

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |   |
|-------------|-------------|---|
| 36          | N/A         | Absorb America’s language and culture as quickly as possible, even if their native language and culture are neglected |
| 47          |             | Maintain their own language and culture even if it takes them longer to absorb America’s and culture                  |
| 18          |             | Not sure  |

**Q38.** From what you know or have heard about the process of professional accreditation of education programs—for example, through organizations like NCATE or TEAC—is it your sense that receiving accreditation means:

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |  |
|-------------|-------------|--|
| 7           | N/A         | A guarantee of top-notch quality             |
| 46          |             | A base-line of acceptable quality            |
| 41          |             | Very little other than procedural compliance |
| 6           |             | Not sure                                     |

**Q39.** Which comes closer to your view of alternative teacher certification programs that are not run by schools of education?

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |   |
|-------------|-------------|---|
| 47          | N/A         | They threaten to compromise the quality of the teaching force in the public schools |
| 32          |             | They are a good way to attract unconventional talent to the public schools          |
| 21          |             | Not sure  |



Here are some questions about alternative routes to the education field. For each, please indicate if you think it is generally a good idea or a bad idea, or if you don't know enough to say.

**Q40.** Recruiting people for school leadership who have proven track records of success from other fields such as business, law, and the military

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                          |
|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| 33          | N/A         | Generally a good idea    |
| 42          |             | Generally a bad idea     |
| 21          |             | Don't know enough to say |
| 3           |             | Not sure                 |

**Q41.** Programs like Teach For America that recruit and place high-achieving college graduates in struggling public schools

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                          |
|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| 63          | N/A         | Generally a good idea    |
| 20          |             | Generally a bad idea     |
| 13          |             | Don't know enough to say |
| 4           |             | Not sure                 |

**Q42.** Teacher preparation programs administered by school districts or charter management organizations that certify their own teachers

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                          |
|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| 17          | N/A         | Generally a good idea    |
| 51          |             | Generally a bad idea     |
| 27          |             | Don't know enough to say |
| 5           |             | Not sure                 |

**Q43.** When it comes to removing unsuitable teacher candidates, does your program mostly rely on:

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |   |
|-------------|-------------|---|
| 46          | N/A         | A formal and systematic process for identifying and removing unsuitable candidates            |
| 23          |             | An informal process that relies on individual professors to counsel out unsuitable candidates |
| 11          |             | Students themselves to drop out when they realize they are not suited for teaching            |
| 3           |             | Something else/combination  |
| 17          |             | Not sure  |

**Q44.** About how many of the students graduating from your teacher education program this school year do you think will be great teachers?

| 2010 | 1997 |               |
|------|------|---------------|
| -    | N/A  | None          |
| 10   |      | A few         |
| 34   |      | Some          |
| 45   |      | Most          |
| 4    |      | Virtually all |
| 8    |      | Not sure      |

**Q45.** How often have you personally come across students who you seriously doubt have what it takes to be a teacher?

| 2010 | 1997 |           |
|------|------|-----------|
| *    | 1    | Never     |
| 20   | 26   | Rarely    |
| 20   | 27   | Total     |
| 62   | 60   | Sometimes |
| 15   | 12   | Often     |
| 77   | 72   | Total     |
| 3    | 1    | Not sure  |

**Q46.** As you may know, charter schools operate under a charter or contract that frees them from many of the state regulations imposed on public schools and permits them to operate independently. Do you favor or oppose the idea of charter schools?

| 2010          | 2009                        | 2008                            |          |
|---------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| Ed Professors | General Public <sup>C</sup> | Classroom Teachers <sup>D</sup> |          |
| 44            | 64                          | 42                              | Favor    |
| 34            | 33                          | 45                              | Oppose   |
| 23            | 3                           | 14                              | Not sure |

C. Comparison data are from Bushaw, William J. and John A. McNee. 2009. "Americans Speak Out: Are Educators and Policy Makers Listening?: The 41st annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools." *Phi Delta Kappan*, 91, no. 1 (September).

D. Comparison data from Duffett, Ann, Steve Farkas, Andrew J. Rotherham, and Elena Silva. 2008. *Waiting to be Won Over: Teachers Speak on the Profession, Unions, and Reform*, 24, question 83. (Washington, D.C.: Education Sector). This was a survey of K-12 public school teachers.

Here is a list of different education reforms. For each, please indicate if you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose.

**Q48.** Having a core curriculum with specific knowledge and skill standards spelled out for each grade level

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                 |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 29          | N/A         | Strongly favor  |
| 49          |             | Somewhat favor  |
| 78          |             | Total           |
| 15          |             | Somewhat oppose |
| 5           |             | Strongly oppose |
| 20          |             | Total           |
| 2           |             | Not sure        |

**Q49.** Requiring kids to pass tests demonstrating proficiency in key subjects before they can graduate

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                 |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 18          | N/A         | Strongly favor  |
| 43          |             | Somewhat favor  |
| 61          |             | Total           |
| 25          |             | Somewhat oppose |
| 11          |             | Strongly oppose |
| 36          |             | Total           |
| 3           |             | Not sure        |

**Q50.** Requiring teachers to pass tests demonstrating proficiency in key subjects before they are hired

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                 |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 37          | N/A         | Strongly favor  |
| 41          |             | Somewhat favor  |
| 78          |             | Total           |
| 13          |             | Somewhat oppose |
| 7           |             | Strongly oppose |
| 20          |             | Total           |
| 2           |             | Not sure        |

**Q51.** Requiring a minimum of five years before tenure is awarded and strengthening the formal teacher evaluation process

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                 |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 42          | N/A         | Strongly favor  |
| 37          |             | Somewhat favor  |
| 79          |             | Total           |
| 12          |             | Somewhat oppose |
| 4           |             | Strongly oppose |
| 16          |             | Total           |
| 6           |             | Not sure        |

**Q52.** Making it easier to terminate unmotivated or incompetent teachers—even if they are tenured

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                 |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 51          | N/A         | Strongly favor  |
| 36          |             | Somewhat favor  |
| 86          |             | Total           |
| 8           |             | Somewhat oppose |
| 2           |             | Strongly oppose |
| 10          |             | Total           |
| 4           |             | Not sure        |

**Q53.** Giving financial incentives to teachers whose students routinely score higher than similar students on standardized tests

| <b>2010</b> | <b>2008<sup>E</sup></b> |                 |
|-------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 11          | 11                      | Strongly favor  |
| 20          | 23                      | Somewhat favor  |
| 30          | 34                      | Total           |
| 30          | 25                      | Somewhat oppose |
| 35          | 39                      | Strongly oppose |
| 65          | 64                      | Total           |
| 5           | 3                       | Not sure        |

E. Comparison data are from Duffett, Ann, Steve Farkas, Andrew J. Rotherham, and Elena Silva. 2008. *Waiting to be Won Over: Teachers Speak on the Profession, Unions, and Reform*, 19, question 20. (Washington, D.C.: Education Sector). This was a survey of K–12 public school teachers.

**Q54.** Giving financial incentives to teachers who work in tough neighborhoods with low-performing schools

| <b>2010</b> | <b>2008<sup>F</sup></b> |                 |
|-------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 38          | 34                      | Strongly favor  |
| 45          | 46                      | Somewhat favor  |
| 83          | 80                      | Total           |
| 9           | 11                      | Somewhat oppose |
| 5           | 7                       | Strongly oppose |
| 14          | 17                      | Total           |
| 3           | 3                       | Not sure        |

**Q55.** Holding teacher education programs more accountable for the quality of the teachers they graduate

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                 |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 32          | N/A         | Strongly favor  |
| 41          |             | Somewhat favor  |
| 73          |             | Total           |
| 16          |             | Somewhat oppose |
| 6           |             | Strongly oppose |
| 21          |             | Total           |
| 6           |             | Not sure        |

**Q56.** Some suggest that the best way to measure teacher effectiveness is to assess students' skills and knowledge when they first come to a teacher and to measure them again when students leave to see what progress was made. Others disagree. How would you rate this as a way of measuring teacher effectiveness?

| <b>2010</b> | <b>2008<sup>G</sup></b> |           |
|-------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| 13          | 15                      | Excellent |
| 35          | 34                      | Good      |
| 47          | 49                      | Total     |
| 32          | 29                      | Fair      |
| 16          | 20                      | Poor      |
| 48          | 48                      | Total     |
| 4           | 2                       | Not sure  |

F. Comparison data are from Duffett, Ann, Steve Farkas, Andrew J. Rotherham, and Elena Silva. 2008. *Waiting to be Won Over: Teachers Speak on the Profession, Unions, and Reform*, 19, question 23. (Washington, D.C.: Education Sector). This was a survey of K–12 public school teachers.

G. Comparison data are from Duffett, Ann, Steve Farkas, Andrew J. Rotherham, and Elena Silva. 2008. *Waiting to be Won Over: Teachers Speak on the Profession, Unions, and Reform*, 19, question 23. (Washington, D.C.: Education Sector). This was a survey of K–12 public school teachers.

**Q57.** One focus of the Obama administration’s education agenda is to open up every avenue possible to recruit new teachers. Which comes closer to your own view?

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |  |
|-------------|-------------|--|
| 40          |             | This is on the right track—times have changed, and we need to do whatever it takes to draw qualified people to the teaching profession from nontraditional sources           |
| 39          |             | This is on the wrong track—only university-based education programs provide the theory, pedagogy, and clinical experiences necessary to produce the highest quality teachers |
| 22          |             | Not sure   |

**Q58.** As you may know, the No Child Left Behind Act requires states to set standards in math and reading and to test students each year to determine whether schools are making adequate progress, and to intervene when they are not. This year, Congress is deciding whether to renew the No Child Left Behind Act. What do you think Congress should do?

| <b>2010</b> | <b>2009<sup>H</sup></b> |                             |
|-------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1           | 21                      | Renew the legislation as is |
| 9           | 28                      | Renew with minimal changes  |
| 52          | 30                      | Renew with major changes    |
| 34          | 22                      | Not renew at all            |
| 5           | -                       | Not sure                    |

**Q59.** For holding schools accountable, should all state governments adopt the same set of educational standards and give the same tests in math, science and reading, or do you think that there should be different standards and tests in different states?

| <b>2010</b> | <b>2009<sup>I</sup></b> |   |
|-------------|-------------------------|---|
| 49          | 72                      | Adopt the same set of educational standards and give same tests |
| 36          | 19                      | Should be different standards and tests                         |
| 16          | 9                       | Not sure  |

H. Comparison data are from *Education Next*-PEPG. 2009. "Survey of Public Opinion." Cambridge, MA: *Education Next* and the Program on Education Policy and Governance, Harvard University.  
 I. Comparison data are from *Education Next*-PEPG. 2009. "Survey of Public Opinion." Cambridge, MA: *Education Next* and the Program on Education Policy and Governance, Harvard University.

**Q60.** Which of the following describe you?

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                                      |
|-------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| 3           | N/A         | Dean                                 |
| 8           |             | Department Chair                     |
| 14          |             | Adjunct                              |
| 64          |             | Tenured or tenure-track faculty      |
| 12          |             | Non-tenure track or clinical faculty |
| 7           |             | Something else                       |
| *           |             | Not sure                             |

**Q61.** Is the college or university where you work located in an urban, suburban, or rural area?

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |          |
|-------------|-------------|----------|
| 39          | 39          | Urban    |
| 33          | 27          | Suburban |
| 25          | 34          | Rural    |
| 3           | *           | Not sure |

**Q62.** Do you teach:

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                          |
|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| 74          | 87          | Bachelor's level courses |
| 75          | 73          | Master's level courses   |
| 27          | 28          | Doctoral level courses   |
| 5           | N/A         | Something else           |

**Q63.** In what subjects, if any, do you consider yourself a specialist?

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                                 |
|-------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| 15          | 16          | Adolescent or child development |
| 8           | 13          | Arts                            |
| 7           | 7           | Computer science or technology  |
| 10          | 10          | Education policy                |
| 18          | 15          | Education research              |
| 10          | 11          | Educational administration      |
| 13          | 18          | Education psychology            |
| 16          | 17          | Elementary education            |
| 10          | 21          | English or language arts        |
| 3           | 5           | Foreign language education      |

(Q63 Continued: In what subjects, if any, do you consider yourself a specialist?)

| 2010 | 1997 |                           |
|------|------|---------------------------|
| 12   | 13   | Foundations of education  |
| 3    | 4    | Health or sex education   |
| 8    | 12   | Higher education          |
| 20   | 26   | Instructional methods     |
| 9    | 10   | Math education            |
| 4    | 3    | Physical education        |
| 9    | 11   | Reading                   |
| 9    | 8    | Science education         |
| 10   | 12   | Social studies or history |
| 12   | 11   | Special education         |
| 4    | 4    | Generalist/not specialist |
| 25   | 22   | Something else            |

**Q64.** For how many years have you taught at the college level?

| 2010 | 1997 |              |
|------|------|--------------|
| 17   | 11   | 1-5 years    |
| 22   | 21   | 6-10         |
| 18   | 17   | 11-15        |
| 14   | 15   | 16-20        |
| 30   | 36   | More than 20 |

**Q65.** Have you ever been a [K–12] classroom teacher?

| 2010 | 1997 |                               |
|------|------|-------------------------------|
| 80   | 83   | Yes, have been [K–12] teacher |
| 20   | 17   | No, have not                  |

(Ask if “Yes” in Q65.)

**Q66.** About how many years has it been since you were a [K–12] classroom teacher?

| 2010 | 1997 |              |
|------|------|--------------|
| 19   | 11   | 1-5 years    |
| 19   | 21   | 6-10         |
| 16   | 16   | 11-15        |
| 16   | 17   | 16-20        |
| 30   | 34   | More than 20 |
| 1    | 1    | Not sure     |



**Q67.** Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent or something else?

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                |
|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| 13          | 16          | Republican     |
| 51          | 50          | Democrat       |
| 27          | 31          | Independent    |
| 4           | 3           | Something else |
| 5           | 1           | Not sure       |

*(Ask if "Independent" in Q67.)*

**Q68.** Do you lean toward the Republican party, the Democratic party, or do you not lean either way?

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                 |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| (n=187)     | (n=270)     |                 |
| 13          | 15          | Lean Republican |
| 49          | 41          | Lean Democrat   |
| 35          | 43          | Do not lean     |
| 4           | 1           | Not sure        |

**Q69.** How old are you?

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |               |
|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| 5           | 2           | 34 or younger |
| 15          | 17          | 35-44         |
| 25          | 42          | 45-54         |
| 42          | 33          | 55-64         |
| 13          | 7           | 65 or older   |

**Q70.** Do you consider yourself:

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |                             |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| 85          | 91          | White                       |
| 6           | 4           | Black or African American   |
| 4           | 2           | Hispanic                    |
| 1           | 1           | Asian/Pacific Islander      |
| 2           | 1           | Something else              |
| 2           |             | Mixed (voluntary)           |
| 1           |             | Native American (voluntary) |

**Q71.** Are you:

| <b>2010</b> | <b>1997</b> |        |
|-------------|-------------|--------|
| 50          | 50          | Male   |
| 50          | 50          | Female |

