

Testimony of Daniel Fallon
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**COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR
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Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness
Honorable Ruben Hinojosa, Chair

*“Preparing Teachers for the Classroom:
The Role of the Higher Education Act and No Child Left Behind”*

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Introduction

My name is Daniel Fallon. I serve as Director of the Program in Higher Education at Carnegie Corporation of New York, which is the philanthropic organization established in 1911 by Andrew Carnegie to maintain the benefaction he intended to pursue with the wealth he had accrued in his lifetime. In Mr. Carnegie’s words, our mission is to promote “...the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding to benefit the citizens of the United States.”

Over the course of the twentieth century Carnegie Corporation of New York has provided support for many worthwhile American activities, with a particular focus on education. For example, resources from the philanthropy helped establish the first nationally available pension fund for college teachers, the Teachers Insurance Annuity Association, known by its initials TIAA. Research supported by the Corporation provided the basis for establishing national need-based financial aid, now known more commonly as Pell Grants. Other investments were instrumental in establishing the College Board, the Educational Testing Service, and more recently the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Since the early 1980’s the Corporation has increased its efforts to improve the quality of teaching in the nation’s schools. Under its current president, Vartan Gregorian, it undertook a major initiative beginning in 2001 to reform teacher education. The initiative is called *Teachers for a New Era* and I am its principal designer and have directed its development since its inception. The Annenberg Foundation and the Ford Foundation have joined Carnegie Corporation in this effort, contributing significant resources to extend the reach of *Teachers for a New Era* and to disseminate positive findings arising from its work.

Purpose of this testimony

I have accepted your invitation to describe today the work we are doing in teacher education reform. Some of our findings thus far may be helpful to you if you begin to consider ways to facilitate the production of high quality teachers. For example, in my testimony I will discuss three areas you may find useful: (1) the value for states of recording educational data, releasing such data to higher education institutions for purposes of improvement of teacher education programs, and placing responsibility for educational data with research institutions; (2) how academy-based induction functioning as a complement to district-based induction increases efficiency, reduces costs, and improves pupil learning; and (3) why it may be worthwhile to provide incentives for teacher-education programs to adopt evidence-based continuous-improvement designs focused on facilitating pupil learning.

I speak on behalf of the eleven institutions of higher education that are participating in *Teachers for a New Era*, and with their consent. I should add that the presidents of the *Teachers for a New Era* institutions, led by President Simon of Michigan State University and President Hennessy of Stanford University, are preparing a letter to the National Research Council. You will be receiving a copy of this letter, which addresses the congressional charge to the Council to prepare a report on teacher education. It echoes some of the themes I raise today, but also places a particular emphasis on the value of teacher education reform to improve the nation's competitiveness in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

As an officer of Carnegie Corporation of New York I hope my testimony may serve one of our basic purposes: to increase the life chances of citizens of the United States.

Why try to reform teacher education?

We decided to undertake this work seven years ago with no illusions. There was a well-justified consensus within the policy community about teacher education. It was judged in general to be intellectually incoherent. Its value in providing certified teachers was of unproven effectiveness. Finally, numerous well-organized efforts at reform of teacher education had not led to any fundamental change in the enterprise. In short, most informed observers did not think that teacher education was a worthy target of philanthropic attention. Nonetheless, we decided to make a big bet on it.

We undertook our initiative on teacher education for two principle reasons. The first is the much-discussed emergence in the U.S. of a knowledge-based economy. Our nation is today and for the foreseeable future generating wealth principally through knowledge, information, and services. If the nation is to preserve its standard of living and protect the quality of life of its citizens, it must place priority on producing a highly educated work force. We understand the reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

and the Higher Education Act in recent years as a rational political response to the challenge of a new economy.

The second reason for our investment is a fundamental paradigm shift in our conception of how well children learn in schools. For more than a generation our knowledge was based on the excellent pioneering work of sociologist James Coleman sponsored by the U.S. government in the late 1960's. These analyses led to a prevailing conclusion that pupil achievement was largely controlled by economic inequality mediated in large part by family circumstances. The science on which this idea was based depended for the most part on cross-sectional analyses of average test scores of some groups of pupils compared with others. Longitudinal data permitting the analysis of the change in test scores by individual pupils over time were largely nonexistent and thus not available to Coleman. That circumstance changed with the broad introduction in several states during the decade of the 1980's of mandatory state-wide testing in the public schools. As the accumulation of these data made further analysis possible, researchers began to look at the performance of individual pupils in successive years with different teachers. They discovered that some teachers demonstrated an ability to raise pupil achievement reliably, in some cases quite dramatically, even in the face of severe economic hardship experienced by the pupil. In other words, our knowledge shifted from thinking that wealth, families, and neighborhoods were the principal source of pupil achievement to understanding that high quality teaching made a very significant contribution.

The two new developments, a new knowledge-based economy and an understanding that the quality of the teacher was likely the single most important school-based factor influencing the achievement of pupils, were foremost in giving Carnegie Corporation of New York confidence that an investment in improving the quality of teacher education would be worthwhile. To these we added other considerations. We believe, on principle, that higher education institutions are the best place to educate teachers. Further, we are convinced that a new generation of faculty at colleges and universities are more prepared than ever before to accept the challenge of designing strong programs of teacher education.

Evidence-based guidelines for reform

The U.S. has not on the whole invested heavily in rigorous research on education. Primarily for that reason we do not know with high confidence what an ideal teacher education program might look like. We began with a straightforward presumption that observable pupil learning is the only way to make high quality teaching visible. Therefore, if we want to see evidence of high quality teaching, we must look for pupil learning. We studied the limited amount of relevant research literature carefully and could find no reason based on evidence to recommend a specific structure or curriculum for teacher education. Instead, we asked higher education institutions to respond to challenges for teacher education around three large design principles that were justified to the best of our ability on sound evidence.

The first design principle is cultivating a respect for evidence. Within this general framework we embedded a radical idea, that the higher education institution must find a way to measure the quality of the teacher education program by demonstrable pupil learning occurring in classrooms of teachers who were graduates of the program.

The second design principle is effectively engaging faculty from the disciplines of the arts and sciences. This includes acquiring knowledge of the content that the teacher will teach, of course, but also speaks to the importance of general education for the teacher. Also important is the idea that faculty from the disciplines of the arts and sciences will learn from their contact with teacher candidates and with their colleagues in colleges of education more effective ways of representing content so that it is readily learned by students.

Finally, the third design principle calls for understanding the act of teaching as skilled clinical practice. Thus, it considers pupils as clients, the classroom as a clinic, and the teacher as a clinician who assists each child in learning to high standards. Taking this idea seriously requires that teacher education programs work closely with representative school districts, that teacher candidates be exposed early and often to working classrooms, that some highly effective teachers from schools be appointed to positions as “professors of practice” in the teacher education program, and that higher education faculty from the disciplines of the arts and sciences also observe teaching in classrooms and assist in instructing teacher candidates about the teaching of the content. The third design principle embeds a second radical idea within the teacher education program, namely, that the teacher education program should offer to each of its graduates a program of intensive mentoring and support during the first two full years of professional clinical practice. Through this device the novice teacher who was once a teacher candidate in the teacher education program continues to receive education to become an effective teacher. We call this idea academy-based induction, or residency.

By tightly coupling the teacher education program to working classrooms in schools, requiring an ongoing professional relationship with recent graduates who are working as novice teachers, and using pupil learning in the classrooms of graduates as the primary means of measuring quality, *Teachers for a New Era* is explicitly a design for continuous improvement. We believe this is an evidence-based program that will enable a teacher education program to gather the data it needs to improve continuously over time. The functional nature of the reform challenge ensures that any teacher education program anywhere in the United States today could meet it by applying the design principles.

A capsule description of how Teachers for a New Era is being implemented

Instead of requesting proposals to participate, Carnegie Corporation of New York engaged policy analysts from the RAND Corporation, and appointed a National Advisory Panel of distinguished figures from the world of policy, practice and research. With

assistance from these two groups, we went through an iterative process of investigation of teacher education programs, culminating in site visits to numerous institutions, and ultimately in the identification of eleven institutions of higher education that we believed were capable of meeting the challenges we posed in our general prospectus, which is attached to this document. We then invited proposals from just these eleven, and went through multiple revisions of the proposals until each proposal was judged to have produced a work plan capable of meeting our requirements.

In addition to the prospectus describing *Teachers for a New Era*, I have separately provided each member of the Subcommittee with a laminated 4x6 card containing a list of the eleven participating institutions on one side, and a schematic summary of the design principles on the other side. We designed the initiative so as to provide strong support for fundamental reform. Each of the eleven institutions of higher education was awarded \$5 million over a five to seven year period, and was then asked to raise another \$5 million independently, with at least 30% of the matching money dedicated to a permanent endowment to support the reconfigured program of teacher education. In addition, each institution received \$500,000 to be shared with “partners,” such as school districts or other cooperating institutions, to facilitate relationships necessary for preparing effective teachers. Thus, each institution received \$10.5 million in direct support. Carnegie Corporation of New York also contracted with outside partners, primarily the Academy for Educational Development, to provide direct technical assistance for the life of the project that included assistance for each institution with budget development, monitoring of benchmarks, consultation services, and several meetings of teams from all institutions each year to discuss progress on the design principles. All in all, the philanthropic investment in this unusual national initiative has exceeded \$125 million.

Early findings and implications

Although it is too early to draw many confident conclusions about the long-term success of this initiative, a few patterns are becoming clear. First, in a few pilot studies several of the institutions have been able to link pupil learning gains in public school classrooms with teachers who have pursued distinct teacher education programs before being appointed as teachers. These investigations have been very helpful in pointing to areas within the teacher education curriculum that require strengthening. The promise of this approach seems clear. Nonetheless, we have found in many instances that there are severe obstacles to retrieving data for legitimate program improvement purposes, even when the data are available, there are no objections from union representatives, and proper safeguards have been taken to protect the identities of particular teachers and particular students. In other cases, state or local data are not collected in ways that make comparisons for research purposes useful.

We thus find ourselves faced with the dilemma that (a) we cannot mount an evidence-based system for program improvement without data from the schools; and (b) the

authorities responsible for school data are often unable to provide data for program improvement. Therefore, if your legislative deliberations include data systems, and you wish to improve the education of future teachers, you may wish to consider incentives to states and local school districts to construct comprehensive data systems that collect measures that can be compared directly from school to school within a district, and from district to district within a state. It would be helpful if such data systems included unique identifiers that permitted the linking of performance of individual pupils with the teachers that taught them, in ways that protect the identity of the pupils and the teachers, and also included provisions that require such data to be made available to institutions of higher education with teacher education programs for the purpose of program improvement. There may also be distinct advantages in ensuring that school data repositories be entrusted to research institutions in the state rather than to state regulatory agencies.

A second finding of importance has been the remarkable success of the implementation of academy-based induction as a supplement to district-based induction programs. For example, one of our grantees, the University of Virginia, has shown that its academy-based induction achieved a 33% reduction in attrition of novice teachers over and above the existing district-based induction program by itself. Innovations of this kind result in enormous cost savings to districts and lead to more effective instruction for pupils. To offset the cost of design and introduction of academy-based induction nationally, you may want to consider offering incentives to partnerships between teacher-education programs and school districts to propose them.

Finally, a third finding is that the introduction of an evidence-based continuous-improvement program built around the *Teachers for a New Era* design principles has resulted in substantial long-term administrative and organizational changes within these higher education institutions. The effect of new management has been to promote greater institution-wide responsibility for teacher education and to improve the application of the considerable knowledge resources throughout these institutions to the enterprise of teacher education. Therefore, you may want to consider some form of incentive grants to higher education institutions that propose to restructure teacher education by agreeing to design principles similar to *Teachers for a New Era*.

Summary and conclusion

As we review the fifth year of implementation since the first group of institutions received awards under *Teachers for a New Era*, a wide variety of very encouraging developments are beginning to emerge. The comprehensive application of the design principles appears to be shaping a coherent vision of effective teaching as academically-taught skilled clinical practice. Therefore, we have reason to hope that a foundation is being laid for an evidence-based program of teacher education driven by attention to pupil learning in working classrooms in a form that enables continuous improvement of teacher education.

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Ours is a vision for reliable means of preparing effective teachers who can teach all children, from all walks of life, to learn to high standards. It is a vision of higher education in the nation's service.

Thank you for your attention this morning.