

Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice: Report addressing gaps in access to strong teachers misses opportunity to tackle root causes of teacher recruitment and retention problems

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EAST LANSING, Mich. (Nov. 28, 2017) — In October, The Education Trust published a report that called on state leaders to embrace new flexibility available under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to address inequities in teacher and leader quality in schools. The report drew on state-level examples of promising practices and made recommendations. An academic review released today finds significant omissions in the report, which fails to engage with issues around alternative pathways into teaching or incentives for supporting recruitment and retention efforts in hard-to-staff schools.

Doris Santoro, Bowdoin College, reviewed the report, *Tackling Gaps in Access to Strong Teachers: What State Leaders Can Do*, for the Think Twice think tank review project. Think Twice, a project of the National Education Policy Center (NEPC), is funded by the Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice.

According to the reviewer, the report relied primarily upon submitted ESSA state

consolidated plans and state teacher equity plans for the purpose of providing guidance to state education agency leaders. Santoro in her review notes that the report included some sound advice for education agency leaders, but cautions that the report might not help them better understand how they could build incentives and cultures in schools in order to draw strong teachers and leaders into high-need schools.

Santoro says that state leaders reading this report will likely be left with an incomplete, insufficient set of tools to ensure equitable access to excellent educators. She finds that the report primarily casts the problem of recruiting and retaining excellent teachers as a labor supply problem without addressing the root causes of teacher recruitment and retention problems.

Specifically, she says the report relies on advocacy sources instead of scholarly research, which fail to capture the impact of past federal and state policies on teachers. Moreover, she writes that the report has too few references to be useful to policy makers.

Positively, she says that readers will find the report understandable and accessible. Despite the report's attempt to fill a knowledge gap, Santoro concludes: "State leaders will likely come no closer to understanding how they might build incentives and cultures that draw strong teachers into high-need schools."

Find the review on the GLC website:

<http://www.greatlakescenter.org>

Find the original report on the Education Trust website:

<https://edtrust.org/resource/tackling-gaps-access-strong-teachers/>

Think Twice, a project of the National Education Policy Center (NEPC), provides the public, policymakers and the press with timely, academically sound reviews of selected publications. The project is made possible by funding from the Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice.

The review can also be found on the NEPC website:

<http://nepc.colorado.edu>