



For Immediate Release:

November 1, 2006

Contact: Gary Reinecke (510)465-6444, ext. 300 or greinecke@edtrustwest.org

The Second of a Series of Reports Tracking California’s Revised Teacher Equity Plan Reveals Ongoing Concerns and Critical Questions

(Oakland, CA)-A new Education Trust—West analysis of California’s revised and resubmitted plan to address teacher quality distribution among poor and minority students, as required by No Child Left Behind, finds that the current plan still falls short.

According to the report, *Enough to do the Job? Critical Questions about California’s Latest Teacher Equity Plan*, while the resubmitted plan represents a more extensive effort than this summer’s initial plan, it raises ongoing concerns about whether or not the State has the capacity and vision to ensure that all students will have equal access to qualified and experienced teachers.

“We’ll give credit where it’s due,” said Russlynn Ali, director of the Education Trust—West. “California’s new submission is a much longer, more detailed, more responsive document. Still, it does not fully comply with the teacher quality reporting requirements of NCLB, limits the number of schools that get meaningful help and lays out in a convoluted fashion a series of policies and programs that together still don’t comprise a thorough roadmap of how California is going to close the teacher quality gap that’s hobbled poor and minority students in this state for far, far too long.” Ali commented.

The report lists these ongoing concerns about the effectiveness of California’s plan for closing the teacher quality gap:

- First, the plan does not address the concentration of inexperienced teachers at high-poverty and high-minority schools nor plans for correcting this problem.
- Second, the current plan passes a great deal of responsibility to districts, some of which may not have the capacity to close the teacher quality gap given the technical assistance the state plans to provide.
- The state level programs listed in the plan comprise a piecemeal approach, and little evidence is offered that the state’s various strategies, many of which are longstanding, will succeed.

The report makes clear that far more important than the federal government accepting or rejecting this plan, and to date they have yet to do so, is whether or not this current plan of activities will be enough to get the job done. “Whether or not this plan is ultimately accepted by federal government, we see this as an opportunity to take a good, hard look at California’s plan

for closing the teacher quality gap. And when we take that hard look, we are skeptical that California's efforts will be enough to get the job done," said Camille Esch, Senior Data and Policy Analyst for the Education Trust—West.

The Education Trust—West recommends the State's plan be revised as follows:

- Include more information, as required by NCLB, on how concentrations of inexperienced teachers will be identified and corrected. It should report the percent of first and second year teachers for California schools and consider implementing a cap on the percent of first and second-year teachers a school can have before being considered to have an inequitable distribution.
- Because the State plan passes much of the responsibility on to local districts for remedying the teacher quality gap, the plan should indicate what specific strategies districts should use to tackle the distribution problem, and provide technical assistance from the state substantial enough to assist in correcting it.
- Commit to a comprehensive effort of the California Department of Education, the State Board of Education, the Secretary of Education, and the Legislature, to strengthen the good programs we have, eliminate those that aren't working and add new, research based strategies where gaps in service are found. In short, we need a real plan that reflects a careful analysis of the problems underlying the teacher quality gap.
- Commit to far better evaluation of state programs moving forward. Although many of the state level efforts described in the plan are longstanding, there is generally very little evaluation data available for them.
- Finally, the state needs to clean up its plan – there are tables with contradictory numbers, references to appendices that don't exist, inconsistent program names, to name a few – and make a more synthesized, more legible version easily available to the public.

"The task ahead is challenging. But the teacher quality gap is the single largest contributor to the achievement gap. If we're to make good on our promise to close the achievement gap, it is essential that we become honest about the teacher distribution problem, confront the challenges head-on, and then go about the business of helping schools and districts provide their teachers -- novice and veteran -- the supports they need to become more effective," concluded Ali.

To download a copy of the report, *Enough to do the Job? Critical Questions about California's Latest Teacher Equity Plan* please visit: www.edtrustwest.org.

###

About the Education Trust—West

The Education Trust—West is the West Coast partner of the national policy organization the Education Trust. The organization works for the high academic achievement of all students at all levels, kindergarten through college with an emphasis on serving low-income, Latino, African-American and Native American students. The Education Trust—West works alongside policymakers, parents, education professionals, and business and community leaders, in cities and towns throughout California, who are trying to transform their schools and colleges into institutions that genuinely serve all students. To learn more about the Education Trust—West, visit www.edtrustwest.org.