



# Meeting Summary

## Teaching Quality & Leadership

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### The People Side of Reform

Session 233, Thursday, July 9, ECS National Forum on Education Policy  
July 2009

Everyone is aware that the common goal in education reform today is to dramatically improve student performance — but the problem is that there is no one strategy for reaching this goal. Dr. Allan R. Odden, Co-Director of the Strategic Management of Human Capital (SMHC) project, of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE), shared insightful information on what he believes will help improve student achievement and reduce achievement gaps. He advocates a focus on reforming and restructuring state and district human resource management systems by first addressing the largest and most urban districts.

During the 2009 Education Commission of the States (ECS) National Forum on Education Policy, in Nashville, Tennessee, Dr. Odden explained that states need to improve teacher and principal talents and skills to make substantial and long-lasting changes in educational reforms. States need:

- An education improvement strategy
- A budget plan to fund the strategy
- A “people” plan to implement the strategy.

The SMHC project is addressing two major questions:

1. How can districts recruit the top teacher, principal and central office talent?
2. How can districts manage that talent to deliver successful instruction in the classroom?

Dr. Odden reported on the findings of the case studies the SMHC Project has conducted in Boston, Chicago, Fairfax County, Long Beach, New York City, Teach for America, The New Teacher Project and New Leaders for New Schools. The case studies found that many urban districts and turnaround schools have dysfunctional human resources systems and are plagued by low student achievement, large achievement gaps, disjointed improvement strategies, and low quality and effectiveness of teachers and principals.

Additionally, the SMHC case studies produced the following five “Big Findings:”

1. Urban districts can recruit top-quality teachers and principals by deploying a multi-faceted human resource strategy (i.e., multiple recruitment strategies, tapping traditional and new recruitment pipelines, establish “grow your own” programs).
2. Urban districts that developed systems to recruit and retain high-quality teachers and principals and improve student performance have restructured and automated many human resources processes.
3. Current processes related to the strategic management of teacher and principal talent have barely addressed the development of valid and practical measures of teaching performance. Such measures should be developed, and their results used to manage all aspects of human resources decision making.
4. Stable district-level leadership, strengthened by ongoing support from city officials, is necessary to build and sustain an effective system for strategic management of human capital.
5. Union-management collaboration is requisite to many SMHC advances.

Because Dr. Odden and the SMHC Project believe that educational improvement is the result of having highly qualified and effective teachers and principals, he concluded his presentation with a list of seven key state implications that any state could begin to address, in order to see significant improvement in student achievement.

1. Develop student-teacher linked data systems to track effectiveness of various teacher and principal training pathways and programs.
2. Create understanding that there are two pipelines that produce teacher talent — pre-BA traditional teacher preparation and post-BA for early and mid-career changers.
3. Provide state funding to any teacher recruitment/training organization that produces teachers effective generally and particularly in high need schools.
4. Create a statewide system of measuring teaching practice that covers initial and professional licensure and performance levels for teachers in years 4-8.
5. Enhance state/district/university policy and practice regarding developing teachers' clinical skills in the first 3-5 years of teaching; perhaps provide professional license only after a significant residency period.
6. Include sufficient funds for effective professional development in the state's school funding formula.
7. Provide state funding for developing new approaches to teacher salary schedules that trigger base pay increases for teachers on a validated measure of teaching performance, to link pay levels with practice.

*Barbara Thompson is the Lead for Teaching Quality & Leadership and the Director of State Relations for the Education Commission of the States. [bthompson@ecs.org](mailto:bthompson@ecs.org)*

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