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Using Pressure and Support to Create a Qualified Workforce

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Abstract

In order for any new initiative to be implemented, it is generally assumed that policy actors need both motivation to comply with a new initiative and adequate assistance to implement the required change successfully. The study reported here examined the impact of a system of pressure and supports created to encourage preschool teachers working in public school, Head Start, and child care settings to obtain a teaching credential by a court imposed deadline. Findings from the sample of 689 teachers indicate that the court mandate, in combination with a scholarship program and an accessible number of certification programs, motivated many preschool teachers to improve their qualifications. Paradoxically, it was also found that the mandate may contribute to a depletion of the workforce if teachers who obtain a qualification move out of preschool into higher status positions. Findings of this study suggest that policymakers should consider systems of pressure and support not only to achieve short term goals, but to maintain outcomes over the long term, as well.

In order for any new initiative to be implemented, it is generally assumed that policy actors need both motivation to comply with a new initiative and adequate assistance, such as updated knowledge or financial resources, to implement the required change successfully (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987; McLaughlin, 1991). Given that improving education is a constant focus of policymakers, pressure and support are recurring themes in the school reform literature. The key role these concepts play can be seen in studies that examine

supports for teachers in response to new state standards and assessments (Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Cohen, 1996; Cohen & Hill, 2000, 2001; Elmore, Abelman, & Fuhrman, 1998; Firestone, Camilli, Yurecko, Monfils, & Mayrowetz, 2000; Kauffman, Johnson, Kardos, Liu, & Peske, 2003). Similarly, studies of the employment of testing data to bring about instructional improvement (Firestone & Mayrowetz, 2000; Goertz, 2001; Herrington & MacDonald, 2001; Massell, 2001), as well as the use of market pressure to provide alternatives to public education (Chubb, 2003; Fuller, Burr, Huerta, Puryear, & Wexler, 1999; Levin, 1991, 2000; Rosegrant, 1999; Witte, 1998), are also illustrative of the dilemmas associated with the use of pressure and support to reform schooling.

In these studies, the “school” typically refers to children who attend grades K-12. Educational reform efforts are not exclusive to these grades, however. Policymakers in the United States are increasingly recognizing the benefits of high-quality preschool as a strategy for producing improved academic and developmental outcomes for lower-income children (Barnett, 2002). As a consequence, the majority of states are providing publicly-funded preschool for select populations of pre-kindergartners (Barnett, Hustedt, Robin, & Schulman, 2004), and school districts are increasingly incorporating preschool as part of their overall reform efforts (Walker, 2003).

The inclusion of preschool as part of public schooling is a significant undertaking. Programs for children who are not yet in kindergarten have tended to operate in isolation from the K-12 sector and, as a result, the provision of preschool has been defined by different goals, regulations, and funding mechanisms (Barnett & Masse, 2003; Bowman, 1999; Clifford, 1999; Mitchell, 1996; Morgan, 2003; Smolkin, 1999; Wolery, 1999). The push to expand publicly funded preschool programs across the country therefore involves the amalgamation of two distinct systems of education, each with differing expectations for quality, curriculum, and teacher qualifications, among other things. Not only is this a mammoth task, but also there is no research information available about how to reform preschool education on a large scale.

The research base catalyzing the movement for publicly funded preschool education is mostly composed of longitudinal evaluations of specific programs, such as the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project (Barnett, Young, & Schweinhart, 1998; Weikart, 1998). These studies therefore, tend to focus on child outcomes (Bagnato, Suen, Brickley, Smith-Jones, & Dettore, 2002; Bryant, Maxwell, & Burchinal, 1999; Schultz & Lopez, 1996) or which stakeholders are necessary to get a program “up and running” (Knitzer & Page, 1998; Miller, Melaville, & Blank, 2002). While this body of research has been informative to policymakers about the components necessary for high quality preschool programs, without attention to the implementation of preschool reform on a larger scale, there is the potential that the positive results of these studies will not be replicated. With the aim of building this research base, this paper uses the findings of a survey with teachers involved in a large-scale preschool reform initiative to examine the kinds of pressures and supports necessary to ensure one aspect of a high quality system of preschool education: a qualified teaching workforce.

Capacity and Will in Policy Implementation

Successful implementation of educational reforms depends on both capacity and will (McLaughlin, 1991). If implementation actors do not have an adequate level of information, skills, or other resources, they may also not have sufficient capacity to successfully implement any initiative (Schneider & Ingram, 1990). In educational reform efforts, issues of

capacity have generally focused on what types of support are needed to change teachers' classroom practice and facilitate their understanding of new curricula (Spillane, 1999, 2002; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002). Effective professional development has therefore been viewed as one of the key supports for increasing teachers' capacity (Cohen & Hill, 2001).

There has also been recognition that capacity is an issue that extends beyond individual teachers to schools and districts. Implementation is enhanced when school leaders and the policymaking agencies that are outside of schools are aware of the difficulties inherent in any implementation effort, and provide the necessary resources to overcome any constraints faced by those who are on the front lines of implementation (Fullan, 2001). The capacity of local education agencies and districts must be attended to, as well, in order to ensure that new policies are aligned with existing expectations (Corcoran & Lawrence, 2003; Spillane & Thompson, 1997).

Facilitating "will," however, is another matter. As McLaughlin (1991) noted, will is an implementer's "motivation and commitment" (p. 187) to undertaking an initiative. As such, will is also reliant upon both implementers' and stakeholders' "assessment of the value of a policy or the appropriateness of a strategy" (McLaughlin, 1991, p. 187), and thus can be harder to come by. In educational reform initiatives, policy actors involved in reform efforts must perceive the need for the change as a significant priority, as the short-term personal costs of becoming involved in a new activity or approach can often appear to outweigh the long-term benefits (Fullan, 1991). This is a particularly salient point for teachers. As Fullan (1991) has elaborated:

Especially at the beginning, innovation is hard work. It takes extra time and energy, even when release time is provided. It can add significantly to the normal workload. As for increased competence on the job—another incentive—it is more likely that our competence actually *decreases* (emphasis in the original) during first attempts at trying something new. (p. 318)

Supports alone, then, can be insufficient, especially when the value judgments of key implementers do not generate motivation to comply with any new policy.

Policymakers have therefore also relied on various policy "tools" as a way of providing the motivation that might otherwise be lacking in any reform effort. Policy tools are "techniques used to increase the probability that agents or targets will take action consistent with the preferred results of policy...[and] are instructions about who is supposed to do what as well as the motivating devices for bringing about the desired behavior" (Ingram & Schneider, 1990, p. 71). These techniques assume that the specific actions that are required to implement a new policy would not occur without the extra motivation provided by various policy tools. In short, policy tools are important for turning "policy goals into concrete actions" (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987, p. 134), and can mean the difference between superficial compliance and real reform.

Policy tools can take various forms, with each form also assuming a type of behavior on the part of a target population and working best under specific conditions. For example, system-changing tools alter the authority structures for the provision of a product or service. This choice of policy tool assumes that changes in authority can bring about a more focused or efficient delivery of a particular good or service. It may also be based on the premise that the status and power of previously-marginalized groups will be increased through the restructuring of authority. System-changing instruments also rely on accurate assessments of the additional supports that might be needed to both dissolve old power structures and empower new ones (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987).

More typically, however, policymakers rely on the use of mandates as tools for motivating target populations. The use of mandates assumes that behaviors need to be either prohibited or prescribed. Although mandates can rely on a specific populations' commitment to obey laws or rules, they may also be dependent on both enforcement and negative sanctions. In other words, we may not obey the mandate merely out of a sense of duty, but rather because the cost of noncompliance is higher than the cost of complying (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987; Schneider & Ingram, 1990).

Conversely, incentives or inducements without the concurrent utilization of a mandate are also used to encourage compliance. This type of policy tool assumes that individuals have the capacity to take action, but "will not be positively motivated" to take that action "unless they are influenced, encouraged, or coerced by manipulation of money...[or] other tangible payoffs" (Schneider & Ingram, 1990, p. 515). Key to both of these policy tools, however, is that any short- or long-term return is "worth it" for the actors involved. For example, Liu, Johnson, and Peske (2003) found that teachers participating in the Massachusetts Signing Bonus Program were not motivated to either enter teaching—or remain in the field—because of the \$20,000 incentive provided. Gormley and Lucas (2000) also determined that offering the incentive of a higher reimbursement to child care centers that were accredited only affected those settings that desired to attain a certain level of excellence, and had no effect on centers of poor or mediocre quality. Thus no matter what the policy context, mere provision of pressures and supports is not always enough to guarantee intended outcomes although the evidence suggests that there is more likelihood of implementation when these policy tools are employed.

Pressure and Supports for Reforming Preschool in New Jersey

The issues associated with the use of policy tools and capacity building efforts are illustrated in the case of New Jersey and its implementation of preschool education as part of whole school reform in the 30 *Abbott* districts. *The Abbott vs. Burke* (1998, 2000) Supreme Court decisions ordered the 30 urban school districts which serve the state's poorest students to embark on an ambitious reform agenda, including creating systems of high quality preschool for all 3- and 4-year-old children beginning in the 1999-2000 school year. Reflecting the research base on program quality (Espinosa, 2002; Frede, 1998), the court defined quality preschool programs as having a class size of no more than 15 students with a certified teacher and teacher assistant in each classroom. In addition, all programs must use a developmentally appropriate curriculum linked to the state's core curriculum content standards, and provide adequate facilities, special education, bilingual education, transportation, health, and other services as needed.

To rapidly implement the integration of child care and education systems, school districts were encouraged to collaborate with existing Head Start and private child care programs already offering preschool in their communities in an effort to offer full-day year round preschool programs to all. Prior to the Court's decision, however, the credential needed to be a "teacher" in New Jersey's private preschool centers and Head Start programs was a minimum of a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential (Division of Youth and Family Services, Department of Human Services, & State of New Jersey, 1998). Obtaining the CDA credential involves undertaking 120 clock hours of training in such subjects as promoting a safe and healthy learning environment and supporting children's social and emotional development (Council for Professional Recognition, 2000). The research base, however, shows that the presence of qualified teachers who have attained a

bachelor's degree (BA) and additional specialized content in child development or early childhood education (Barnett, 2003; Whitebook, 2003) is one of the most consistent indicators of improved child outcomes. Therefore to ensure quality in Head Start and private child care programs, the New Jersey Supreme Court mandated that all teachers in *Abbott* preschools—unless they already held the Nursery or Kindergarten through Grade 8 certificate and had two years of experience working with preschool aged children—must obtain a minimum of a BA with Preschool- Grade 3 (P-3) certification by September 2004.

In response to this mandate, policymakers and other entities in New Jersey created two key supports for teachers who needed to obtain a P-3 teaching credential. First, most of the state's institutions of higher education created specialized P-3 certification programs. These programs encompass both alternate route and traditional approaches to teacher preparation, and range from initial licensure at the BA level, to post-baccalaureate, Master's level, and endorsement programs. In addition, two of these institutions recognized that geographical access to P-3 coursework was limited for teachers working in the state's central and southern *Abbott* districts, and thus offer P-3-related coursework at extension sites in these areas, as well.

Secondly, although coursework leading to a P-3 credential was made available to teachers working in New Jersey's *Abbott* preschool classrooms, the state was also cognizant of the fact that enrolling in college-level classes might present an untenable financial burden for those affected by the mandate. As a result, a scholarship program was initiated for *Abbott* preschool teachers, and was administered by the New Jersey Professional Development Center, a state-funded organization whose mission is to coordinate professional growth activities for the early care and education workforce. The scholarship provides financial assistance of up to \$5,000 per year for tuition costs related to attainment of an AA, or BA or MA and teacher certification (New Jersey Professional Development Center for Early Care and Education, 2003). As per-credit costs at the three schools which serve almost half of all *Abbott* preschool teachers ranged from \$299 to \$395 in 2003-2004, the scholarship could potentially cover the cost of full time study (12 credits) per year. Teachers are also eligible for \$50 per course for other expenses (New Jersey Professional Development Center for Early Care and Education, 2003).

The study reported here examined whether the Court's mandate and this system of supports were sufficient for achieving the intended outcome of a qualified teacher in every *Abbott* preschool classroom by September 2004.

The Study

Sample

Our sample consists of 689 teachers who worked in public school, Head Start, and private preschool classrooms in New Jersey's 30 *Abbott* districts during the 2002-03 school year. The overall sample was obtained in two phases. First, we utilized a stratified random sampling method to choose a proportional sample from each of the 30 *Abbott* districts, using a teacher list obtained from the New Jersey Department of Education. This gave us an initial sample of 800 of the total population of *Abbott* preschool teachers teaching in 2002-03. Of this initial sample, 182 teachers were found to have left their public school or private center. Therefore the second phase involved adding these teachers' replacements to the sample, or replacing them with other teachers from the same district and auspice. Out of this reworked sample of 800, however, 111 teachers either declined to be interviewed or could not be contacted despite repeated telephone calls to the numbers they provided, producing a final

sample of 689 teachers (270 public school, 94 Head Start, and 325 private preschool teachers).

To ensure that accurate predictions could be made, the sample was weighted to represent the total 2003-2004 teaching population of 2825 teachers in the *Abbott* districts based on data provided by the New Jersey Department of Education. Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the *Abbott* teaching population. The average age of preschool teachers is 38 years ($SD = 11.1$), similar to the national average (Saluja, Early, & Clifford, 2002), and nearly all are female. Almost half of all preschool teachers working in the *Abbott* districts are White (44%). Teachers self-identifying as African American comprise 33% of the teaching workforce, while only 16% are Hispanic. A small proportion of teachers in the *Abbott* districts are from Asian-American or Native American backgrounds. Higher proportions of African American and Hispanic teachers work in Head Start (72%) and private child care settings (58%), whereas the teaching population in public schools is predominantly White (70%). Teachers in the *Abbott* districts have been working in the classroom for an average of almost 10 years ($SD 7.84$) and 60% of the teaching population has more than five years of experience. Despite the fact that many of these teachers have been in the profession for some time, 77% of all participants in this study have been teaching at their current place of employment for five years or less.

Table 1
Teacher Demographics

Teacher Characteristic	Mean Percent
Population Estimate (weighted n) = 2825	
Auspices	
Public school	32.5%
Private	57.8%
Head Start	9.7%
Age (\bar{X})	38.0 yrs ($SD = 11.1$)
Female	96.0%
Ethnicity	
White	43.6%
African American	32.5%
Hispanic	15.8%
Asian	3.1%
Native American	0.2%
Refused	4.8%
Years of experience (\bar{X})	9.5 yrs ($SD = 7.84$)
> 5 years experience	60%
= 5 years experience at current place of employment	77%

Data Collection

Telephone interviews were conducted by a professional data collection firm, using a computer-aided telephone interview (CATI) system. Upon completing the survey, participating teachers were mailed a \$20 gift certificate to a national bookstore chain. Data collection began in December 2002 and concluded September 2003.

Teachers were surveyed using a structured protocol developed by the authors (Ackerman & Ryan, 2002). The content of the protocol was determined in consultation with preschool education experts, and piloted with teachers who were outside of the sample and represented a range of educational backgrounds, professional experience, and certification status. The interview protocol examined four topics. The first was teachers' personal characteristics and work experience. The second was teaching credentials, including progress towards any increased qualification and anticipated completion dates. This section of the protocol also asked teachers to report on the content of coursework and their evaluations of these experiences. The third was teachers' beliefs and practices, measured on a Likert scale (Charlesworth et al., 1993). The fourth topic asked teachers about their ongoing professional development. In this paper we report teachers' responses to the first two topics.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were conducted using the weighted data to calculate enrollment patterns and potential numbers of teachers meeting the mandate. These statistics were also examined according to the auspice in which teachers work. This distinction is important, as not only has program quality been found to vary between auspices (Kagan, 1991), but 68% of the *Abbott* preschool teachers work in either private or Head Start programs, and are thus less likely not to have attained a teaching credential prior to the Court's mandate.

Findings

The question guiding this study is whether the Court's mandate and a concurrent system of supports were sufficient for achieving the intended outcome of a qualified teacher in every *Abbott* classroom by September 2004. To answer this question we examine data pertaining to teachers' efforts to improve their credentials, the supports they report using, and whether these efforts have helped them to meet the *Abbott* mandate.

Efforts to Improve Credentials

At the time of this study, the majority (70%) of teachers in the *Abbott* districts already had a BA and an additional 15% of teachers had attained a Master's degree or higher. Of those teachers with a BA or higher, 68% also have some type of teacher certification. Most of these certified teachers work in public schools. Ninety-three percent of public school teachers in our sample already had a minimum of a BA and were certified. Conversely, just 54% of Head Start teachers and 58% of private teachers had similar credentials.

Forty-six percent of the teachers were undertaking further education, and the majority of these teachers (81.2%) were taking coursework leading to a P-3 teaching credential. Given that until the *Abbott* mandate teachers in Head Start and private programs were not required to have a four-year degree or a teaching credential, a disproportional amount of teachers (88%) in these settings were enrolled in P-3 coursework.

Supports Being Used by Teachers

At the time of the survey, 12 universities and colleges were offering P-3 programs, and all 12 were being used by teachers in the study. In addition, teachers were attending Associates degree programs at 11 county community colleges. A small number of teachers (7.9%) were enrolled at schools that did not offer P-3 certification. Most of these teachers were already certified and pursuing Masters level degrees.

As can be seen in Table 2, there are nine distinct pathways through which these teachers are progressing toward a P-3 teaching credential, ranging from an endorsement to initial certification. Eighty-four percent of teachers took classes either on the main campus of these institutions, or at a satellite facility of the institutions offering these programs. No matter where they were attending programs in the state, the majority of teachers reported that the location of their classes made it easier for them to obtain their credential.

Table 2
Potential Percentages of Teachers Meeting the Mandate

Enrollment Status	Stand. Percent	Lower Error	Upper 95%	Upper 95%	Estimate	Stand. Error	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Cell n
Had both BA & certification in 2002-2003									
Not enrolled, but already certified	42.75	2.84	36.71	48.80	1207.71	201.49	778.24	1637.18	321.00
Enrolled in MA, already certified	6.52	0.88	4.64	8.41	184.20	34.02	111.70	256.71	48.00
Working towards a P-3 related credential in 2002-2003									
AA	0.10	0.12	-0.14	0.35	2.93	2.93	-3.32	9.18	1.00
BA, no endorsement noted	2.29	0.80	0.58	4.00	64.59	28.74	3.34	125.83	16.00
BA with P-3	3.10	1.01	0.95	5.25	87.62	36.92	8.93	166.31	20.00
Post-bacc. with P-3	4.77	0.87	2.93	6.62	134.86	29.56	71.85	197.86	26.00
MA, no endorsement noted	1.67	0.50	0.60	2.74	47.17	16.36	12.31	82.04	13.00
MA with P-3	8.55	0.97	6.48	10.62	241.62	53.49	127.62	355.62	59.00
MA with P-3 & additional endorsement	3.32	0.89	1.41	5.23	93.81	32.05	25.49	162.13	22.00
P-3 endorsement only	7.76	1.33	4.92	10.60	219.22	41.04	131.76	306.69	48.00
Alternate Route with P-3 endorsement	1.31	0.44	0.36	2.25	36.90	14.35	6.32	67.48	7.00
Not certified & not enrolled in P-3 related program in 2002-2003¹									
Not enrolled in any P-3 related program	6.87	1.46	3.75	9.98	194.00	50.66	86.01	301.98	39.00
Working towards a CDA	0.18	0.19	-0.21	0.58	5.22	5.22	-5.91	16.36	1.00
Working towards an Alternate Route, non-P-3 certificate	0.90	0.60	-0.38	2.19	25.48	15.94	-8.49	59.46	5.00
Total	90.10	3.06	83.59	96.61	2545.34	433.71	1620.92	3469.7	626.00

¹ Teachers in these categories already had a BA and potentially could meet the mandate. However, at the time of this study, they did not report being enrolled in P-3 coursework.

Fifty-nine percent of teachers enrolled in coursework are using scholarship funds to pay for their college costs. Another third of the teachers said they were paying out of their own pocket to attend classes. Of those teachers paying for their own schooling, some were not eligible for a tuition scholarship because they were working towards a Masters degree without P-3 certification. For those enrolled in P-3 credentialing programs and receiving scholarships, we infer that while their tuition may be covered, they are most likely also incurring out-of-pocket costs for student fees, books, traveling expenses, and child care.

Meeting the Abbott Mandate's 2004 Deadline

Table 2 examines the *Abbott* teaching workforce and the proportions of teachers who potentially have met the court imposed deadline for a Bachelor's degree and teaching credential by September 2004. As can be seen, 49.2% of the teaching population is certified and therefore already meets the mandate. In addition 32.9% of teachers who are enrolled in coursework anticipated finishing their degree requirements by the deadline. When combined with the proportion of the teaching population in the *Abbott* districts who are already certified, we thus estimate that 82.2% of *Abbott* teachers met the mandate.

Another 8% of teachers could potentially have met the mandate. Teachers within this group already had attained a Bachelor's degree, and while not enrolled in a credentialing program at the time of this study, could have enrolled since then and therefore also not have been out of time. However, it is important to note that in 2002-03, 1.1% of these were enrolled in CDA or alternate route programs, which would not lead to any kind of early childhood certification.

As can be seen in Table 3, 6.9% of *Abbott* preschool teachers who are undertaking P-3 related coursework indicated that that they could not meet the mandate, but will be able to complete course requirements within 2 years or by September 2006. However, 2.7% of the teaching population is not attempting to meet the mandate at all. The teachers within this group do not have a Bachelor's degree and are not enrolled in any kind of coursework that may lead to an early childhood teaching credential in the near future. Thus 9.6% or approximately 273 *Abbott* preschool teachers were not able to meet the mandate. All of these teachers are working either in private child care settings (74.1%) or Head Start programs (25.9%).

While a court mandate would seem to facilitate teachers' attainment of a Bachelor's degree, it should also be noted that 33% of the teachers who are enrolled in some kind of teacher preparation program indicated that they intended to leave their positions once they became certified. Eighty percent of these teachers work in private or Head Start preschool settings, and when asked the job they were considering taking instead, the majority indicated that they want to teach in a public school setting. The most often cited reasons for wanting to move to the public schools were the additional pay and/or benefits, the better working conditions, and the higher status or value associated with this job.

Table 3
Potential Percentages of Teachers Not Meeting the Mandate

Enrollment Status	Percent	Stand. Error	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Estimate	Stand. Error	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Cell n
Working towards a P-3 related credential in 2002-2003									
AA	4.12	2.19	-0.54	8.78	116.45	72.17	-37.39	270.28	25.00
BA, no endorsement noted	0.96	0.44	0.02	1.90	27.10	14.44	-3.67	57.87	7.00
BA with P-3	1.81	0.46	0.84	2.78	51.13	18.24	12.26	90.01	12.00
Post-baccalaureate with P-3	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0.00
MA, no endorsement noted	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0.00
MA with P-3	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0.00
MA with P-3 & additional endorsement	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0.00
P-3 endorsement only	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0.00
Alternate Route with P-3 endorsement	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0.00
Not certified & not enrolled in P-3 related program in 2002-2003									
Not enrolled in any P-3 related program	2.20	0.60	0.92	3.48	62.21	23.59	11.94	112.48	15.00
Working towards a CDA	0.53	0.36	-0.23	1.29	15.04	10.64	-7.63	37.71	2.00
Working towards an Alternate Route, non-P-3 certificate	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0.00
Total	9.63	3.11	2.99	16.26	271.93	119.32	17.60	526.26	61.00

Discussion and Implications

Although the findings of this study are limited to the self-reports of preschool teachers and therefore may not always be accurate, they do suggest that the combination of a court mandate, along with a scholarship program and an accessible number of certification programs, motivated many preschool teachers who needed to improve their qualifications to do so. Our findings indicate that by September 2004, 90% of the *Abbott* teaching population potentially had a Bachelor's degree and was at least provisionally certificated. Given that when the 2000 Supreme Court decision was handed down only 15% of teachers in the private settings had a BA in early childhood (Barnett, Tarr, Lamy, & Frede, 2001) and there was no system of professional preparation in place to meet the increased demand for qualified teachers created by this mandate, this outcome is quite remarkable. At the same time, the court mandate and the supports put in place to ensure a qualified preschool teaching workforce have had two unintended consequences that have implications for policy efforts in other states.

The first of these is that the combination of pressure and supports used in New Jersey has apparently not provided the necessary capacity and will for every teacher to take action and become qualified. While the number of teachers at the time of this study who were not enrolled in any kind of program leading to P-3 certification was small (2.7%), the issue for policymakers is why these teachers chose not to respond to the mandate. Similarly, at the time of this study there was also a group of teachers who already had a Bachelor's degree and thus had to only enroll in a P-3 certification program to retain their teaching position. Given the little effort required on the part of these teachers to retain their jobs, the concern is why they have chosen not to take action. The top two reasons cited by these non-enrolled teachers for why they are not attempting to gain a P-3 credential is because they already have all the education they need for the job and they do not get enough time off from their work duties to undertake further study.

While further research is needed that can examine the differing factors that interplay with a teacher's decision to risk losing his/her job rather than undertake further education, the findings of this study would suggest that in addition to scholarships, other incentives might be needed to both motivate and support teachers to upgrade their qualifications. Providing time to study and attend classes might be one such incentive. In addition, given that many teachers working in private preschool settings and Head Start already work long hours and are nontraditional students juggling work and family responsibilities, it may also be necessary to think about ways to bring P-3 credentialing programs to their work sites.

In addition to the small group of teachers not responding at all to the mandate, there is also the paradoxical issue that the very mandate that is designed to increase the quantity of qualified teachers in New Jersey's *Abbott* preschools may effectively serve to lessen numbers of qualified preschool teachers working in these districts. Although teachers—particularly those in private settings—are increasing their qualifications, once they obtain their BA and certification they are also eligible for other job opportunities. It is quite possible that these teachers may take up a preschool teaching position in a public school setting within an *Abbott* district, but it is also likely that some of these teachers may take a job in a non-*Abbott* district. While we cannot predict where these teachers will go, there are further ramifications from this issue, as the absence of continuity of care has been shown to negatively impact children's learning and development (Whitebook, Phillips, & Howes, 1993). Moreover, as many of these teachers are from diverse ethnic backgrounds there is also the concern that this reported turnover will impact the diversity of the private and Head Start program workforce.

While New Jersey is attempting to ensure parity in salary for all teachers within the *Abbott* districts, the fact remains that there still exists a two-tiered system of working conditions within the current preschool system both in the state and across the nation. Although we did not ask teachers what they meant by "better working conditions," given that those who care for and educate young children often must work longer hours than public school teachers and feel "they seldom receive recognition for their important work" (Whitebook & Sakai, 2004, p. x), we might assume that these conditions revolve around issues of benefits and status. Therefore in order for teachers not to feel shortchanged, efforts must be made to alleviate any differences in the working conditions and benefits between public schools and private settings and Head Starts. Providing teachers in these latter settings with a financial bonus if they agree to remain in their current position for at least three years once they become qualified may also serve as an initial incentive while this process gets underway.

In conclusion, the case of New Jersey's *Abbott* districts demonstrated that it is possible to create a qualified preschool teaching workforce in a short period of time. This feat would arguably not have been realized without the coordinated system of pressure and supports implemented in the state. The findings of this study also suggest, however, that policymakers must be mindful not only of the short-term outcomes of any system of pressure and supports, but whether these outcomes will facilitate reaching the goal of any policy in the long term, as well. A court mandate and a system of supports have created a qualified workforce, but further pressure and supports will be needed to maintain the goal of a qualified teacher in every classroom.

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