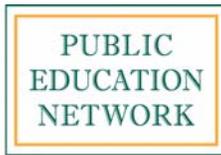

**From Plan to Action:
Local Education Funds
Deepening Public Engagement on
Teacher Quality**

July 2007

**PUBLIC
EDUCATION
NETWORK**



Public Education Network (PEN) is a national organization of local education funds (LEFs) and individuals working to improve public schools and build citizen support for quality public education in low-income communities across the nation. PEN and its 83 LEF members work in 34 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico on behalf of 11.5 million children in more than 1,600 school districts, seeking to bring the community voice into the debate on quality public education in the firm belief that an active, vocal constituency will ensure every child, in every community, a quality public education.



Public involvement. Public education. Public benefit.

Introduction to the Goldman Sachs Teacher Quality Case Studies

Prologue: The Annenberg Public Engagement Initiative, 2001-2004

In *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Robert Putnam argues that community disconnectedness is creating a series of fault lines that threaten to deter us from building the social capital necessary to address common problems. The Public Education Network (PEN) believes that this community disconnectedness infects urban school districts in particular. For public education to survive and thrive, the public must support the vital role of public schools.

In 2001, the Public Education Network (PEN) undertook a bold four-year, \$15 million initiative funded by the Annenberg Foundation and designed to increase public responsibility for public schools—i.e., the degree to which the public explicitly demands high quality schools for every child—in 14 communities around the country. PEN issued requests for proposals to the membership and awarded three-year grants of \$500,000 each to 14 LEFs to implement the theory of action in their communities. LEFs employed three key strategies to reach the public at large, organized groups and professionals, and policymakers. 1) LEFs structured and hosted broadly inclusive public conversations about public schools and how to improve them. 2) LEFs enlisting professional service providers inside and outside schools in collaborations designed to extend and enhance their professional work. 3) LEFs communicating early and often with policymakers about priorities identified by LEFs.

In the Annenberg initiative, LEFs played two key roles in their communities in building public engagement. 1) LEF built community capacity by developing venues for discussion of issues and by broadening the base of trust with people in the community. 2) LEFs helped build school system capacity to incorporate community engagement into the way the district works—by bringing in national expertise and by showing districts effective ways to convene the public and stakeholders.

PEN's venture was guided by its theory of action. In simplest form the theory is: reform idea plus public engagement equals change in education practice; reform idea minus public engagement equals inability to cope with an intricate process. The world of public education reform obviously has many complexities not captured in our preliminary model, but our experiences in the Annenberg public engagement initiative pointed us in the direction of identifying those complexities, thinking about how to incorporate them into a more refined theory of change, and ultimately of achieving that change.

Introduction to the Case Studies

We had the opportunity to move to a more refined theory of change and achieve systemic changes in the PEN Teacher Quality initiative. To build on the groundwork of the Annenberg Public Engagement initiative, in 2004, the Goldman Sachs Foundation funded PEN for two years to continue the public engagement work started—to deepen the nascent community-based efforts to focus specifically on teacher quality in five cities:

Mobile, AL; San Francisco, CA; Durham, NC; Portland, OR; and Seattle, WA.

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Our **overarching goals** were to:

- Affect key policies and practices in teacher quality that lead to increased student achievement, and
- Move public support and action to leverage resources and sustain district efforts to improve teaching and learning.

Five **key strategies** supported these goals:

1. Identify key obstacles at the district and county levels to improve teacher quality;
2. Develop and sustain key policies and practices in teacher recruitment, induction, mentoring, and professional development;
3. Improve district capacity to strengthen accountability mechanisms for teacher quality;
4. Restructure local finance and human resource allocations to be consistent with district reform goals to improve teacher quality, and
5. Extend public engagement by continuing to educate key constituencies such as policymakers, stakeholders and the public at large on key issues in teacher quality.

Project Results

Policy and practice outcomes from the 2004-2006 PEN Teacher Quality initiative include:

- *Implementation of a nationally recognized **teacher induction program** in Durham.* The district realized a substantial reduction in teacher attrition, directly attributable to the implementation of the new teacher induction program.
- *Adoption of a pilot **incentive-based pay system** to encourage the most highly qualified teachers to teach in a designated set of five low-performing schools in Mobile.* Four of the five transformation schools, which received specific district attention and resources as a result of this initiative, made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the first time in 2005-2006.
- *Development of a **standards-based teacher evaluation system** in Seattle.* The LEF developed a new teacher evaluation system called the Professional Growth and Evaluation System (PGES). A pilot phase, district training, and communications plan were implemented.
- *Creation of a **framework on quality teaching**, based on a comprehensive central office audit and review, in Portland.* The LEF launched, in partnership with the district, a Teaching and Learning Review to help uncover issues and promising practices. The LEF worked with the district and the Center for Teaching Quality to develop a report on teacher induction.
- *Collection of critical **data on teachers and teaching** from the district, teachers and youth to inform **policy advocacy** efforts in 2005-2006, in San Francisco.* Data collection and analysis (on teacher retention trends and distribution) resulted in the formulation of five policy recommendations to improve teachers and teaching. The LEF developed a master plan for professional development (one of the five policy targets) and launched a community-wide teacher appreciation campaign that built public awareness about teachers and teaching.

These policy outcomes were achieved through deep and sustained engagement of the public:

- Community-wide summits of hundreds of citizens and elected officials, informing and adopting key principles on quality teachers and teaching, in Durham and Mobile.
- The establishment of district and superintendent-supported community coalitions and advisory committees to guide development of policy targets and implementation, in Portland and Seattle.
- A series of focus groups with teachers, youth action-research projects, and parent workshops on teacher quality issues in Mobile and San Francisco.
- Frequent and positive media coverage of teacher quality issues in the local press in all communities.

Site Teachers/Students Impacted	Policy Target	Engagement Strategies	Policy Outcomes
<p>Durham, NC</p> <p>Teachers: 2,271 Students: 30,889</p>	<p>Teacher induction</p> <p>Teacher retention</p>	<p>Engagement: Held Education Summit on teaching quality with 100 citizens</p> <p>Data: Increased response rate for NC teacher working conditions survey from 28% to 51%; produced cost-benefit study of new teacher induction program</p> <p>Planning: New teacher induction program and Principal Leadership Training to support new teachers, a joint public-private venture of five</p>	<p>Durham County added \$920,000 to the city budget to increase teacher salary supplements for SY-2005-06, increasing starting teacher supplements by 13.5%</p> <p>New teacher induction program district-wide: New Teacher Center model (UC Santa Cruz)</p> <p>Reduction of new teacher attrition from 28% to 12.5%</p>
<p>Mobile, AL</p> <p>Teachers: 4,206; 182 in 5 Transformation Schools Students: 64,774; 2,714 in 5 Schools</p>	<p>Teacher compensation: performance-based pay</p>	<p>Data: On-line working conditions survey of all Mobile teachers, with a 76.8% response rate (3,300 teachers). This survey allowed the district to target specific teaching and learning improvement efforts.</p> <p>Data: Conducted focus groups and analyzed results in partnership with the district and the University of South Alabama.</p> <p>Planning: This partnership developed a plan to recruit and retain teachers through teacher academies.</p>	<p>State Education Trust Fund Budget in FY2006 included \$725,000 to lure experienced teachers to hard-to-staff districts and schools</p> <p>District implemented a pilot incentive-based pay for teachers at 5 Transformation Schools: \$4000 supplemental pay for five years and \$4000 performance-based bonuses</p> <p>Four of the five Transformation Schools made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the first time in 2005-2006.</p>
<p>Seattle, WA</p> <p>Teachers: 2,412 Students: 46,070</p>	<p>Teacher evaluation</p>	<p>Funds: Raised \$400,000 to support a superintendent's community advisory committee to ensure public support of quality teaching.</p> <p>Planning: Helped develop the advisory committee's report to the community</p> <p>Engagement: Wrote op-ed articles and convened meetings with stakeholders to build public sup-</p>	<p>Pilot and continued development of new (standards-based) teacher evaluation system called the Professional Growth and Evaluation System (PGES)</p>
<p>San Francisco, CA</p> <p>Teachers: 2,992 Students: 57,144</p>	<p>Teacher professional development</p>	<p>Engagement: City-wide teacher appreciation campaign that built public understanding about teachers and teaching. Municipal leaders, the district and local business community participated.</p> <p>Planning: Worked with the district to develop a Master Plan for Professional Development.</p>	<p>Formulation of five policy recommendations to improve teachers and teaching.</p>
<p>Portland, OR</p> <p>Teachers: 2,349 Students: 44,169</p>	<p>Teacher mentoring and induction</p>	<p>Data: Launched, in partnership with the district, a Teaching and Learning Review to help uncover issues and promising practices.</p> <p>Planning: Worked collaboratively with the district and the Center for Teaching Quality to develop a report on teacher induction.</p> <p>Funds: Attracted additional private funding and national experts to support Portland's teacher</p>	<p>Consensus among key stakeholders (union, higher ed) on teacher quality blueprint; adoption of "leverage points – professional development and teacher distribution.</p> <p>Began work with the district and CTQ on a systemic plan for a district-wide mentoring and induction program.</p>

Reflections and Next Steps

From 2001-2004, LEFs underwent dramatic changes and growth over the course of the Annenberg initiative. The executive directors said the initiative had changed their organizations. None referred to the initiative as a “project.” Rather, most said it had brought a new organizing framework to much if not all of their work. Some dropped their support for projects such as teacher mini-grants and others are thinking about eliminating these and other small-scale programs.

Also, in the Annenberg initiative, entering the policy arena was new for many LEFs. LEF directors and board members alike had concerns about taking higher-profile roles in community mobilization. LEFs did not find it easy to identify and pursue policy targets and making the transition from programmatic concerns to a policy focus was a challenge. In general, the Annenberg initiative supported LEFs’ work to help communities develop more broadly held visions of what they want from their schools; but it was only the start—just laying the groundwork for strategic, community-supported, targeted policy change.

Consequently, from 2004-2006, the Goldman Sachs Teacher Quality initiative allowed all five sites to deepen and expand their use of data to understand the issues and to serve as a public platform upon which to advocate for needed policy and practice changes. And the work by LEFs in resulted in **much greater impact on many key levers** to improved teaching and learning.

These levers included: addressing the needs of beginning teachers; developing a comprehensive, standards-based evaluation system; creating a master professional development plan to drive teacher improvement; creating a community-wide action plan to build understanding, consensus and accountability for improved teaching and learning; attracting additional private resources to assist efforts; and highlighting and celebrating quality teaching and learning.

The use of data permitted the local education funds, which are independent from their districts, to have authority and credibility within and outside of the school system. Often times, external efforts to improve teachers and teaching are met with resistance from school district officials who feel that ‘they know what’s best.’ The collection and analysis of data, particularly teachers’ voices, helped LEFs and their community partners raise the difficult questions and open the ‘black box’ of the teaching profession.

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The Goldman Sachs initiative has helped PEN and LEFs deepen our understanding and application of public engagement to the specific area of teacher quality, and to refine our theory of action. We have broadened our definition of constituents to include: district leaders and school staff; community stakeholder groups, such as the teacher's union and local colleges and universities, as well as parent and community advocacy groups; and the public at large.

Each of these audiences or constituencies requires different engagement strategies and outcomes. The outcomes related to district and school staff are directed towards building internal (central office and school) capacity to deliver effective instruction to all students, and to have the systems and processes in place to do that. For community stakeholder groups, the outcomes are directed at strengthening partnerships among the entities and with the district. For the public at large, the outcome is towards creating a stronger sense of stewardship – articulating expectations for its public schools, holding school and elected officials accountable for those expectations, and providing the public resources required.

While the specific work in the five sites will continue, PEN will be refocusing its efforts from technical assistance to national communications and advocacy. PEN will use the lessons, tools, and impact from these sites as a national platform to advocate for changes in teachers and teaching. Specifically, we have begun to focus our efforts on three (inter-related) levers for improvement. These levers are a direct outgrowth of the 2004-2006 Goldman Sachs Teacher Quality initiative. They are: 1) Teacher Preparation and Induction, 2) Professional Development and Leadership, and 3) Professional Compensation. Each of these levers has helped to move districts and communities towards a more comprehensive system of quality teaching that directly impacts student learning.

