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The National Network of State Teachers of the Year Releases 2016 Results of First Federal Policy Survey

124 State Teachers of the Year and Finalists identify policies that will improve U.S. progress in education.

WASHINGTON—April 5, 2016—The National Network of State Teachers of the Year (NNSTOY) is pleased to release the results of its 2016 Federal Policy Survey.

NNSTOY surveyed its members on key federal policy issues in order to understand their perspectives and priorities related to federal education policy. The survey respondents included both State Teachers of the Year and Finalists for State Teacher of the Year. There were 124 respondents--80 female; 24 male; ranging in age from 29-74 years. They teach in 42 states; 67% are active full time classroom teachers and 58% have over 20 years of classroom experience. They are evenly distributed across the demographic and socioeconomic spectrums of today's students. They work in rural, suburban and urban settings in about equal proportions. They represent every grade level and virtually every field of teaching.

The survey covers a range of issues including:

- teachers' views about the role of the federal government in education
- factors related to the professionalization of the teaching profession
- ways to recruit more teachers into the profession
- strategies to develop and retain our nation's current teachers, and
- areas ripe for further educational research.

"Often educational leaders and policymakers have inadequate access to the necessary information to make sound decisions about policies that affect schools," said Katherine Bassett, CEO of NNSTOY. "Today our nation's best teachers—from Maine to Guam—provide their judgment about the policies that help (and hinder) teaching and learning."

In addition to utilizing the results of this survey to help accomplish its mission overall and guide its day-to-day work, NNSTOY used the results to develop its 2016 Legislative Agenda. The three agenda topics reflect the survey respondents' commitment to a career continuum for teachers, including new teachers, teachers perfecting their craft and teachers in leadership positions. The agenda identifies three priorities for 2016 which are:

1. **New Teachers** -- with focus on:
 - a. **Clinical preparation**
 - b. **Mentorship**
2. **Expert Practice** – with focus on:

- a. Actionable feedback
 - b. Research
3. **Teacher Leadership** – with focus on:
- a. Partnering in policy
 - b. Career continuums

As the year unfolds, NNSTOY will promote both the legislative and policy priorities to federal and state policy makers and other education stakeholders through several venues including social media, Hill briefings, reports, policy updates, newsletters, and conference sessions.

NNSTOY is a network of exemplary educators from across the nation who have been recognized for excellence in practice and trained in policy and advocacy. NNSTOY seeks to transform the teaching profession by using the credible voice of its membership to support policies and practices that advance teacher leadership; educator effectiveness; and the conditions, capacity, and culture necessary to support great teaching and learning for all students. For more information about NNSTOY, visit www.nnstoy.org.

Appendix A: A 1-page summary of the survey results
Appendix B: The survey.

OVERALL VIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- Survey respondents strongly agree that federal policy should support structures and mechanisms to develop mentorship roles for expert teachers (69.8%).
- Survey respondents strongly disagree that federal policy should support teacher evaluation systems that rely significantly on the results of student standardized test scores (81.3%).

PROFESSIONALIZATION

- Survey respondents say that the federal policy that most damages the professionalization of teaching is the utilization of standardized student K-12 test scores for teacher evaluations (69.4%).
- Survey respondents say that the federal education policy most likely to increase the professionalization of teaching is individualized professional development that aligns with teachers' needs as (73.1%).

RECRUITMENT

The top two federal policies seen as most effective in enhancing teacher recruitment are:

- Expanding partnerships between higher education and K12 (57.7%)
- Loan forgiveness (56.7%)

RETENTION

The three highest ranked policies that the federal government could use to increase retention of new teachers are:

- Stronger induction for new teachers (64.2%)
- Opportunities for peer collaboration (57.5%)
- Stronger clinical preparation for teachers (55.9%)

The three highest ranked policies that the federal government could use to increase retention of mid-career teachers in the profession are support for:

- Shared leadership models (59.8%)
- Differentiated roles for experienced teachers with differential pay (49.5%)
- Partnerships with higher education where accomplished teachers and higher education faculty could merge/exchange roles (47.6%)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The four highest rated policies (based on their likely or demonstrated effectiveness in incentivizing excellent professional development for teachers) are:

- Having access to a highly supportive principal (73%)
- Observing modeling of effective teaching practices (59.2%)
- Having access to a mentor (57%)
- Having common planning time with other teachers (55%)

RESEARCH

The three most important areas for federal funding in education research are:

- Teacher preparation (83.3%)
- Comparative analysis of the effectiveness of instructional strategies (64.6%)
- Brain research (57.3%)

SURVEY DATA

OVERALL VIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Please provide your level of agreement/disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%		
Federal policy should support structures and mechanisms to develop mentorship roles for expert teachers.	1	1	67	69.8
Federal policy should promote (and support and/or fund as necessary and appropriate) professional development systems that include collaborative practice .	4	4.3	56	60.9
Federal policy should require a "floor" of entry into teaching, for example completion of a preparation program and a BA degree.	3	3.2	57	60
Federal policy should expand financial aid incentives (grants and loan forgiveness) to recruit new students into teaching especially in high needs schools and subjects.	3	3.2	57	60
Federal policy should promote (and support and/or fund as necessary and appropriate) the creation and implementation of teacher leadership roles in schools and districts.	4	4.2	57	59.4
Federal policy should promote (and support and/or fund as necessary and appropriate) formalized induction (systemic set of supports) for new teachers.	3	3.2	54	56.8
Federal policy should play a role in ensuring that standards for teachers are not lowered when states and districts face teacher shortages.	2	2.1	52	54.7
Federal policy should promote (and support and/or fund as necessary and appropriate) a teacher lead process for developing teacher quality standards and accountability and evaluations systems.	1	1	52	54.2
Federal policy should promote (and support and/or fund as necessary and appropriate) investment in the creation of teacher career continuums (an array of career options for the teaching profession).	3	3.2	51	53.7
Federal policy should promote (and support and/or fund as necessary and appropriate) pay differentials (different levels of pay) for teachers in relation to credentials, such as an MA and a PHD.	2	2.1	45	47.4
Federal policy should ensure the equal distribution of accomplished teachers to all students no matter what school they attend.	5	5.3	41	43.6
Federal policy should promote (and support and/or fund as necessary and appropriate) pay differentials (different levels of pay) for teachers based on National Board Teacher Certification.	7	7.4	40	42.1
Federal policy should promote (and support and/or fund as necessary and appropriate) in-school governance structures that distribute leadership across all staff levels.	4	4.3	39	41.5
Federal policy should develop targeted initiatives to diversify the teaching workforce.	7	7.4	34	36.2
Federal policy should promote (and support and/or fund as necessary and appropriate) pay differentials (different levels of pay) for teachers dependent upon the role of the teacher, e.g. teacher leadership.	5	5.3	33	34.7
Federal policy should promote (and support and/or fund as necessary and appropriate) pay differentials (different levels of pay) for teachers in relation to years of experience teaching.	2	2.1	31	32.6
Federal policy should promote (and support and/or fund as necessary and appropriate) pay differentials (different levels of pay) for teachers based on the teacher's placement, e.g. in a high need school or a high need field.	3	3.2	29	30.9
Federal policy should require measures of "inputs" (e.g. finances, resources) along with "outcomes" (e.g. student performance on standardized tests, graduation rates) in evaluating school performance .	9	9.7	25	26.9

Federal policy should promote (and support and/or fund as necessary and appropriate) an “opt out” provision for parents in relation to participating in required standardized achievement tests.	13	13.8	25	26.6
Federal policy should promote (and support and/or fund as necessary and appropriate) state adoption of the common core standards and related assessments.	15	16.1	14	15.1
Federal policy should promote (and support and/or fund as necessary and appropriate) pay differentials (different levels of pay) for teachers dependent upon teacher evaluations.	24	25.5	7	7.4
Federal policy should support teacher evaluation systems that rely significantly on the results of student standardized test scores.	78	81.3	1	1

PROFESSIONALIZATION

In your view, what are the most damaging federal policies in relation to the professionalization of teaching?

	N	%
Utilization of standardized student K-12 test scores for teacher evaluations	75	69.4
Authorizing teachers who are still learning how to be teachers as “highly qualified” teachers of record (the teacher with the legal responsibility for students in a classroom)	13	12.0
Promotion of alternative routes to teaching	12	11.1

Please rate the following federal education policy based on their likely or demonstrated effectiveness in increasing professionalization of teaching.

	Very Ineffective		Very Effective	
	N	%	N	%
Support individualized professional development that aligns with teachers' needs	2	2.2	68	73.1
Support the profession in taking primary responsibility for setting and enforcing standards for the profession	4	3.9	43	41.7
Invest in the development of teacher career continuums (an array of career options for the teaching profession)	3	2.9	35	34.0
Support pay differentials (different levels of pay) for teachers with different roles and evaluation outcomes	11	10.7	23	22.3
Support states in developing tiered licensure systems	4	3.8	14	13.5
Invest in more alternate routes into teaching	17	16.3	10	9.6
Support a national entry exam into teaching	17	16.2	5	4.8
Require teacher evaluation with K-12 student test results as a significant part of the evaluation	62	60.2	1	1.0

RECRUITMENT

Please rate these Federal government policies based on their effectiveness to enhance teacher recruitment.

	Very ineffective		Very effective	
	N	%	N	%
Expand partnerships between higher education and K12	3	3.1	56	57.7
Loan forgiveness	3	3.1	55	56.7
“Grow your own” (Initiatives support paraprofessionals, parents, and community members in low-income communities to become highly effective teachers through innovative partnerships of community organizations, higher education institutions, and school districts)	1	1	44	45.4

Invest in early career initiatives	0	0	38	40.4
Outreach strategies to minority groups	1	1.1	27	28.7
Scholarships for recruiting minorities into teaching	1	1	25	25.8
Matching local workforce needs to teacher recruitment and preparation	0	0	23	24.5

RETENTION

Please rank the following policies that the federal government could support based on their likely or demonstrated effectiveness in increasing retention of new teachers.

	Very unimportant		Very important	
	N	%	N	%
Stronger induction (systemic set of supports for new teachers) for new teachers	1	0.9	68	64.2
Opportunities for peer collaboration	2	1.9	61	57.5
Stronger clinical preparation for teachers	1	1	57	55.9
Development of career continuums (an array of career options for the teaching profession)	5	4.7	39	36.8
Stronger selection of teacher candidates	3	2.9	36	35
Differential pay (different levels of pay)	7	6.7	27	25.7
More alternative routes into teaching	11	10.4	16	15.1

What could federal policy do to keep mid-career teachers in the profession?

	Very ineffective		Very effective	
	N	%	N	%
Support for shared leadership models, such as teacher developed and administered schools	1	1	61	59.8
Support for differentiated roles for experienced teachers with differential pay	2	2.2	45	49.5
Support for partnerships with higher education where accomplished teachers and higher education faculty could merge/exchange roles	3	2.9	60	47.6
Support for differentiated roles for experienced teachers with non-financial incentives such as reduced teaching load	4	3.8	42	40.4
Support for sabbaticals such as those available in higher education	4	3.8	41	39
Support for research opportunities with scientists	3	3.1	24	24.5

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Please rate the following federal government policies based on their likely or demonstrated effectiveness in incentivizing excellent professional development for teachers.

	Very ineffective		Very effective	
	N	%	N	%
Having access to a highly supportive principal	5	5	73	73
Observing modeling of effective teaching practices	8	8.2	58	59.2
Having access to a mentor	5	5	57	57
Having common planning time with other teachers	8	8	55	55
Serving in a teacher leader position	7	7.3	52	54.2
Participating in teacher-delivered professional development	6	6	53	53
Participating in teacher leadership opportunities	5	5	52	52

Taking courses taught by professors with recent, relevant PK–12 teaching experience	5	5	50	50
Participating in collaborative activities with colleagues	7	7.1	45	45.5
Team teaching with a teacher leader	7	7.1	45	45.5
Receiving actionable feedback through formal and informal evaluations	6	6.1	43	43.4
Participating in external professional development	5	5.1	37	37.8
Participation in professional learning communities	8	8	37	37
Participating in professional conferences	7	7.1	33	33.3
Taking content-specific coursework in certification area	5	5.1	32	32.3
Developing of individualized professional growth plan	6	6.3	29	30.2
Taking pedagogy-related coursework	6	6.1	29	29.3
Taking continued coursework on a master's degree	5	5	28	28
Belonging to a professional organization	7	7	25	25
Participating in data analysis teams	11	11.2	23	23.5
Participating in district/school led professional development	9	9	18	18

RESEARCH

Please rate the following federal funds for research in education based on their importance.

	Very unimportant		Very important	
	N	%	N	%
Teacher preparation	1	1	85	83.3
Comparative analysis of the effectiveness of instructional strategies	1	1	65	64.6
Brain research	3	2.9	59	57.3
Effective instructional practice for students with disabilities	1	1	54	53.5
Effective instructional practice for English learners	1	1	52	51
Teacher evaluation strategies	2	2	38	38
Impact of specific policy mandates on student outcomes	6	5.8	29	28.2