

NEWS RELEASE -

Contact:

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Ron Cowell, (717) 260-
9900

EPLC Releases Recommendations for Improving State Policy Relating to Teachers

(Harrisburg) -- The Harrisburg-based Education Policy and Leadership Center (EPLC) today released its new report **Head of the Class: A Quality Teacher in Every Pennsylvania Classroom**. The report follows the Center's year-long review of teacher quality and supply issues and makes recommendations for how state policy can increase and support Pennsylvania's supply of qualified teachers.

The report emphasizes that quality teaching is key to student achievement and that the state must act to ensure the presence of a qualified teacher in every Pennsylvania classroom at all times. "While the overall statewide supply of quality teachers in Pennsylvania is adequate, there are areas of shortages," said Ron Cowell, President of the Center. In addition, the report cites disturbing trends in Pennsylvania that include a reduction in certificates issued, an increase in teachers leaving their districts, and an increase in the number of emergency permits issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

The Center's report reflects the work of a 27-member Study Group that met several times during the past 12 months and the discussions at a two-day conference held last September by EPLC.

Among its suggestions to Pennsylvania policymakers, EPLC recommends that the state:

- Implement a highly targeted recruitment program for districts that have significant difficulty filling teaching positions with qualified candidates;
- Strengthen efforts to increase the number of minority teachers by providing grants to support magnet schools for future teachers in urban districts and expanding the Governor's School for Teaching to one or more urban sites;
- Provide funding to extend teacher induction programs to two years;
- And bolster professional development by using teacher evaluations to target professional development rather than the current teacher testing program, strategically using the online professional development courses offered by the Department of Education, and supporting certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

EPLC makes additional recommendations in four areas - Promoting and Professionalizing Teaching in Pennsylvania; Enhancing the Preparation of Future Teachers and Monitoring

Recent Reforms; Addressing Specific Staffing Problems; and Improving the Collection, Integration and Utilization of Data - that are designed to improve state policies surrounding teacher preparation, certification, hiring, induction, mentoring, and professional development. The complete report is available at www.eplc.org/teacherquality.html