

Center for American Progress



SPECIAL PRESENTATION:

**“CAN WE IMPROVE TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS BY
MEASURING PERFORMANCE ON THE JOB?”**

MODERATOR:

**CYNTHIA G. BROWN, DIRECTOR OF
EDUCATION POLICY, CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS**

FEATURING:

**JOAN BARATZ-SNOWDEN,
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION ISSUES, AFT TEACHERS DIVISION
OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS**

**TOM BLANFORD, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, TEACHER QUALITY
DEPARTMENT, NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**

**ROBERT GORDON, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR ECONOMIC
POLICY, CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS**

**JASON KAMRAS, 2005 TEACHER OF THE YEAR AND 7TH AND
8TH GRADE MATH TEACHER, JOHN PHILIP SOUSA MIDDLE
SCHOOL**

**AMY WILKINS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
EDUCATION REFORM NOW**

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MS. CYNTHIA G. BROWN: – My name is Cindy Brown and I am the Director of Education Policy here at the Center for American Progress and we are so pleased that you have joined us today for our discussion of whether we can improve teachers' effectiveness by measuring the performance on the job. We have a wonderful group of experts and thoughtful people to discuss this topic this morning. I know Michael already told you to turn off your cell phones, but I just wanted to make sure that you've done that, and we'll move on.

I don't need to tell you all of you that teachers matter most in fostering student learning; research has made that clear. Indeed, it has demonstrated that having a high quality teacher throughout elementary school can almost and sometimes does eliminate the disadvantage of coming from a disadvantaged background, so good teachers make good schools. The challenge is how to get more good – really great teachers into our public schools. We must have innovative thinking about this if we are going to close the two achievement gaps that our country is facing simultaneously: one here at home and the other internationally.

There are efforts underway to closely examine how we compensate teachers and to recommend promising changes. Here at the Center for American Progress, we have initiated a two-year project to study research and experience with pay for performance and incentive pay, and to promote workable improvements in teacher pay systems. You will here more from us in coming months about this.

Today however, we are going to look at how we credential teachers along with an important pay consequence and consider a remarkable new paper coauthored by Robert Gordon, Senior Vice President for Economic Policy and my colleague here at the Center. The other coauthors of the paper, entitled "Identifying Effective Teachers Using Performance on the Job" are Professor Thomas Kane of Harvard University and Professor Douglas Staiger of Dartmouth University. This paper was prepared for the new Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institute.

We are going to begin with Robert Gordon who will take about ten minutes to describe these authors' proposal and its rationale. Then we will turn to this diverse group of panelists to give their views, first in about five minutes each, about whether this can work or how to improve it or even to make an alternative proposal. After that I will moderate a discussion among them, where they can go back and forth over these issues. Then after that we'll open up the session to an exchange with you, the audience.

I will now introduce the panel. We are going to speak in the order I introduce them. Tom just accused me of being a bit sexist in how I did this, but be that as it may, their bios are in your packets. I've already noted Robert Gordon, the Senior Vice President here at the Center. He will be followed by Joan Baratz-Snowden, the Director

of Educational Issues in the AFT Teachers Division of the American Federation of Teachers. She will be followed by Amy Wilkins, Executive Director of Education Reform Now; and then by Tom Blanford, Associate Director of the National Education Association's Teacher Quality Department; and finally by Jason Kamras, the 2005 National Teacher of the Year. When Jason is not doing his teacher-of-the-year shtick, he teaches seventh and eight grade math at John Phillips Souza Middle School here in the District of Columbia.

So Robert?

MR. ROBERT GORDON: Thank you, Cindy, and thank you all for coming. As Cindy said, this is a paper co-written with Tom Kane and Doug Staiger. They probably have a better grip on some of the data than I do, but I am looking forward to talking about it and really looking forward to being here with this great group of folks.

Someone said to me last week when I presented this at Brookings, "Why did you write about teachers? You know, why didn't you write about NCLB, or technology or charter schools or whatever?" And what I said was, "Well, because teachers matter the most," and that's reflected in data which Cindy mentioned and which we can talk about. It's also the experience we all have had in our own lives about teaching and how we learned. And it's one of the reasons that I, and I think all of us, so much admire people like the folks here who dedicate their lives to teaching and the teaching profession.

So the paper really offers a pretty simple idea. Right now, we do a lot of screening of teachers on the front end, but very little screening once teachers are in the classroom. So, for example, under No Child Left Behind teachers are required to be highly qualified, which includes certification, which generally means having an education degree of some kind. So we set a certification bar that's quite high. Once teachers are in the classroom, we make relatively few distinctions. So, for example, we grant tenure as a matter of course and in any cohort of teachers we generally pay the same with exceptions based on levels of education.

The basic idea in this paper is that in important ways that system is backward: that we should be making fewer distinctions on the front end and then more distinctions once teacher are in the classroom based on their performance. So why do we say that? I'm going to talk a little bit about the data in the paper from looking at students in Los Angeles. We looked at three grades of students over four years. And – I'm not a PowerPoint guy. How do I do this? Okay. So we looked at three grades over four years and the first question we asked was did certification status matter for student achievement? And what you can see in this chart is – this is – the three bars represents traditionally certified, alternatively certified, and uncertified teachers. We are looking at how much teachers changed –

MR. : Robert.

MR. GORDON: Oh, it's on here and it's not up there? Thank you for stopping me. Thanks.

So this is the distribution of teachers in terms of impact on student achievement. If you are at zero, that means you have the average impact on student achievement and it's a normal distribution, so the largest number of teachers have an average impact. And then to the right it means you had an above average impact; to the left it means you had a below average impact on student achievement.

And so what you see is that these three charts are – the three lines are basically the same, which basically means that certification status had no statistically significant impact on student achievement. Just an interesting wrinkle: you will see that the traditionally certified line bulges out a little bit compared to the other two. That's not – wasn't statistically significant. There is other research by Linda Darling-Hammond, there is a new paper by Dan Goldhaber that looks not at certification exactly, but looks at the effective passage of teacher licensure exams. And what they find is a statistically significant, but very small, impact. It would be about a one percentile point on this chart – what they find. And so zero – it's a small impact on certification.

The next question we asked is, well, do you get a difference if you look the way teachers performed in the past and you group them and you try to predict how they are going to perform in the future? So we did an experiment where we looked at teachers over two years and grouped them into quartiles based on student achievement. So we said we would have a top quartile of teachers whose students had the greatest growth in achievement in their first two years down to a bottom quartile of teachers whose students had the least growth in achievement.

And then what we did is we watched those teachers and their students in the third year and we asked, well, you had those top teachers in the first two years. What happened to them in the third year? What happened to their kids? Likewise down to the bottom quartile.

And this is a very different looking chart. You see a big gap in achievement. What you find is in the furthest right chart you see a gain of about five percentile points. That's the top quartile. Furthest left, a loss of nearly five percentile points. So it's a swing of about ten percentile points. That's a really big swing, that's like twice the gain that you see from class size reduction. It's about one-third of the black-white test gap, which means that if you were to duplicate – if you could duplicate a gain of this magnitude over three years you would actually close that gap.

And again this research is consistent with research that others have done in New York, Chicago, Tennessee, and other places, so the finding is that it's hard to predict based on certification status who the good teachers will be. It's much easier – not perfect, but it's easier to predict once you see teachers in the classroom, and that's the basis for our policy recommendations, which I will get into now.

Three recommendations: one about certification, one about tenure, and one about pay. On certification, we recommend creating a path into teaching based on performance, not certification status; not just because certification doesn't have much of an impact on achievement, but also because we have a huge teaching shortage and we think that certification requirements are scaring off and keeping out people who would otherwise go into teaching. The age of the average teacher rose from – in 1976, the average teacher was 33 years old. In 2001, the average teacher was 46 years old. And so our projections are that just to keep class size where it is today we would have to increase the rate of hiring of teachers by 35 percent, so we've got to bring in a lot of new teachers.

There is evidence that there are good people who aren't teaching because of certification requirements. Our same data – Los Angeles did something interesting: because they were reducing class size, they had to triple their hiring very quickly so they had to hire lots and lots of uncertified teachers. And what we found is that the quality of the average teacher didn't go down, which means that lots of those folks who were coming in who were not certified were quite, quite good. Lots of them were lousy, no question, but lots of them were quite, quite good. And then of course we have programs like Teach for America that have lots and lots of applicants for every slot.

So our proposal is that traditional certification continue to be a route in, but then in addition there be a route where you could come in, you get hired – we would continue to require a B.A. and observe the subject matter requirements in NCLB, but that you could come in without certification and then be deemed highly qualified if your performance was above average after two years. The principle is basically that if you are a good teacher, you should be able to continue teaching whether you are certified or not. So that is the first proposal.

The second proposal is about practices for granting tenure. Right now – and there is a table about this in the paper I should have put on a PowerPoint – fewer than 2 percent of new teachers report that they were denied tenure or involuntarily transferred in their first three years teaching. I've seen some questions raised – well, this is self-reporting; who wants to report that they got fired essentially? We did a sort of anecdotal sweep of the 10 biggest school districts sort of asking the same question. It seems to be that the findings are consistent. There is some research by Mike Ward in North Carolina about the number of new teachers denied tenure, so there seems to be pretty broad evidence that very, very few teachers are denied tenure.

The tenure decision is a weighty decision. It means that a teacher can spend decades teaching classes of children and having a huge impact on children. What we find is that if schools did not tenure the bottom quarter of their teachers, and if those teachers weren't teaching and if novices were coming in instead, you could actually see a substantial increase in achievement. If the gains were cumulative, you would see an increase of about fourteen percentile points over a student's career in school. That would be, based on sort of traditional estimates, worth about \$100,000 to a child in earnings over his or her lifetime, so there's a potential for a big impact for denying tenure just to

that bottom quartile of teachers. Three quarters would continue to get it; one quarter wouldn't.

Procedural protections for teachers are important. Teachers should get notice of how they are doing early on. They should have opportunities to get training, additional professional development. But our proposal is that schools set a default rule, which could be subject to some exceptions, but a default rule that teachers in that bottom quartile not get tenure. Superintendents could override. There will be cases where someone says, you know, "This teacher is in the bottom quartile, but they should get tenure." Superintendents should be able to deal with that, but we say that there should be burdens to do that, notice to get special permission, to give notice to the community. So that is our second proposal.

Our last proposal is about pay. I think – common knowledge sort of – obviously, poor children are in greatest need of high-quality teachers by a large number of measures, including the ones we use in our paper. Students in poor school districts are the least likely to get high quality teachers. What we say is that there ought to be incentives for high quality teachers to go into the poorest school districts. Often, incentive pay schemes are proposed with out a quality screen. We say there ought to be because you really do want to be bringing in the best teachers that you can. Bonuses would need to be large to have the effect. We talk about \$15,000; you could talk about different amounts. We talk about going into schools that have over 75 percent of kids living in poverty, which is about 20 percent of kids are in these schools. You could set the thresholds differently.

And we hope that this would have two effects: one is to change the distribution of teachers, and the other potentially is to bring new people into the classroom based on the possibility of earning additional pay and recognition.

How is it all going to work? It is easy to talk about all this in theory, and then there is the question of how are you going to do all these evaluations that you are talking about? Different things are going on in different places in the country. We looked at those and drew out some basic principles. The first is that test scores – where you've got them, they should count. They should count for a significant portion; they shouldn't count for everything. We don't think that there are legitimate concerns about sort of NCLB and emphasis on specific tests overriding everything else in education, so we wouldn't want test scores to count for everything, but obviously they are an objective measure. And it might be very important in this context to do lots of things to improve the quality of tests. That's sort of a separate conversation that we could have.

Second, you could use lots of other measures: principal evaluations. There is new research showing that at least at the top and bottom of the distribution, principal evaluations tend to be consistent to the results of test scores. You could use parental evaluations; you could use things like national board certification. And as you do this there is a question about what are you trying to achieve and what's realistic? It is true that there will be mistakes. I think that that is a reality here that we have to recognize,

just as there are mistakes that are made in the private sector all the time about which individuals get bonus pay, which don't; which get discharged and which don't.

And so I think there are two questions that you need to ask about the overall system. One is, will it yield an improvement in student achievement? I think that our evidence says that if you can do this accurately enough – and we have every reason to think you can – that it would. The other is, will it be legitimate? Will it be viewed as legitimate in the eyes of teachers and in the eyes of parents and students? That is going to be hard. You are going to have teachers, principals, communities involved in designing these systems, but we think there is every reason to think you could do this carefully and in a way that would get you a great deal of accuracy, certainly much more than your average boss who's making a decision because that's who he or she feels is able to achieve.

So those are the basic proposals. We propose a phase-in. If you did it everywhere, it would cost about \$3 billion a year. Costs could be a lot. There are all kinds of assumptions there. Costs could be higher. I guess I would just close with the thought that we have tried a lot of things to improve the quality of education in America and as with anything in the world you sort of get a law of diminishing returns at some point.

This notion of using data about teacher performance – and I should say that you could use the data for lots of other things that I haven't talked about. You could use – making the data available to teachers to help them improve their performance, to identify who is good, identify people to be mentors, identify teachers who need additional help to get remediation, so there is a million uses for this, but the notion that by using these data we could really make a difference – it is a new strategy and we actually think that there is an opportunity to achieve real gains for kids, so I will leave it there.

MS. BROWN: Thanks, Robert.

Joan?

MS. JOAN BARATZ-SNOWDEN: This is a provocative paper that's heavy on theory, selective on research, and light on knowledge of how school systems operate and how teachers are evaluated and what makes for an effective teacher. There is much in this paper that I agree with. For example, the standards for teacher certification are very low. We need a better system of certification and training. The current system is inadequate in the manner in which tenure is granted. The AFT has been saying that for a very, very long time. Your system doesn't – my objection to your system doesn't stop getting a better system for granting tenure. We need much better systems for teacher evaluation. Student achievement should be part of an effective teacher evaluation system. And finally there should be significant financial incentives to attract excellent teachers to high poverty, low performing schools. I agree with all of that, but identifying a problem is not the same thing as offering a viable solution, and there is much in this paper with which I have serious disagreement.

Fixing tenure. The paper says, good, we're going to have a system that would – we create where schools would no longer be able to offer tenure to new teachers with poor ratings. The fact of the matter is, schools do not offer tenure right now to teachers with poor ratings. The problem is not that principals grant tenure to poorly rated teachers; the problem is that principals rarely rate teachers, tenured or not, unsatisfactorily. Indeed, our research shows that the union-initiated, peer evaluation systems for new teachers result in more new teachers being denied tenure than the traditional system of leaving the principal in charge of making such judgments.

The standard for tenure proposed by the author relies heavily on value added and principal judgment, especially for the vast majority of teachers for whom test data is not immediately available. This is untenable. Principal behavior is a part of the problem, not a part of the solution. The paper cited about principals' ability to evaluate teachers shows on a scale of one to ten, when ten is the highest, principals overwhelmingly – the mean evaluation is 8.1, and less than 10 percent of teachers get rated by principals lower than six.

In addition, when the principals were – looked at their ratings for excellent reading teachers as compared to the value added data, there was a 52 percent agreement. Well, from my reading of that, that sounds like chance.

There is plenty of research to indicate that principals are not good judges of effective teaching practice and often care little about it. The authors' own evidence that principals recommend tenure for virtually all the teachers that pass through the schools should be troubling, as should the literature on past failed efforts at merit pay which were largely based on principal decision-making.

Now, do we need a better evaluation system? Yes. The authors, however, are extremely naïve or silent when it comes to discussing how alternative evaluation systems might work. What research do they have suggesting that parents or principals actually identify, quote, “the most effective teachers” regardless of how effective is defined? Parents believe their kids have good teachers when their kids are happy and when they come to complain about Mrs. Jones, they are unlikely to be mollified by a principal's mumbo jumbo regarding Mrs. Jones's high value added ratings.

Developing an alternative system including student performance is an important thing to do. In fact, we like the (Milkin?) Teacher Advancement Program; TAP as it's called. Their widely touted performance pay system has a strong teacher evaluation system that along with value added includes a component for assessing teachers' instructional practices. This is an expensive system, one that involves not only the cost of training the principals and teacher evaluators – each teacher is evaluated six times – but also the costs of educating the teachers about the standards upon which they are to be assessed and the professional development to help them reach those standards. Such costs are not included in this paper. The pay-for-performance of TAP is not merely a pay-for-performance, but a school improvement plan.

Speaking of numbers, I know you said all that stuff about 44 percent or 14 percent, depending on whether or not students get the best teachers consistently. Of course, unlike in Lake Wobegon, it's impossible for all the students to get the top quartile of teachers. But nonetheless, (they'd?) make some progress. However, from my perspective this assumes that the plan won't blow the lid off of the system and create a revolving door policy when the numbers of individuals – quote, unquote – “trying teaching” and leaving within three years due to attrition and poor performance of the constantly – let me say this: the revolving door comes from the fact that the numbers of individuals trying teaching and leaving within three years due to attrition and poor performance constantly expands, thus driving the performance of the top quartile down and really doing serious damage within the bottom quartile. It seems a crapshoot to me as to which scenario – Robert's or mine – is likely to pay off.

Their plan also assumes that the money for the bonuses will be in addition to the money currently available to keep teachers in their humble straits that they currently enjoy. If, on the other hand, the bonuses are taken out of the current salary scale, further reducing the average teacher's salary competitiveness, teachers will leave in droves to try other occupations where they can feed their family and send their kids to school.

Using value added I think is an interesting and promising methodology; however, I do not think that it is currently ready for primetime in terms of high-stakes decision-making, and that's not my personal opinion. Rand reports said, quote, “The research base is currently insufficient for us to recommend the use of value added methodology for high-stakes decisions.” And even Tom Kane, in a paper he distributed just last month – I don't know if you got it – mentioned, quote, “value added measures have drawbacks such as their limited scopes and their potential malleability.” Nonetheless, he doesn't hesitate to use it for high-stakes decisions, but we don't have to worry: he is doing more research.

If the authors' assertion said it's not necessary to control for the usual demographics, et cetera, are right statistically, there is other research that questions that. But even if they are right, it gives the model virtually no credibility in the eyes of teachers. By the way, where does the 25 percentile come from? Why did we cut off the top 25 and the bottom 25? Why not the top 10 and the bottom 10? Why not the top 30 and the bottom 30?

Sanders, the father of value added applications, found only the top and bottom quintiles were stable. It seems to me that this current proposal leaves a lot of room for false positives and false negatives, not a comforting thought to someone whose livelihood will depend on the system and for children who may not always benefit from it.

On the strength of their Los Angeles analysis, the authors call for no more certification, even though there is a looming shortage, which they think this broad definition will make a greater eligibility, which is true because everybody is going to be eligible. But not only does this fly in the face of efforts to professionalize teaching, it undermines the current NCLB definition of highly qualified and officially puts us back to

the good old days when anyone could come in and sink or swim with little or no help from the system.

I fail to see how getting rid of a quarter of the teachers at the end of three years – remember, 35 percent leave already in three years – will help the shortage problem. Instead, it is likely to create even more churning and more instability. But happily it will solve the principal's main concern: it can assure that they will always have someone in the classroom they can call teacher and they don't have to worry about high percentages of noncertified teachers or underqualified teachers in hard to staff schools since all new bodies are by definition equal. I wonder how Ed Trust will feel about that. Maybe you'll give me a hint.

But the authors' claim that opening the system to any recent college graduate would likely give us many, many more eligibles. I don't think that's the case. We already have the system open to everybody and the data from a few boutique programs doesn't give me a reason to believe it will really burst open the system. The "you all come" has been tried and it has been found wanting.

Now, I do believe that we should offer bonuses to teachers who would be teaching in hard-to-staff schools; and in fact in making the argument for that, Gordon, et al., say, quote, "If teacher salaries are based solely on educational attainment and teaching experience, there is no way to compensate teachers" – I emphasize – "for the additional challenges of the job." I agree. Therefore, I don't understand why they only want to give additional compensation to the, quote, unquote, "effective teachers." I might understand if they wish to give more compensation to such teachers in hard-to-staff schools, but why shouldn't the others be compensated as well for their willingness to take on the tough jobs.

By the way, the issue of this money – I don't understand how you cost things out, but I am worried when I hear it's going to cost billions more dollars to do this. I wish we had billions more and I think that we should have billions more, but if we look at the past experience with pay-for-performance, we see it's failed because districts can't afford too much excellence and they're reluctant to pay it. They either capped the excellence or created trivial dollars for incentives. I want to really know – I hope you have a reason to believe why this one is going to be different.

But maybe it won't be a problem because maybe you won't get the teachers coming. We know that in the chancellor's district – I know you're going to New York – they had a very serious union district program where they looked for the most skilled teachers to come in and get a \$15,000 bonus to teach in hard to staff schools, and they didn't come. They didn't get enough teachers. Why? Because money is necessary, but it is insufficient and they couldn't attract more veteran, excellent teachers until they put in all the supports, got the stronger principals, and the like. But of course this program was very successful but when Chancellor Klein came in, he eliminated it because it wasn't his idea and so he didn't spend the money there.

Recommending this radical plan to be implemented by the feds by 2009, three years from now, and which makes passing mention of the need to overcome obstacles such as how to treat schools with highly mobile populations, teachers who don't have standardized test scores from their students, what to do about tests that have flaws and ceilings and are in other ways not aligned to standards to be able to show growth in first place from year to year – I believe that is irresponsible.

Incentives are nice, but not sufficient. Instead, I would suggest that we really need to get serious about teacher professionalism. As the AFT has recommended, we need to be selective about who is accepted into teacher preparation. We have to close weak departments of education. We have to learn from effective programs, alternative and traditional, about what prospective teachers must know and be able to do before they enter the classroom. We need rigorous standards for licensure, called certification here. We need to create strong peer evaluations, supplemented by value added measures. As these become more finely grained and reliable, we need to develop new opportunities for apprentice models and stronger use of board certified teachers in a differentiated system of staffing that recognizes teacher expertise and deploys it more effectively to build capacity in low performing schools while helping to transform their professional culture and climate. Contrary to popular belief, teacher professionalism hasn't failed; rather it hasn't been tried yet.

MS. BROWN: Great, thanks.

Amy?

MS. AMY WILKINS: Joan, I'll give you a hint about what I think the Ed Trust thinks about this paper. We love it. I love it. I think it is good, powerful, and strong. And I was really pleased, Joan, to hear your comments about the need for ed school reform. It was interesting to hear Robert say that there are very high hurdles to be jumped to get into the teaching profession, and you say that they are too low. What is clear is that the ways into the teaching profession now are terribly broken and are not giving any of us what we want.

That said, I think that Robert's paper suggests a powerful potential new way to create the porousness (sic) that we need in the teaching profession, porousness that will attract new people into the teaching profession while protecting and hopefully elevating the effectiveness of teachers. I think that what – I just need to do this really quickly because I think the discussion here is the important thing and I think that we are running behind time. As you think about Robert's paper, I think an important thing to think about is where we are now. It is clear that if we are going to raise the achievement of our students, we have to raise the effectiveness of teachers. The research is – couldn't be clearer. And if we are going to ever, ever, ever going to close the achievement gap between low-income kids and more affluent kids and white kids and kids of color, we have to redistribute teachers so that low-income kids and kids of color get at least their fair share of effective teachers.

I want to especially draw your attention to Robert's chart that I guess was up before. You know, ineffective teachers are not neutral. There is learning loss of about – according to Robert, of about five points a year. Those kids are being damaged by ineffective teaching. It is not that ineffective teaching isn't growing them; ineffective teaching is pushing them further and further behind. So if we are ever going to close the achievement gap we, have to stop tinkering around the edges of this and try bold and innovative new approaches – some of which I think are embodied in Robert's paper – to begin to attract highly effective teachers into the classrooms that serve low-income and minority kids.

If I have any worry about this paper, it may be its emphasis on attracting highly effective teachers to high poverty schools because when you look at the data on the proxies on teacher quality, what seems clear is that minority kids – black and Latino kids may be more likely to be assigned the most ineffective teachers, and so how we address the questions of race and ethnicity is sort of not dealt with here and that's sort of my strongest concern about this paper.

I think that as you look at the paper what is terribly important is that it says once and for all that there is no right to teach our children; that just because you show up, just because you put in your two or three years before tenure, you don't have a right to do that and you have to demonstrate effectiveness. And I think that teachers hold a huge public trust and you should have to earn that public trust, and this paper makes a good stab at that earning.

I think on the piece about rewards for teachers who are willing to teach in high-poverty schools – highly effective teachers who are willing to teach in high-poverty schools, I think we have to look at differential pay in several ways. Both Robert and Joan asserted this sort of teacher shortage notion. The data I've seen doesn't suggest so much that there is an overall teacher shortage; it suggests that we have kind of a match. If you look at the number of people coming out of the ed schools and going through alternative education programs and the number of just slots that are needed in the teaching profession, we have in fact almost a match. What we have are spot shortages and spot surpluses. So what you have are too many people who want to teach elementary school, not enough people who want to teach high school; too many potential English teachers, not enough potential math and science teachers.

So as we think about how we are going to staff schools, I think that we have to stop sort of talking about this notion of an overall teacher shortage and begin to think about how we are going to attract specific kinds of teachers that we need, which suggests to me that in addition to having incentives for people willing to teach – effective people willing to teach in high-poverty schools, we also have to think about how we draw specific domain areas – subject area knowledge into those schools as well.

How are we going to reward math teachers, especially effective math teachers who go and teach in high poverty schools? And the paper doesn't really address the

subject area shortage issue or the (band?) level issue, and I think that that could be stronger.

That said – those are sort of my main concerns about the paper. That said, I think that the potential for value added to help better staff our schools to ensure that some percentage – Robert says 25, Joan says Sanders says 30 – you know, I think that you can play around with that band a little bit both at the upper end and the lower end, but a way to cut off the least effective teachers prior to giving them tenure and the way to reward the most effective teachers is terribly, terribly important.

There are a couple of other things I wanted to say about – oh, you know, Joan asserts pretty clearly that the tenure system is broken, that we need better systems to evaluate teachers, and that we need financial incentives for our best teachers. All of those things are done in this paper and done based on good, solid data. I think that we have to begin to give those things a try, as Robert suggests in his paper.

And Joan's concern about principal evaluation so far, I think the reason principal evaluations are frankly so lousy and so untrustworthy is that they don't have a tool. Principals don't have good tools right now to evaluate their teachers. This would give principals a tool to look at their teachers and to make decisions, but also continue to allow them to have discretion, so I think that when Joan says principal evaluations are bad, this is a reason that you should have a system like that offered in this paper.

The other thing that Robert glanced over I think too quickly was the other uses for the data that the system that he proposes would yield. I think it is terribly important to understand that teachers are – that the professional development we give them now tends to be one-size-fits all. You know, this is the professional development mode of the month. This is the flavor of the week. And it fails to, for the most part, attend to their specific professional needs. If you had a data system that could give us very specific data about teacher strengths and weaknesses, we could better target the professional development to the particular teacher that needed the professional development, thus improving the chances that the bottom quartile – individuals in the bottom quartile will move up.

I hear all the time from teachers who are bored to tears by the kinds of professional development that they are getting. We have all of these well intentioned mentoring programs for teachers that aren't based on much of anything. We pay our teachers by guess and by golly. If you could look at a teacher's weakness and pair her or him with a teacher that had strength in those areas, you could really see change and improve the effectiveness of teachers. So using value added data not just for tenure decisions, not just for an attempt to better distribute teachers between schools, but also to attend to the professional development needs of all teachers such that we could improve the quality of the overall workforce I think would be a huge step in the right direction.

With that, I will pass it on.

MS. BROWN: Tom?

MR. TOM BLANFORD: Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity to comment on this report. Much of my life is in here. I entered teaching as a lateral entry teacher in February with absolutely no training at the age of 32 in the city of Detroit. My induction was largely “we have a bad situation back there; don’t make it any worse.” I also spent a lot of time over the subsequent 10 or 12 years with student teachers, with working on licensing issues, so a lot of this resonates with my personal experience.

So that being said, I’m pleased to have followed Joan. You’ll be pleased, too, because it takes about 10 minutes off of what I was going to say. Many of the points that Joan raised are points that we would also agree with. I want to make some contextual points first from the National Education Association. I’m not going to spend a lot of time on the specifics of this research study. You know, we could spend a lot of time on sort of dueling research papers, and I’m not going to do that because we are not particularly enamored of the state licensing system as it currently exists and so we would concede the point that the licensing system is not currently an extremely effective filter for determining who is going to be a high quality teacher and who is not, and I’ll come back to that point a little bit later.

I want to make a few contextual remarks before talking about the specifics. The first contextual remark is that our members care deeply about quality – about the quality of themselves first of all. Being an ineffective teacher is a truly miserable job and being an effective teacher is a great job, so quality issues are very much at the center of what we talk about. Secondly, our members care very much about the quality of their colleagues. Try to be an effective third grade teacher when the second grade teacher isn’t doing the job, or try to be an effective algebra II teacher when the kids don’t know algebra I walking in the door. So our members care very much about quality and are very interested in any proposals that purport to speak to improving the quality of their own practice and also of the profession in general.

Third, though, our members do understand that quality is multidimensional. It’s not solely about the relationship of an individual teacher to an individual class of kids. It’s not just about how much content you know, it’s also about what you know about structuring and shaping that content, about working with diverse student populations, about adjusting strategies based on data to help kids learn. It’s also about the art teacher and the theater teacher and the physical education teacher, who all contribute to the general environment and community that is schools and that is effective schools, and so to try to distill that into one teacher and one set of test scores is a very difficult enterprise.

I talked to a parent a couple of days ago who was explaining about how her daughter is an extremely effective math student. She loves math. She’s great in it. She scores off the charts. But her drama teacher noticed she was having some processing problems in English language arts issues and referred her to the English teacher and they discovered some disability issues with the reading and they are beginning to address those. But you know what? If we adopt this test rating system, the math teacher is going

to look great and the English teacher is not going to look so good. So are we going to propose to eliminate the English teacher because the kid is skilled in math?

So that's the kind of conversation that our members would have. That's the kind of thing that they talk about. They would also tell you that they are increasingly concerned about the amount of time and energy that goes into testing. If you look at where we currently are, we have a relatively small proportion of our teachers that you could currently even begin to make a value-added assessment of. Basically, it's upper elementary teachers in math, and English language arts teachers in middle schools. Beyond that, there's not sufficient test data to establish scores on anybody else. So in order to move forward with this proposal, what we'd have to do is implement a massive, massive testing program.

When you go into our classrooms now – I was in Montgomery County Public Schools last week. They said you can't come in March, because March is testing month. March is testing month. They're giving state tests. They're giving local district tests. They're giving their own tests to get student assessments and these are just in the tested subjects. When you give them math tests, kids from all over the school leave their class in order to go take the math tests.

In other subjects where there's not a sequence, in order to establish a value-added credibility you're going to have to do pretest and posttest, so that's another whole set of testing that needs to go on. At what point does measuring kids' progress overwhelm our teachers' ability for – to test kids to learn? All right, so that's another concern that they would have.

Because this is coming from the Hamilton project, I can throw in some Alexander Hamilton quotations. "Men often oppose a thing merely because they have no agency and planning in it or because it may have been planned by those whom they dislike." What we can take – reasonably could take from that is we cannot do this without the active involvement of teachers at every level, and the report acknowledges this, although we're at this point in the proposal without significant involvement of the AFT or the NEA or teachers across the board. So that would be a warning flag I would put out. If this is another proposal that comes at teachers that people who know better than they do are going to figure out how to assess them, what we're going to have is massive rebellion. I mean, they're already – already teachers are so discouraged and so difficult to continue on in their day-to-day life just by the things that are put upon them, so we need to work together to move forward any proposal to improve the quality of the teaching profession, and we have some ideas.

MS. BROWN: Thanks a lot. Oops, I'm sorry. Go on.

MR. BLANFORD: Not quite.

MS. BROWN: That's all right. Go on, please.

MR. BLANFORD: All right. A few more points. One is a point that I want to emphasize that Joan made. Right now, our churn is about 40 percent in some districts in difficult places. These are the teachers that are leaving after five years. We're going to propose to add 25 percent more. That might be the same 40 percent. It might be an additional 40 percent. Those are – an additional 25 percent. Those of you who have been in schools and classrooms understand what happens when half of the teachers are turning over year after year after year. It destroys mentoring. It destroys any coherence. It destroys any teamwork. It destroys building the community that we need for our schools to be effective. Why the problem is getting rid of additional teachers is hard for us to grasp.

Second issue I wanted to raise about the specific recommendation, how many of you in here want to volunteer your kids to be subject to this experiment? We're going to throw open the doors. We're going to let people teach if they have a bachelor's degree. Some of them will be good. Twenty-five percent of them will be dismissed after two years. What about if it's your child that is trying to learn reading from some of those teachers for those two-years' period? Does that child get to go back and take second and third grade over again because their teacher really wanted to be a real estate salesperson and instead they thought they'd teach for a couple of years waiting for the job market to open up? Are you willing to volunteer your children? It's a question of other people's children as well. Who's going to get these teachers that aren't licensed, who aren't prepared, who aren't certified as having a high-quality experience in preparation? Who's going to get these children? Who's going to get these teachers? We know who's going to get them.

All right, so a couple of proposals. We thought a lot about this. We talk about this because our people care about quality. Our goal is to get and keep quality teachers. It's not mystical who can teach. It's not genetic who can teach. We can figure out who is going to be a good teacher in the classroom. We may not have done it yet. (End tests?) started on this road about 20 years ago. But rather than trying to evaluate people on the job so we can fire the ones that are not effective, let's put a lot of time and effort into figuring out what the filter is. Let's figure out what an effective screen would be. We can do this. We can do this together. We can figure out an effective licensing system.

If your furnace filter is defective, what do you do? Do you throw out the filter and vacuum frequently? No, you get a better filter. So that's what we're proposing. Let's get a better filter for who's going to enter into the teaching profession. We collectively can do that.

Secondly, instead of focusing all this time and energy on new sorting mechanisms to, quote, "get rid of people," let's focus the time and energy on effective induction. Let's focus on what we need to do in those first three years. It's not genetic. It's not somebody who's going to be bad and they will always be bad or somebody's going to be great, then they'll always be great. It's knowledge and skills that people can learn, so let's figure out how to help them learn it, and make sure that every district does that.

Finally, let's look at creative models of staffing. We can do – we can use our skilled teachers in better ways than we currently are. In conclusion, and I'm going to use that Alexander Hamilton again, he says, "When the sword is once drawn, the passions of men observe no bounds of moderation." Let's not draw our swords on this. We have the same goal. We want to improve the quality of teaching in our schools for all kids, so let's not draw swords and go to war over alternative proposals. Let's sit down and work together to figure out, first of all, what an effective filter on coming in and how do we induct new teachers in ways that would improve the quality and skills.

Thanks.

MS. BROWN: Thank you very much, Tom.

And now from our current teacher.

MR. JASON KAMRAS: Good morning

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

MR. KAMRAS: Good morning. (Laughter.) I'm a teacher, so yeah. If you are now or ever have been a teacher, can you raise your hand? Thank you. I would just like to thank you all for your service. We appreciate it very, very much.

I also wanted to start off at the beginning by making a disclosure. I was a student of Professor Kane's at one point in my life, so I just wanted to put that out there, but that in no way will color my comments today.

I absolutely love this paper. I am proud to be a public school teacher. I have taught in the District of Columbia public schools for eight years and this paper, I think, is extraordinarily good – would be extraordinarily good for the children of the District of Columbia and countless others like them around the country.

I wanted to start off by saying that what I found most, I'll say, shocking is that it's not just the third and fourth quartiles were ineffective. It's that they were having a negative impact as was brought up earlier: that students in those classes were actually losing ground. And when many children come into the seventh grade, as they often do to me, with third or fourth-grade math skills to then lose an additional year and have that happen cumulatively is just simply criminal.

I absolutely love being a teacher. I'm proud of my profession, but I don't think the profession is at all diminished. I think it's actually raised up when we say that not everyone is equal, that there are more effective and less effective people just like there are in medicine, in law, even in the clergy. And I think the essence of being a professional is to be able to admit that, to raise up and support those who are working and who are being effective, and then to help transition out those who have demonstrated that

they're not effective. There's no shame in saying that, but that's what's right for children, and I believe that's why we're all here. I want to go through each of the recommendations very briefly because I know the discussion will be lively, at the very least.

Number one, reducing the barriers to entry. I think that is a wonderful idea. I know there's a lot of emphasis we've heard about tacking down the proper filters to find out who would be the best teacher. To me, it seems like in many cases a lot of unnecessary work. If we open it up more and see in reality who really are the most effective teachers and raise those people up and then quickly dismiss those who are not effective, to me that seems a better way of doing things.

At the same time, I am sensitive to the fact that we don't want people coming in who are absolutely not offering anything, and so I do think some of the initial requirements – good test scores, and subject matter mastery – are sufficient as a minimum requirement.

Recommendation to make it harder to promote the least effective to tenured positions. I know again this may be unpopular, but I'm not even sure why tenure has a place at all in public education to be honest, and definitely not after two or three years, and definitely when it's not tied to student performance.

I would ask, Robert, if he could comment when we have a discussion, is there any significant difference in the distribution after year one as opposed to year two? Is there a significant reason to wait a whole other year? I don't know if – I believe my children don't have two years to wait. They need to know after one year. My next question to you on this is again, that third quartile – why are they getting off scot-free? Maybe there could be some sort of probationary year after year two, and if they haven't moved up to the second or the first or some absolute measure of effectiveness, then they also have some sort of dismissal process begin.

Third point. You estimate a 1.2 percentile net gain after replacing the bottom quartile with novices. I think you're underestimating that and here's why. I think this is an important point which is not discussed fully. There is a multiplier effect when you have – when you aggregate quality people in a school, in a grade level. And so when less effective people are removed and you retain highly effective people, and you keep aggregating them, it spirals up. I know. I can tell you from personal experience as a teacher I have been more effective when everybody on my team was effective, and so I would estimate that it's more than 1.2. I would go so far as to say it's two, three, four, five, maybe even more.

I appreciate your efforts to introduce some humanity by not automatically firing the bottom quartile and making options for waivers and that sort of thing. My concern is that that might get abused and become an ever-increasing loophole. I do think – I just want to make one comment. You mentioned that there's a tendency to move people around the system and not dismiss them. I call that the broccoli maneuver. When you're

a child and you don't want to eat broccoli, you cut it up and just move it around the plate. It happens – I tell you, it definitely happens. I can tell you from personal experience. Not only that, but principals hide vacancies so that the school system doesn't know about them so they don't have to take the teachers that the school system wants to assign them, because those are the teachers that were dismissed by all the other principals. And so they hide them until it's too late, and then they can go hire whoever else they want because it's past the deadline.

Recommendation three, the bonuses. My questions here are – I appreciate your discussion of not using – basing it on race or class. I think that's important. And you mentioned that instead we could just use previous test scores as our baseline, although you do also mention the correlations point .98, and so in many cases you're basically ducking out the back door.

We're still essentially saying that there are lower expectations for this group of children, which really bothers me. I mean, essentially you're saying is, well, all these children did poorly before, so your target is less than all these children who did much better. So I understand as a teacher that it – why that's being done, but I would like to ask you, maybe there's a way to introduce some sort of two-tier system to the bonus. Maybe there's the one which is baseline based upon previous test score, and then one is an absolute saying, look, if you get your kids to the 75th percentile nationally, period, I don't care what your test scores were, then there's some added additional bonus.

And then I would also agree that there needs to be additional bonuses for math, science, special education teachers who are effective and also, I would say perhaps additions for those teachers in rural areas which have an even tougher time, even more so in many cases than getting in urban systems. And I think we forget about rural school systems a lot, and there are many, many children in rural systems not getting excellent educations.

And then your fourth recommendation, you gave a range of a third to two-thirds of the evaluations should be test scores. I'm going to say two-thirds – the higher the better. Of course, we should use other things to look at teacher effectiveness and performance. I just get worried because when we started introducing a lot of those things it gets very fuzzy and so I'm going to vote for two-thirds.

Let's see. Oh, portfolios for non-math, non-English, non-science. It's an interesting idea. My only point here, you cite the Connecticut program. I was actually just in Connecticut. I spoke to teachers in Connecticut who have gone through this program. You can fail it many times, but keep doing it until you get it. That to me is not quite right. There should be a once or twice and then it doesn't happen. And if you're going to have a portfolio process, it should be heavily observation based. You need to actually see what's going on, not a whole bunch of "I'm on this committee, I'm on that committee, I do this extra curriculum program." It should be what's actually happening in the classroom. And then I would echo that a strong principal evaluation program tied in with this would be very, very helpful and useful, and I'll stop there.

MS. BROWN: Okay. Thank you.

Five sets of very provocative comments. I just want to note that I think there was consensus on at least two points: that we have a serious teacher quality problem. I think the candor of Joan and Tom on that I really appreciate. And that there's an agreement that the licensing system – certification system we have in this country 50 different sets of it, but that it's basically –

MS. : Fifty bad sets.

MS. BROWN: Yes, exactly. Fifty bad sets and that if we're going to address our agreed-upon problems with teacher quality we have to address this issue. There were not – all of them agree in part with each other's comments and they disagree strongly as well. Since it's Robert's paper, I'm going to let him start with a response and then we'll see where it goes.

MR. GORDON: Thank you, Cindy, and thank you to everyone, even Joan and Tom, who I realize weren't nuts about the paper. I appreciate your being here and your candor about it.

Let me quickly just answer a few of Jason's points about why we didn't – why not after one year. Actually, the data are pretty good after one year. You're right. There's not a big loss in accuracy and you could do it then. We were thinking that there's only so much the system can bear, and so it was a calculation based on what we thought people could live with and the notion of this decision being made after a single year. There is more error if you do it in one year, although they're not saying it's –

MR. KAMRAS: But not significantly so?

MR. GORDON: It's statistically significant. There still would be a gain to students based on our data. It's a real question whether if I've made these calculations it remains a paper that encounters – it isn't really going to fly. I don't know if it was worth the calculations, but that's a different question.

And I guess as I listened I thought of the saying that the perfect is the enemy of the good. And then I thought of sort of a corollary saying, which is that the perfect is the friend of the not so good, which is to say I think you can point out problems and difficulties in ways that a system like this would not be perfect and they are real problems. There are real difficulties, but you have to just ask yourself if doing a change along these lines would get you to a better place than we're in right now.

Tom talked about would you want us to sort of experiment on your kid. But we are doing something to your kid right now. What we're doing to your kid right now is applying certification requirements that have no or at best a minimal, barely statistically significant impact on achievement on the front end, and then we are letting teachers

continue to teach your kids, even if their achievement is very low – very, very low. And those teachers are staying in the classroom for a decade, two decades, three decades, and those are the teachers your kids have, so that’s – it is an experimental whatever you want to call it. It is a system that’s being applied right now.

There was a point made about induction. We are supportive of professional development. We talk in the paper about the need to do more of it and do it better. We do talk about the limits of professional development and the limits of – I think this is a hard point, but the limits of the ability to identify who the really good teachers are on the front end. It’s just really hard. The best way to know is to see them teach for a while and then to make decisions, which is why we concluded that this tenure decision was so, so important because you’re never going to have a perfect system for choosing teachers. You’re always going to choose teachers who aren’t great, just like I am not a teacher, but I have hired people and I have made mistakes, and everyone does. And the way you deal with making mistakes is to be able to say after a while this isn’t going to work out.

And so we can try to improve and professional development matters is an interesting discussion in the paper. I find it interesting about the gain from the first to the second year of teaching. There is a gain, and it’s one of the reasons that churning is a concern, but that gain is relatively small compared to the gap between top and bottom teachers. So if you think about what professional development could achieve, do you think that the best professional development in the world could do more for teachers than actually teaching for a year in the classroom? No, my guess would be probably not; that the best professional development experience is actually teaching.

And actually teaching, the gain from that is four points on our scale. And we talked about ten points as the gap between top and bottom teachers, so I think we should do a better job on induction, but we should be realistic about what we can achieve with that, just as we should be realistic about what certification can achieve.

And I have great respect and admiration for Joan and for the efforts that AFT has made over the years around teacher quality. I just – I think there’s a question whether the notion of raising – I think the idea of raising standards and certification standards is – there’s no question that it is advanced with the best interests of kids at heart. I just think – it seems to me that what this research calls into question is whether it’s the right strategy, because what we find is that there’s not a strong correlation between raising those standards and getting better achievement where if there is reason to think that we’re keeping teachers who turn out to be good.

Joan mentioned the problem of boutique. Are we hanging everything on Teacher for America, which is a highly unusual program – a great program, but not a basis for talking about what everyone can do. I don’t think that we’re doing that. I mean, the LA research is really interesting that when you tripled hiring in a huge school district you didn’t see a decline in the quality of teachers even though they were bringing on large numbers of uncertified teachers.

MS. BARATZ-SNOWDEN(?): We don't want to reify the status quo, though.

MR. GORDON: Well, we agree on that. (Laughter.) Let me just close with one – address one other point that Joan made which is about principals, which I think is a real point. I think you want – if you're going to do this – have a system like this for teachers, you want a system like this for principals also. We didn't get into it in the paper. It's not something I know as much about, but clearly the people making evaluations need to be accountable for those decisions in the same way that the people subject to the evaluations are accountable for them. The evidence about the impact of evaluations is worth looking at. It's a – I guess Joan and I both read this paper and you all can read it for yourself if you're interested. Brian Jacob and Lars Lefgren, "When Principals Rate Teachers." It's in *Education Next*. Don't hold that against it.

And their – this is their conclusion. "In sum, our results suggest that student achievement as measured by standardized test scores would probably improve more under a system based on principals' assessments than a system where compensation is based solely on education and experience. This is because principals would be able to identify and reward the very best teachers, while at the same time identifying the least competent teachers for remediation and dismissal." And their findings suggest that ratings by principals, both overall ratings and ratings of a teacher's ability to improve achievement, effectively predict a student's future achievement gains.

So not a – I agree with Joan, it's not a perfect correlation, but it is a highly significant and strong correlation. And so the question just is do you want that in your system or not. And I guess I'll just close, and I'm talking too much, but I do think it's a question whether we – there are problems here, no question. And I think the real question is, do we move forward and try to deal with those problems or not? Do we take these criticisms and try to move toward a system where performance is taken more seriously, which – or do we say no, we see problems, therefore we're not going to go down that road? And I would argue based on these data that we really, really should go down that road and should – Tom raised a question of would teachers have input. I have no doubt that a system like this would never work if teachers didn't have input and weren't on board, and so I think the real question is, can we get there? And my hope is that we can.

MS. BROWN: Okay. This is a very important discussion we're having and so we're probably going to run over a little bit. I want to give Joan and every – Tom and Amy and Jason a chance to comment further if they'd like.

MS. BARATZ-SNOWDEN: I don't think this is an either/or kind of thing that we have here. I object to the idea that in three years you're going to put this in the nation, but I certainly think it's worth finding a few places and seeing what happens in terms of the true realities that we think are there.

I mean, I can't stress – I mean, a lot of this defaults – as Tom indicated, there are a few places, grades where you can do this with test scores. The rest defaults to that

weak paper on principals being able to do things, and I can tell you that principals don't know what good teaching is. And, in fact, I will tell you that 20 years ago I was asked to be the vice president for assessment at the national board and to create an assessment to identify excellent teachers. Right.

Well, I can proudly say that the research now is saying that what we did, which did not look at test scores, it looked at student work and how teachers respond to student work, but for technical reasons we didn't look at test scores, per se. We developed a system that looked at instruction and looked at how teachers responded to students. And 20 years ago, I mean, I knew enough about assessment to know that if you're going to make an assessment, it'd better be based on standards. So I came to the national board and I said, okay, show me the various definitions, the various standards we have for excellent teaching and I'll choose the one I like the best, and we'll make a set of assessments around it. It wasn't that I had five and I had to choose or cobble together from them. There was not a single statement of what excellent teaching was that I could find either at the state or any other place in the professional associations. That was only 20 years ago.

So is it surprising that like the Cheshire cat if you're the dean when you don't know where you're going, anywhere will take – any road will take you there? I mean, we do not have a system here and if principals don't know what good teaching is, they're not going to recognize it. Sure, test scores can be helpful, but they alone will not help.

And the other kind of thing that worries me about all of this is I wish that we could just discard people and get the – somebody who does it better. I just do not believe – I look around at the district, and I say, show me the hordes that are waiting to come in. I look – and we need to develop, we need to help the people that are there, and on – we just can't discard, because the system will collapse.

MS. BROWN: Tom?

MR. BLANFORD: Just a couple quick things that I didn't get to. One is that you know we've got a profession that starts people at \$24,000, \$25,000 a year in many places. As long as we are going to value teachers at that level, we're not going to be able to be as selective as we would all like to be. So there's lip service, but not focus given to improving both the quality of working conditions and the salary of teachers.

A second quick point, if this proposal were viable to make it easier to fire teachers, then here's something that we should see. In places that have right to work, that have no tenure laws, that have no protection for teachers even after the third year, of which there are several, are you going to tell me that those are the places where kids learn the most? Because clearly school system administrations have much greater freedom to turn over their faculty and to get rid of the ineffective teachers. Is that where you find good quality education going on?

And the last thing I want to say on this is the principal issue is absolutely key and it's not addressed in the report, but it's been alluded to. When the NEA conducted a series of conversations among national board-certified teachers – “what would it take to get you to move to a difficult or a challenging school?” – the number one issue was, I would follow good school leadership practically anywhere, but no amount of money will induce me to go to a difficult school where I can't be effective. As one teacher in Chattanooga who was leaving their incentive program put it, “You know the real question, the way to phrase this is how much do you have to pay me to go home and cry every night?” and that's the mentality unless we can make those schools places where people can be effective and where they can feel good about what they do.

MS. BROWN: Jason?

MR. KAMRAS: Yeah. I agree having really excellent principals who can evaluate instruction is important. But to me, that's not a criticism of the program. It just means we need better evaluations and tools for principals. So it's not an either/or proposition. It's an A and B come together, and I understand why it's not really the focus of the paper since you were focusing on this specific area.

I did want to comment on bringing more people into the profession. I've been around the country this year, being Miss America pretty much, and I often poll college students and first-year teachers about various questions that I have that I'm curious about. And this will all make sense in a second; bear with me. One of the things I often ask is, if you could make \$10,000 more per year or just pick your colleagues – this is often the first-year teachers – which would you choose? And 99 percent choose option B.

The reason I bring that up, and it may seem counterintuitive, but that's actually, I think, supportive of this program because what it to me says is the thing that most keeps good people in the profession – high performing people – is that they get to work with other high performing people. And they go to work every day and know that they're on the same page with people who really have high expectations, who believe that every single child can in fact learn and achieve at the highest levels, who are willing to do whatever it takes, even though in nearly all the time that's beyond what the contract says. That's the reason why schools like KIPP and other such schools are able to turn away applicants, because people want to work there because they're powerful places to work.

A program like this will help create, I believe, more environments such as that, and to me, that is a self-fulfilling prophecy. It will spiral up. You'll get more people who want to be in those schools. Working conditions will improve because a staff that is highly excellent creates a highly excellent working condition, regardless of whether the window's open or not. And I speak of a school – I speak from the place of teaching in a school with significant facilities challenges and all sorts of other issues.

So to me, that is sort of the understated or not fully discussed power of this. And I think as you go out and try to push it, I think you need to explore that more fully and I don't know how you get the data on that, but that's very, very powerful. I believe the key

to their retention piece is the aggregation of good people and the transitioning out of low-performing educators.

MS. BROWN: Amy, do you want to say anything or shall we –

MS. WILKINS: No, no. I mean, I don't think that this paper suggests that we exclude other remedies here, and I think that people are pretending somehow that it does. What this paper would in part do is establish value-added systems where you could look at teacher performance. That would have the effect, I think, of changing the ed schools, Joan, because you could map back from what effective teachers were doing to their preparation.

Right now we don't know what a good ed school program looks like, what a bad ed school program looks like. Well, we do know (inaudible), but if you could look at what effect the teachers were doing in school and based on the system that this would create, map back to the ed schools and say, this is the kind of preparation the effective people had versus this the kind of – this is the preparation that ineffective people had.

If you could look at professional development in the context of this, the system that undergirds this allows for a lot of the reforms that you guys are talking about, so it's not do this and nothing else. In fact, do this and it creates the system that will allow for lots of changing in the teaching profession, will allow the kind of changes that Jason talks about, about workplaces where people are glad to come to work because they feel that they are with colleagues who are as driven and as serious about student achievement, will give principal tools, will give superintendent's tools, and will give peers tools to deal better with each other. So I don't think that sort of – as much as I like this, I don't believe that this is the end all and be all, but I think some of the criticism about this paper is about, okay, if you do this, you're not going to do anything else, and I don't think Robert is suggesting that. Robert is indeed suggesting an evaluation system that will allow for lots of kinds of reforms beyond the one that he's suggesting, so I think it's important to remember that.

MS. BROWN: Okay. I'm going to open this now to the audience. I want to begin with any – if there's anyone from the media, I want to allow them the chance to ask the first question, and please say where you're from. Yes, back there.

Q: Hi. I'm Steven Sawchuk, and I'm with *Education Daily*. So first of all, I would like to thank all of the panelists for giving really thought provoking presentations today. As you can imagine, I attend a lot of these kinds of events and let me tell you, quite a few of them are not as stimulating as this one.

So I think my question is really on – I think we've come to some kind of consensus today that the certification system really needs to be addressed; whether it's an input or an output-based model, we have some differences, but I think my question is, where is the accountability for states in trying to do that? I mean, we've had – we have the education department and we have sort of highly qualified teachers who are supposed

to be this baseline of teacher qualifications, but even with that, we see states kind of wriggling out of a lot of those kinds of provisions. We see weak house plans.

So I guess my question is, how would you actually get a state to beef up their certification system or create these incentives? I mean, I think we see reform happening in fits and starts, but we don't really see anything that can be done on any kind of national level. And as Joan pointed out, I think, expecting this to all happen in just three or four years is probably a bit optimistic. So I would just like to hear from you about what you think the state role is, what you think the federal role is in that.

MR. GORDON: I guess our – no, no. We don't – obviously our proposal isn't to beef up the certification system, but more generally I think No Child Left Behind and the reauthorization provide an opportunity through incentive funding to say to states, here's a bunch of money if you'll do A, B, and C. So that's what we propose. Here's a bunch of money if you will put into place, develop your evaluation systems, put into place systems that at least presumptively don't grant tenure to the bottom quartile of teachers; put into place inside the pay systems; and then create not a beefed-up certification, but an alternative path to a certification to becoming highly qualified. And that we would propose doing that, that's sort of an incentive piece. I think we talked about doing it sort of as an add-on to the Title II teacher quality program. I don't think we would want to – we would let states apply initially. We say ten states. I don't know. Maybe that's overly ambitious, but that seems to be a good (approximation?) from our perspective.

MS. BROWN: Okay. Anyone else from the media? All right. Questions, Diane?

Q: Hi. I'm Diane Piche –

MR. : Please wait for the mike.

MS. BROWN: They want the mike.

Q: I'm Diane Piche with the Citizens Commission on Civil Rights, and I want to thank you, Robert, for this paper and I look forward to reading it. I just want to say from the discussion, though, that I think it's important to understand, as you said, that this kind of thing going forward on a federal level and on a state level will necessarily be limited by the ancillary systems that need to be in place in order to support it.

So, for example, right now the department of ed and our office is involved in this process in evaluating eight state plans for growth models. And in order to do a growth model or value-added systems, you need – states need to have a whole lot of data and a lot of states just aren't there. But notwithstanding that, I think that it's really important to put this stuff out there because going forward we obviously need in this country better systems to weed out ineffective teachers. And also, I think going forward what we're going to be looking at in the next several years between now and NCLB will be the renewal of teacher contracts in major cities around the country.

So with that, my question is directed to the two representatives from the NEA and the AFT. I guess I'd like to know where in your judgment now are there collective bargaining agreements that embrace what you think are the kinds of systems for differential pay, incentive pay, and for directing highly-qualified teachers to the schools that are the least attractive schools.

I mean, we've heard a lot of criticism of Robert's proposal, and I guess I'd like to put it to the two of you to give us some examples of where you think we've made some progress in closing the teacher quality gap, weeding out ineffective teachers, keeping good teachers in the system.

And I just want to add just before you answer the question, I feel compelled to respond to what Tom said about testing because what I hear sometimes is that from critics of No Child Left Behind that kids are being tested to death. And you mentioned Montgomery County, and as a parent of students in Montgomery County schools I can tell you that the reason the schools are shut down to field trips and visitors during March is that the schools want to make sure that instruction is going on and that the actual amount of testing that's going on is no more than about six hours per child spread out over a course of several days. So there really is not that much testing.

In fact, I think the other side of the criticism is that we're now making judgments based on one drive-by test. So I mean, I just wonder whether you think you are saying you want it both ways. But anyway, I really would appreciate if the union reps have some positive examples for us.

Thank you.

MS. BARATZ-SNOWDEN: Well, I would direct you first off to Toledo, to Minneapolis, to Douglas County, to Cincinnati for examples of differentiated pay systems with incentives; systems that have career ladders and the like.

MR. BLANFORD: And I can add to the list: Columbus, Ohio; Denver. Seattle has just signed a contract that was focused on teacher distribution and achievement gap issues. I don't know that anybody has the answer yet, but we have a number of different good-faith efforts. Denver, of course, has been the longest running and the most publicized number of good-faith efforts where our districts are trying to address these issues.

But linking that back to this report, the districts unfortunately, or fortunately, don't have much to do with entry. They do not license and they – our locals for the most part are not involved in hiring decisions and so basically we work with whoever the district decides to hire and whoever the district decides to license. And our approach to that is not focused on sorting them as much as it is whoever they decide to hire, we will do all we can to help them improve their knowledge and skills and effectiveness in the classroom.

Q: (Off mike.)

MS. BARATZ-SNOWDEN: Well, I referred to the Toledo plan. It was an interesting experience because they first asked for a mentoring system, and the district didn't agree until they went through a mentoring system not merely for new teachers, but teachers that were in need of improvement. And they do a lot of not only teacher improvement and recommendation if improvement isn't working for teachers not to go on, but also a lot of counseling out. I mean, it – nobody wants to do a bad job. They really don't, and sometimes they just need help in figuring out how to do something else.

MS. BROWN: Yes. Hold on.

Q: Latoya Johnson from Senator Clinton's office. Before I came to D.C., I taught with Teach for America in a hard-to-staff school where there were – out of 75 teachers, there were ten vacancies, so I taught sixth-grade science, but on my off period I taught eighth-grade English voluntarily because there was no teacher there. Has there been a study or have people looked at the fact that when you open up the window, like Teach for America does, it sort of fulfills vacancies regardless of the fact that they're going to be there for two, three years and looking at what Robert's proposal does for – at least for filling vacancies where people are just not there to teach kids?

MS. BROWN: You want to tackle that?

MR. GORDON: I don't know the answer to that, but I – that's – as you say, that's part of the idea behind the proposal.

Q: My name is Dick Melzer (ph). I'm just interested. I'm a former teacher, the parent of four former students and three teachers. And my question, and you may not have looked at this at all, but it seems to me you sort of walked up to the edge of this in your work is what about teachers who are there 10, 15 years and aren't good anymore? Because I think that was something I experienced as a teacher, as a parent of students, and my current children (has?) teachers of experience that teachers who may have been quite good a number of years ago, are no longer – no longer have the energy, no longer have the interest. And I wonder if there's any data looking at as the career is winding down as well as when the career is beginning.

MR. GORDON: I believe – I don't want to say this with 100 percent certainty, but I believe that in our data there's a – there's a little decline after a significant period in the classroom in average effectiveness which may have to do with a bigger drop-off for some teachers. And our view – I don't think that's the central factor. I think that the – you can get a very large impact with the proposal that we have made, which is to make a significant cut after two or three years, and you can do that without disturbing tenure once it exists. You can have a whole other conversation about obviously your – as you say, I've walked right up to it, but I think that this is a proposal that could take a significant distance in improving student achievement and leave perfection in place for

teachers – leave tenure in place. I've written elsewhere about streamlining tenure and issues about –

MS. BARATZ-SNOWDEN: (Off mike) the AFT?

MR. GORDON: Right. Right. About the needs to have better procedures when teachers are identified, even while tenure continues to exist; that that tenure exists for the purpose of protecting futures against vendettas from principals or principals who does not like someone's teaching style, but that at the same time if after 15 years someone is a lousy teacher, there should be a process that does not cost hundreds of thousands of dollars for not having that teacher in the classroom.

MS. BROWN: Tony, did – yes, please.

MR. BLANFORD: Oh, part of the problem is when we're trying to address education as between an individual teacher and a specific group of students. Well organized functioning schools that have some stability can address all of those issues. It's not an individual teacher goes up and down. A school that functions well, that doesn't have this extra 25 or 40 or 50 percent turnover and churn can look at staffing assignments, can look to differentiate the staffing, can look at ways of teachers who are having a burn-out year or having health problems or other – of making the adjustments so that the kids continue to learn.

The answer isn't just somebody's having a bad year, let's get them out. Let's find somebody new. Let's try it all over again. It creates – it totally disrupts the community that is schools. And those of you who have been in schools or who are parents, you know when a school is a learning community and when a school is not. And the difference in the quality of education that your kids get, whether you have – and Jason alluded to this as well – you have a collection of high-performing interactive people working together to educate all children is what our goal is. And to the degree that we disrupt that by throwing open doors and pushing people in and pulling people out, and doing all of the things that make it difficult to build a community, the education of kids is going to be diminished and could be hurt.

MS. BROWN: Tony, you had a question?

MR. : The last question.

Q: Yeah, I just wanted to know if you've somehow in your mind made a distinction between teacher certification and teacher preparation programs, because in most states the reason for having certification in almost everything, from the person who colors your hair to the person who gives you a manicure, is to protect the public, to protect your clients. And it's to guarantee that there's a minimum – minimum amount of training and skills to do no harm. So I think that looking at teacher preparation as though it was and not a beginning is the wrong way to look at it, and I think that's true for all

professions. If you ask lawyers, most of them will say, gee, most of law school never prepared me for what I'm actually facing on the job.

Having said that, I want to just move to the induction part of this because you indicated, Robert, that teaching is the best professional development. Well, I don't know if you mean by defining that that it's okay for a year to have trial and error on our kids, because basically that's what happens to new teachers. They learn by trial and error. They experiment. I don't think that it's cost-effective to reinvent the wheel, so I think we do have to look at an induction system that says a first-year teacher or a second-year teacher certainly is not as experienced or as good as a teacher who's been there for a while, however you express good.

And think of an analogy that what law firm would send a first-year lawyer – someone they've just hired – to the Supreme Court to make an argument? So, I mean, experience and training have to account for something. And I think the very best thing we could do for new teachers, because they do have enough time to be evaluated, is to look at investing and resources, and that really has to be some kind of induction period that recognizes that a first-year teacher doesn't have the experience or the knowledge or the skills of other teachers who've been teaching longer.

And Al Shanker proposed probably close to 20 years ago that a first-year teacher should have a third of a teaching load, a second-year teacher two-thirds of the teaching load, and in the third year then they come to have a full load. And, of course, this time is done with mentoring. That's the kind of professional development that needs to take place, not just the number of years and how many times you can experiment on kids.

And the last thing I just want to say if you've considered and looked at some of the very high scoring districts like Scarsdale and – I'm from New York, so I will use those as examples – Scarsdale, Jericho, who's going to be the one to stand up and tell them that they're not going to count certification any longer? And also, to look at their selection process, which is quite rigorous and definitely is one step before the actual hiring, probationary, get-rid-of-them sequence.

So I think there are other factors that you need to look at. Nobody wants an ineffective teacher. Joan said it. Tom said it. I'm going to say it as the vice-president of the AFT, but I think we have to be careful with what our solutions are and to know that they will in effect create a better system, not have unintended consequences.

MR. GORDON: Just very briefly, I think those are all fair and important points. Just very briefly, I certainly didn't mean to say that – by saying that experience was the best training, I did not mean to say that training was not also valuable, but just to say that we should be realistic about what training can achieve and that there is an element of ability that can't be trained. You talked about lawyers. I sadly am one, and I mean I think you're right. You – we want people who have been through law school, but I also think it's true that you have moot court in the spring of the first year in law school, and in moot court the natural trial lawyers are the natural trial lawyers, and I wasn't one and I

was never going to be one. And there were people who were and they're the great trial lawyers today. I just think that's a – that is a reality in a lot of fields. And I think that's what this research shows.

And then on your last point about Jericho and Scarsdale, I have not looked at those. I mean, I guess in answer to your point about who's going to tell them about certification, I'd make two points. One is just I would welcome the data about the positive impact of certification. I don't – I'm not aware of it, and when we even looked at someone – Joan is going to jump in, but I'm not aware of data showing strong positive impact of certification, number one. And number two, obviously there are other – didn't look closely at private schools, but obviously there you do have schools that are – have high expectations and high achievement that don't rely on certification, so I think there are at least some schools that do make a decision that they can get high achievement without using certification.

MS. BROWN: Amy, do you want to – go ahead.

MS. WILKINS: Can I just comment on Jericho and Scarsdale for a sec? And this is a story that Rick Mills, again going to New York. Rick is the chancellor of education (inaudible). When Rick was sort of in his – was in his first year and it was – they were doing the assessment, giving teachers – new teachers the test to be certified, the test was administered to all the teaching candidates in the state. The testing company came to Rick and said, "Tell us how many teachers you need," and Rick said, "Huh?" and they said, "Well, that's how we set the cut score. We set the cut score based on the number of teachers your state needs." And Rick said, "That's not right." The testing guy said, "That's how we do it all the time," so that's the value of certification. It's a supply control mechanism.

I'm telling you the value of certification in New York State. And what you can tell the parents in Jericho and Scarsdale is that the state assessment for new teachers is based on the supply of the teachers the state needs, not on the quality of those people results and –

MS. BARATZ-SNOWDEN: That's an acquisition. That's Rick Mills willing to do this. That is not – you have certification. I've got to – let's talk about those three curves that you have. Right now you have teachers that come through this traditional education route and they come through Bank Street and they come through (Cortland?) State, and they come through everything – and I don't mean to denigrate (Cortland?) State, but they come – there's a range that is enormous, all of which is called teacher education.

Then we have alternative certification, and we have that project with Bernstein in New York that's alternative certification, and we have a curve all the way down to people who come in that are virtually emergency certificate. Read (unintelligible) Switzer's (ph) stuff on alternative certification.

And then we have the group, because Mills managed to get everybody certified, by having yet then another group which come in and they can be anybody as long as you have a pulse, a degree, and no criminal record. That could be somebody terrific. It could be some – it ranges from Einstein to a guy off the street. Why – so what do we end up with? We end up with meaningful – meaningless groups and therefore, the curves that you get.

And then you apply that to licensure that there's nothing that says you have to apply – I know that company that does that, but I – there's nothing that says that you have to apply a supply and demand. You could make a cut score that's real. If they don't, what we're really talking about here is political will and concern about children that are poor and children of color and whether or not we get real talent in there, and it isn't about all these other things that we've been talking about.

MS. BROWN: Okay, to be continued. Although, Richard, if you want to – I'll let Rick ask a question if you like.

Q: Rick Kahlenberg with the Century Foundation. I think it's a very innovative and creative paper. Given that it's so innovative and creative, I want to ask you, Robert, why you rely on what I see as kind of an old-fashioned view of education, which is to concentrate power in the hands of the principal. And I'd just echo what Joan said: there are some really exciting peer review programs throughout the country where teachers are tougher on their fellow teachers than the principals are and we – and more qualified. I mean, a lot of principals are foreign PE teachers who don't necessarily know how to teach French, and so I'm wondering why you didn't pursue the peer review question.

MR. GORDON: I think we're open to both. It seems like principals are inevitably going to be a part of the process, and I guess the point I wanted to make was that given that, you had better hold them accountable like everyone else, but I think peer review is great.

MS. BROWN: All right. Since you're not all getting up and leaving, I'm allowing more questions.

Q: Yeah. I'm Justine Maloney with the Learning Disabilities Association. I'm not going to get into the whole issue about how you train teachers to work with kids with disabilities and even the limited English-speaking kids. I have one specific thing: when you talk about doing evaluations, have you considered getting evaluations from the students?

We all know that the kids at the secondary level know well and good who are the good teachers and who are not, and even at the elementary level, you know kids know who are teachers who like them, and teachers who don't.

MR. GORDON: Can I actually – I'm curious, when I worked for John Kerry, he at one juncture threw out this idea, and I thought it was an idea that would not be

terribly popular, but I didn't think about it in this paper, and I guess I would just be curious from the teachers and the folks who work with teachers if the idea of teachers being evaluated by students – it seems kind of weird to me. If a teacher is tough on you, you're going to give them an F? That doesn't seem like a good idea.

Q: Rochester tried it and just didn't – nothing came out of it.

MR. KAMRAS: Well, I'll just say personally I have my students evaluate me every year at the end of the year, which is very informative for me, and I use it to revise my pedagogy. I think it would be a valuable piece in a spectrum of the non-test score part of the assessment. I do want to say, though, as I tell first-year teachers often, do not aspire to be liked, aspire to be effective. And sometimes being effective means being tough and students not liking you, and I have kids who I will say were not particularly pleased with me in seventh grade, but they are now in college and call me up and thank me for being tough with them because they made it to college and I had those high expectations for them. So I'm not sure your effectiveness and sort of general feeling about you as a teacher always correlates exactly, but I think it's – I find it – as a teacher it's very instructional for me to do that evaluation of myself.

MR. BLANFORD: And I would say that Arizona started down the road where they had a grant from a foundation to gather input from parents, students, colleagues. It wasn't used for hiring decisions and it wasn't used for firing decisions, but it was very valuable information to know how the students perceive you, to know how the parents perceive you in order to make – to decide whether any adjustments are appropriate or necessary, so I think it's very valuable data. I would be very uncomfortable with recommending that that weigh into hiring and firing decisions. That could be a little dicey.

MS. BROWN: All right. One last question. This is really it. (Laughter.)

Q: Hi. My name is (Mildred Otero?). I just have a question about a comment that Tom made about teachers knowing that they might need some time off or they might need – I guess I'm a little curious. I think teachers want to be treated as professionals, right? And in the professional world – and maybe I'm just – I'm wearing my social worker hat because I'm a social worker, but I think in the social work world, you – when you're burnt out you take time off, and you – it's not up to your employer to sort of make this – sort of baby you through the process, right; that you have your own professional development and your own association, and you evaluate yourself and you say, okay, I need a break. I've been doing this for four years, and it's – I'm burned out and I need to change jobs or I need to do something else.

And I just – I don't think that – and I was a teacher at one point. I don't think teachers want to be babied through this process. I think they want to be treated as professionals and given options, but also I just get a little afraid when we start sort of talking about, well, we need to think about this for them and think about this for them. It's like they're professionals. They know what they need. They know what they don't

need. And I was just curious to a reaction to that because I was a little concerned about your comment.

MR. BLANFORD: One of the remnants of the factory model of education where teachers were assembly workers is day one on the job looks essentially the same as year 29, day one, on the job, and that there isn't a lot of room for looking at how to structure the job and the school community differently. A community of educators can make those decisions, can make adjustments in teacher load, can grant sabbaticals, could accept a few extra kids one year so that they can have rolling sabbaticals and deal with and work with those issues when teachers say, I really need to take a break. I really need to learn.

Under the current model or the factory model of what teachers' job and work life looks like, those options are very limited, but the possibilities are endless if it's a community of educators taking care of the adults as well as the students and meeting their needs.

MS. BROWN: Okay. I want to thank our panelists, Robert, all of you. We need to continue these conversations very intensively over the next year or two or three. The No Child Left Behind Act is going to be reauthorized. I think most people are unhappy with how the teaching accountability provisions, quality provisions have worked out, have been implemented, and are looking to improve those.

I think I heard Joan say it's okay perhaps to try some of these things through demonstrations. That's what Robert has proposed. I think we all need to engage in more discussions about what these demonstrations could look like, evaluate them carefully, tweak them as we go. I mean, we have to try some new stuff because I think, as I said, the consensus of this panel is that we aren't where we need to be with teacher quality in this country and that the licensing certification systems we have are not effective. So we've got to talk about some solutions, try them out, try out a variety of them, and I encourage everybody to engage in those conversations with us and in other settings. So thanks a lot.

(Applause.)

MR. GORDON: If you've got thoughts on the thing that we wrote, feel free to e-mail me.

MS. : The thing?

MR. GORDON: The thing. (Laughter.) Feel free to e-mail me. It's rgordon@americanprogress.org. I'd love to hear. Thanks.

(END)