



## **REACTIONS TO *TAPPING THE POTENTIAL***

**From Gerald N. Tirozzi, Ph.D.**

**Executive Director, National Association of Secondary School Principals**

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) – the preeminent leadership organization representing the nation’s middle level and high school principals, assistant principals, and aspiring principals – appreciates and supports the comments and recommendations put forth in *Tapping the Potential: Retaining and Developing High-Quality New Teachers*.

The teacher comprehensive induction recommendations outlined in the report represent a realistic and necessary solution to the problem of retaining highly qualified teachers, a problem many of our members face each year. NASSP’s publications, *Turning Points 2000*, *Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for Leading High School Reform*, and *Supporting Principals who Break Ranks*, align with many of the recommendations presented in *Tapping the Potential*.

NASSP applauds the efforts of the Alliance for Excellent Education (AEE) and their focus on finding solutions to the problem of retaining professional teachers. We look forward to working with AEE and other organizations to improve teaching and learning in America’s secondary schools.

**From Joseph A. Aguerrebere, Ed.D.**

**President, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards**

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is pleased to support the Alliance for Excellent Education’s report, *Tapping the Potential: Retaining and Developing High Quality New Teachers*.

Great schools begin with great teachers and research continues to show that the quality of a child’s teacher is among the most important factors in the academic success of that child.

While NBPTS is helping to elevate the quality of instruction of veteran teachers through National Board Certification, we recognize and support the need for more comprehensive induction programs to provide all new teachers with the support they need to be successful in the classroom. The recommendations from the Alliance report present a useful framework for school districts to follow as they address the unacceptable attrition rates of beginning teachers.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards looks forward to working with the Alliance for Excellent Education in sharing the findings of this important report.

**From Gerry House, Ed.D.  
President and CEO, Institute for Student Achievement**

The retention and support of our new and veteran teachers is one of the most valuable elements in providing a high quality education to all students. In developing its ISA Small Schools Model™, the Institute for Student Achievement emphasizes equally the scale and intimacy afforded by small schools and the continuing professional development of the teachers in those schools. ISA finds teacher support so crucial to the success of ISA Model schools that it hosts Summer and Winter Institutes for teachers and administrators, builds regular planning time into the academic schedule and supplies ongoing coaching and training.

The Institute for Student Achievement strongly supports the recommendations in *Tapping the Potential: Retaining and Developing High-Quality New Teachers*. Comprehensive induction for new teachers is an affirmation of the crucial role great teaching plays in the achievement of academic success. To slight the needs of teachers, especially those novice teachers assigned to low-performing classrooms, is to ignore the desperate need of our most at-risk students. This is an unconscionably poor investment strategy and one at odds with our government's substantial commitment to improving education.

One of the single most important steps Congress and state governments and school districts can take is to dedicate adequate funding to the support and retention of new teachers. Induction can turn a hopeful walk-on into a star with a lasting stellar effect on generations of students. At ISA, we see every day what a tremendous influence a capable and caring teacher can have on a young life. We see that enthused and effective teachers are, without exception, supported and valued teachers. We believe that the best learning takes place when everyone is learning, when teachers and students—and principals and superintendents—are involved in a daily process of discovery.

In some of our worst-performing schools, the high school drop-out rate matches the teacher attrition rate: 50%. That is unacceptable by any measure. We cannot—and must not—throw half of our kids and half of our teachers away. In order to provide uniformly excellent education for every child in every school, we must encourage and even educate their teachers to excellence.

*Tapping the Potential: Retaining and Developing High-Quality New Teachers* is an urgently needed reminder to safeguard a most crucial resource—the people in whose classrooms young minds awaken, discover passions and define successful lives. We can do much more than lament overcrowding, funding shortfalls and under-performing teachers. We can create small schools and staff them with teachers at the top of their games—teachers whose love of teaching and dreams for their students are enhanced and protected by professional development and a support system that honors their commitment.

Applause for this important study and for the strong message it sends. The Alliance for Excellent Education gets an “A” for defining a systemic need and proposing the intelligent solution to meet that need. *Tapping the Potential*...deserves wide dissemination and serious attention—just as American students deserve the kinds of teachers this report champions.

**From Dennis Sparks**

**Executive Director, National Staff Development Council**

I am writing in support of the Alliance for Excellent Education's report, *Tapping the Potential: Retaining and Developing High-Quality New Teachers*.

The National Staff Development Council believes that well-designed, comprehensive induction programs are essential to high-quality teaching in every classroom and the retention of talented teachers. Such programs include intensive mentoring by qualified teachers who are trained for and supported in this role and a well-articulated set of formal and informal professional learning activities that strengthen new teachers' understanding of their content, expand their repertoire of teaching strategies, and connect them to colleagues both within their schools and across schools.

NSDC also believes that it is essential that every beginning teacher participate in a well-designed, comprehensive induction program. It is especially important for beginning teachers in schools that serve high proportions of poor and minority students. Therefore, it is imperative that states and school systems do all that is in their power to ensure such programs for all beginning teachers.

**From Andrew J. Rotherham**

**Director of Education Policy, Progressive Policy Institute**

This new report gets at support for new teachers, one vitally important prong of efforts to ensure equity in teacher quality for poor and minority youngsters. Policymakers can and must do more to lessen the sink or swim environment that greets too many new teachers and contributes to excessive job turnover in high poverty schools. Improving mentoring and induction in tandem with modernizing how we pay teachers and overhauling and strengthening credentialing and licensing is the most promising policy direction at hand for meeting this challenge.