A Call to Retreat from Trendy Teacher Education Reform

Key New NEPC Statement Takeaway: Hundreds of leaders in colleges of education across the country present a vision for teacher-education reform, providing an alternative to trendy notions for changing teacher preparation.

BOULDER, Colo. (PRWEB) October 10, 2019 -- As schools and universities begin a new academic year, a growing alliance of leaders in colleges of education across the country today released a statement cautioning against many of the current trends for “reforming” how we prepare teachers for our nation’s public schools.

In the statement, Seven Trends to Reform U.S. Teacher Education, and the Need to Address Systemic Injustices, over 350 deans and other leaders called for a significant shift in course. The statement begins by declaring that teacher-education programs “without a doubt…cannot and should not operate as if all is well, because it is not.” But the leaders then warn that “several current efforts to reform teacher education in the United States…are making things worse.” These trends, they explain, share the fundamental flaw of focusing on hyper-individualistic, market-based solutions linked to failed ideas about student achievement, teacher accountability, rewards, and punishments, rather than addressing legacies of systemic injustices in educational institutions and strategies to increase participatory democracy.

The seven trends examined are:

- Marketizing teacher education in the hopes that competition and more alternatives will spur self-improvement;
- Shaming teacher education in the hopes failing grades will spur self-improvement;
- Externally regulating teacher education at the federal level with statistically faulty methods for program evaluation;
- Externally regulating teacher education at the state level with increased program-entrance requirements that hinder diversity without improving teacher quality;
- Internally regulating teacher education with accreditation that relies on problematic standards and use of data;
- Assessing teacher candidates with problematic instruments and ways of using them; and
- Prescribing practices that too narrowly define the outcomes for students and teachers.

The leaders’ statement highlights research that shows how, “in a number of ways, these approaches lack a sound research basis, and in some instances, they have already proven to widen disparities.” The statement concludes with an alternative vision for teacher education that advances equity and justice in our nation’s schools.

Signing the statement are over 350 current and former leaders in colleges and schools of education across the United States. The leaders, which include deans, associate deans, directors, and chairs, work in public, private, and religious institutions of higher education spanning over three dozen states.

The statement was authored by Education Deans for Justice and Equity (EDJE) and prepared in partnership with the National Education Policy Center. EDJE was formed in 2016 as an alliance of deans to address inequities and injustices in education while promoting its democratic premises through policy, research, and practice.

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Seven Trends to Reform U.S. Teacher Education, and the Need to Address Systemic Injustices, including the list of signatories and endorsements, can be found on the NEPC website at:
http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/seven-trends

Find Documents:
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Contact Information
William J. Mathis
National Education Policy Center
http://nepc.colorado.edu
+1 (802) 383-0058

Kevin Kumashiro
(202) 468-9489

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