

2011-12 Report of the Committee on Professional Standards and Practice
March 15, 2012

Charge #1: Continue to review NEA's Continuum of Teacher Development and revise and/or rewrite a new teacher career continuum to address: the on-going improvement of teacher skill, knowledge and practice; and the broad range of career growth and leadership opportunities which should be available for every professional educator. Make recommendations about how teachers and the union can take greater responsibility for and authority over key elements of the teaching profession.

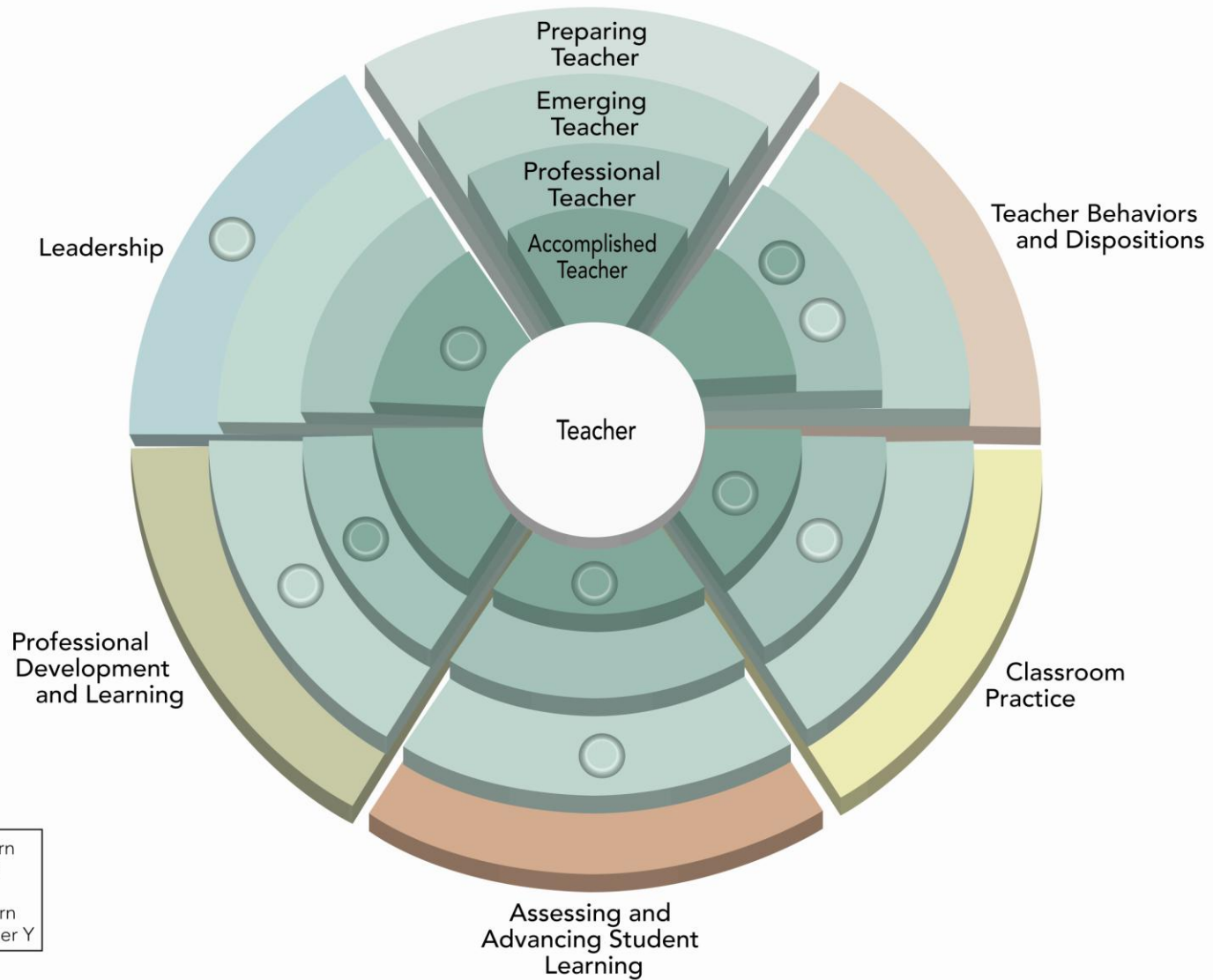
The PSP committee continued work on a teacher career continuum based on the concepts outlined in the 2010-11 PSP report. The committee was interested in a continuum that could be converted to a living document or website that affiliates could upload and integrate their state or district specific information into the larger framework designed to outline the inputs and outputs of a fluid career. The committee's 2010-11 report outlined the *Dimensions of Growth* defining the parameters of both individual growth and a system of standards and supports for teacher growth. The Dimensions of Growth include Classroom Practice; Assessing and Advancing Student Learning; Professional Development and Learning; Teacher Behaviors and Dispositions; and Leadership. The Standards, Supports, and Assurances include Development, Assessment, and Evaluation; Standards of Practice; and Tiered Licensure. The graphic representation of these dimensions is presented in this report and contains two parts: The *Dimensions of Individual Teacher Growth* (outputs) graphic is an underlying component of the *Teacher Career Continuum* (outputs and inputs); together, they illustrate the ideas covered in-depth in the committee's 2010-11 report.

The *Dimensions of Individual Teacher Growth* reflects that movement between levels of expertise within the various dimensions is fluid, which is to say teachers can move in or out of any particular dimension depending on the supports and opportunities offered by the system and in accordance with their own efforts and abilities. For example, a teacher may be at the accomplished stage when it comes to their professional capacity, but at the emerging stage in the teacher leadership dimension.

The Teacher Career Continuum serves as a foundation for a new continuum of teacher development that reflects the complexity of teaching and learning, the significance of systemic supports to teacher and student learning, growth, and development, and the need to build greater flexibility into the profession. The various dimensions of skill, knowledge, and practice underpin each stage of teacher development as well as how the elements of systemic support Development, Assessment, and Evaluation; Standards of Practice; and Tiered Licensure—serve as career pillars for individual teachers.

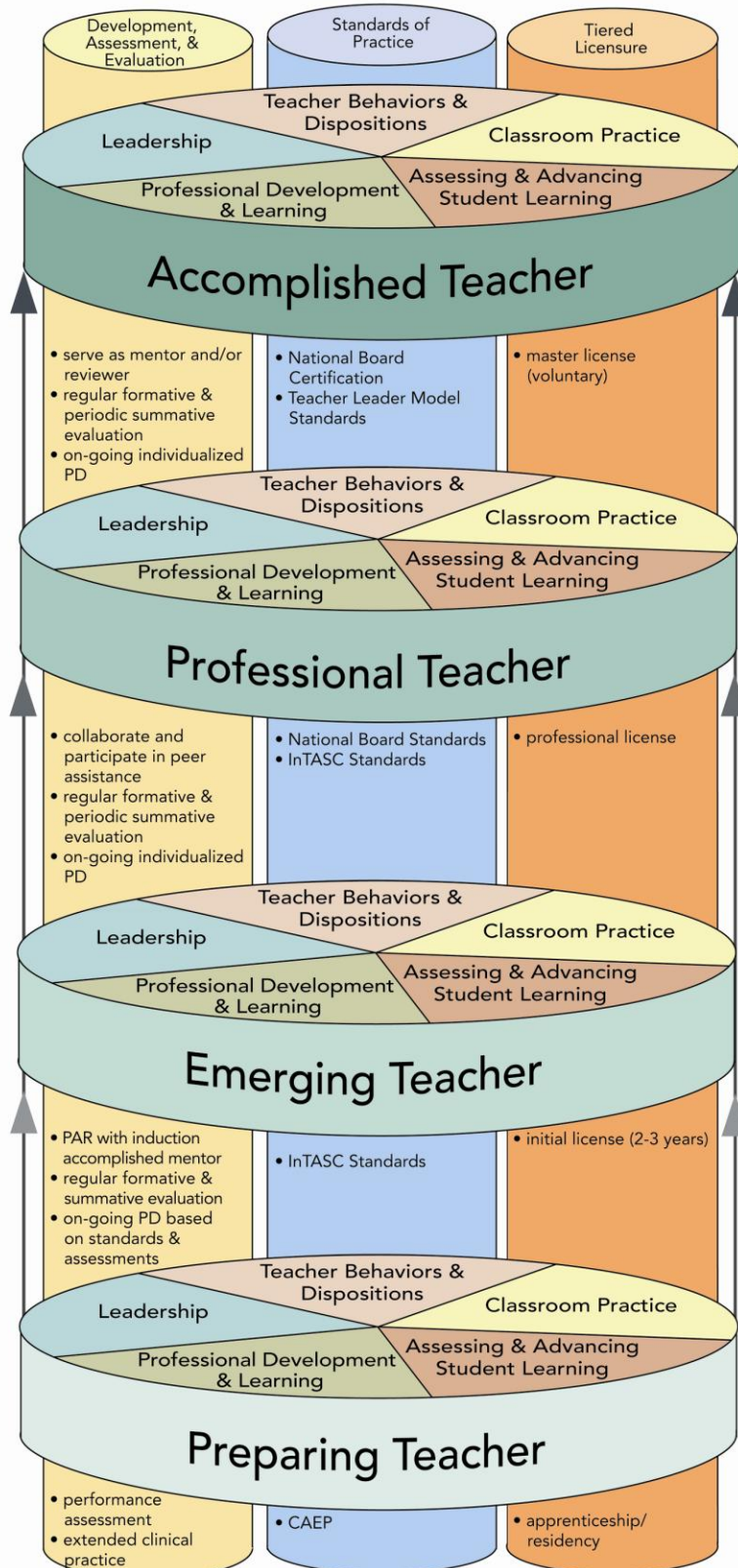
Each component of this teacher career continuum supports and is supported by the other components. The career continuum should encourage on-going personal growth and maximum opportunity, while also distributing responsibility to accomplished and professional teachers and the system itself.

Dimensions of Individual Growth



Teacher Career Continuum

Professional Standards, Supports, & Assurances



Charge #2: Review and analyze the upcoming report from the Commission on Effective Teachers and Teaching. Make recommendations about strategies, programs, or activities NEA might pursue over the next two to five years and about policies NEA might adopt or modify based on the ideas offered in the Commission report.

Maddie Fennell, Chair of the Commission on Effective Teachers and Teaching (CETT) and PSP Committee member, lead an initial discussion around the recommendations in the CETT report entitled *Transforming Teaching: Connecting Professional Responsibility with Student Learning*. Fennell shared the Commission's vision of a teaching profession that embraces *collective accountability* for student learning balanced with *collaborative autonomy* that allows educators to do what is best for students. To deepen the committee's thinking President Denis Van Roekel spoke to the committee about a NEA initiative as outlined in his Three-Point-Plan. He shared that NEA can't talk its way into leading the profession; NEA must behave its way into leading. The profession lacks a recruitment system and takes whoever comes. There is more that we can do without asking permission to move the good ideas of the Commission forward. The PSP committee also reviewed recent research suggesting that peer assistance and review is far superior to principals' evaluation in terms of rigor and comprehensiveness. It does more than classify and label teachers. The process helps teachers improve their practice and provides them with supported opportunities to be successful.

Many of the key themes of the CETT report recommendations are similar to the themes covered in the 2010-2011 PSP Committee report. PSP members voted on whether each CETT recommendation should be part of NEA policy or advocacy efforts and whether each was a high, medium, or low priority. The committee broadly and strongly supported the recommendations of the CETT with only a few exceptions. The highest priorities were those recommendations directed at NEA and its affiliates, but followed closely by those for higher education/teacher preparation programs. The PSP Committee focused on four key areas of focus for NEA policy and actions which are outlined in the Recommendations section of this report.

Charge #3: Examine and analyze research and practice on existing induction, mentorship, peer assistance and peer assistance & review programs, and whether programs align with current NEA policy. Make recommendations as to whether to expand such programs or develop others in partnership with state and local associations or whether current NEA policy is supportive of best practices and research in this area.

The committee received several research studies and seminal articles on Peer Assistance (PA) and Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) Programs. The discussion around the CETT Report delved into the importance of supporting the development of these programs if NEA is to lead the profession. The CETT report envisioned PAR Programs as one avenue that would enable effective teachers to collaborate with administrators to create a high quality evaluation system in which teachers are deeply engaged in assessing and evaluating practice, developing professional learning plans, and contributing to personnel decisions.

Information was shared about two PAR Programs. Rhonda Johnson, President Columbus Education Association, presented on the Columbus, Ohio PAR program and NEA staff presented an overview of the Montgomery County, Maryland program. Following the presentations, the

committee analyzed the rationale and language in Resolution D-11 determining that the current language allows the association to move forward on establishing more of these programs. The committee further explored ways in which to educate and inform members about PA and PAR, vehicles for promotion, and possible outreach to supportive groups.

The Committee determined that NEA should not focus solely on the establishment of additional PAR programs, but should also be prepared to support establishment of PA programs as described in Resolution D-11. Doing so would acknowledge that not all districts want or may be prepared to embrace full PAR, but they may be prepared to support the establishment of PA. In the fall, the committee unanimously agreed to immediately submit the following recommendation to President Dennis Van Roekel:

The NEA should aggressively promote peer assistance programs and peer assistance and review programs, including recruiting states and/or locals who are interested in immediately implementing these programs. Due to the timing of the release of the commission report, this recommendation will be immediately forwarded to the NEA President.

The Committee also reviewed research and information about comprehensive induction and support programs and reviewed NEA policies related to these critically important issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That NEA use the revised *Dimensions of Individual Teacher Growth* graphic and the *Dimension of a Systemic Career Continuum* to develop a living tool (website) designed to assist both members and affiliates around managing their careers and local policy. The tool should allow states to upload information about their own evaluation-professional growth systems, standards, and licensure to the framework.
2. That NEA move CETT recommendations forward based on the following equal-weight priorities:
 - Address internal organizational structures, resources, and policies to more effectively lead education and professional issues
 - Build partnership with the AFT and others around transforming the education professions
 - Center leadership efforts on both improving student learning and addressing the professional needs of new teachers
 - Work with partners on all efforts to significantly reform and improve teacher preparation
3. That NEA should aggressively promote peer assistance programs and peer assistance and review programs, including recruiting states and/or locals who are interested in immediately implementing these programs. Due to the timing of the release of the commission report, this recommendation was immediately forwarded to the NEA President in December of 2011.

4. That as part of the work on the Three-Point Plan for Reform, the NEA actively promote induction and mentoring programs as significant components of Peer Assistance, Peer Assistance and Review programs, and other teacher assessment and evaluation systems.