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**Contact: Kelly Evans
206-790-0276**

**Statewide Study of Teaching Corps Finds Stability, Inequity
and Need for Additional Supports**

Seattle – Washington has a relatively stable teaching corps, however our teachers do not feel adequately prepared to meet the diverse learning needs of their students and issues of inequity between districts and schools remain. This finding comes from an update of a comprehensive analysis of the teaching force in Washington State released by The Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession (CSTP). The study, begun in 2003 and updated every three years, provides a statewide look at Washington’s teaching force, whether Washington teachers stay in teaching, how that relates to student achievement and teacher’ perspectives on various policy issues. “Who’s Teaching Washington Children? A 2006 Update”, authored by researchers at the University of Washington, reveals some encouraging trends and some concerns.

- The majority of classrooms teachers are in the same school after five years.
- Nearly 3/4s of all teachers remain in the same district in some capacity after five years.
- Only 1/5 of all teachers leave the Washington education system in a five-year period.

However, there are still areas which policymakers should pay attention to:

- Teachers do not feel adequately prepared to meet the diverse learning needs of their students.
- In some cases, teacher retention is directly related to the makeup of the student population – particularly to poverty and racial/ethnic makeup. Schools with higher rates of poverty retain fewer teachers after five years. And schools with a greater percentage of white students retain a higher percentage of teachers in the same school after five years.
- Poverty, retention and school performance are all linked to one another – not just in urban schools, but also in suburban districts.
- New teachers leave at higher rates than others, especially in the first two years.
- In small and rural districts, novice teachers move out of the district at higher rates than their peers statewide.
- As our student population becomes more diverse, it is clear that Washington state has an inadequate supply of teachers of color. The study found that an aging group of African American teachers is not being replaced by younger African American teachers in the same proportions.
- While the statewide portrait presents relative overall stability, teacher retention rates vary widely from school to school.

"The new report confirms our findings three years ago," said Jeanne Harmon, Executive Director of CSTP. "Washington enjoys a relatively stable teaching corps. However, we also learned from teachers that they need help meeting the diverse learning needs of the kids in their classrooms. Bottom line is that to keep that stability, we need to focus on meeting the needs of our teachers."

"Issues of equity and adequacy emerge when examining this data," said Marge Plecki, Associate Professor, University of Washington College of Education and co-author of the study. "We found that teacher retention declines as the poverty level of a school increases. We also learned from teachers that they feel ill-prepared to work with diverse learners, especially English-language learners. The two findings tell us clearly that we are not adequately supporting teachers in their work with students who may be most in need."

"We have issues that need to be addressed quickly," continued Harmon. "It's clear that improving and increasing professional development opportunities, providing supports for teachers in their first few years, and targeted help for rural districts and high-needs schools deserve attention by the Legislature."

In the absence of a statewide data system that provides detailed information about teacher retention and mobility, CSTP will continue to provide regular updates of this report. "CSTP's goal is to improve the quality of teaching," said Harmon. "We believe policymakers at the state and local level should have a thorough understanding of our current teacher workforce as they consider ways to improve teaching and where to target resources."

A copy of the full data report is available on line at www.cstp-wa.org. For more information about the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession, or to speak with executive director Jeanne Harmon, please contact Kelly Evans at 206-790-0276.

The Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession (CSTP, pronounced "C-step") was founded in 2003 as an independent, non-profit organization intent on helping students achieve by ensuring they have quality teachers in every classroom.

The data used in the research (commonly called S-275 data) was obtained from the Office for Superintendent of Public Instruction. Teachers' views were compiled from a series of surveys administered to a representative sample of Washington teachers from 2003 to 2005.