Variation in Head Start Teacher Qualifications, Compensation, and Turnover

Evidence from the *State(s) of Head Start* Report

Allison Friedman-Krauss
Afriedman-krauss@nieer.org

Steve Barnett
Sbarnett@nieer.org
First state-by-state look at Head Start

Head Start Program Information Report (PIR)

2014-2015 program year

Reveals wide spread variation in enrollment, spending, quality
  • Including teacher qualifications, compensation, and turnover
Percent of Head Start Teachers with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

- 99% of lead teachers in D.C.
- 36% of lead teachers in New Mexico
Percent of Early Head Start Teachers with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

- 64% of lead teachers in DC have a BA or higher
- 12% of lead teachers in New Mexico have a BA or higher
Head Start Lead Teacher Salary

- $73,265 in DC
- $42,398 in Maryland
- $20,226 in Mississippi
Salary Difference: Head Start Lead Teacher with a BA or higher vs. Public Elementary School Teachers

- Gap is $0 in DC
- Gap is less than $10,000 in WV and SD
- Gap is more than $40,000 in NY and MA
Early Head Start Lead Teacher Salary

- $43,380 in DC
- $33,763 in Washington
- $22,466 in Alabama

Average Salary for all lead teachers: $26,484
Average Salary for lead teachers with a BA or higher: $29,769
Average Salary for public elementary school teachers: $57,092
Salary Difference: Early Head Start Lead Teacher with a BA or higher vs. Public Elementary School Teachers

- Gap is less than $10,000 in SD
- Gap is more than $40,000 in NJ, NY, and MA
Teacher Turnover: Percent of Head Start Teacher who Left

Some evidence of lower turnover in states where more teachers have a BA or higher

- West Virginia: 6%
- Nebraska: 8%
- Missippi: 9%
- Louisiana: 11%
- Vermont: 11%
- Tennessee: 11%
- Virginia: 14%
- Kentucky: 14%
- Maryland: 14%
- Minnesota: 14%
- Massachusetts: 15%
- Pennsylvania: 15%
- Maine: 16%
- New Hampshire: 16%
- New Jersey: 16%
- Alabama: 16%
- Florida: 16%
- California: 16%
- Illinois: 16%
- Illinois: 16%
- Texas: 16%
- Arizona: 16%
- Arkansas: 17%
- Hawaii: 17%
- Washington: 17%
- Georgia: 17%
- Wyoming: 17%
- North Carolina: 18%
- Idaho: 18%
- Rhode Island: 18%
- New Mexico: 19%
- Michigan: 19%
- Alaska: 19%
- Ohio: 19%
- Iowa: 19%
- North Dakota: 19%
- New Mexico: 19%
- North Carolina: 19%
- Pennsylvania:20
- Minnesota: 21
- Mississippi: 21
- Alabama: 21
- Ohio: 21
- Iowa: 21
- North Dakota: 21
- New Mexico: 21
- Michigan: 22
- Tennessee: 22
- Wisconsin: 22
- South Carolina: 22
- North Carolina: 22
- Oklahoma: 24
- Montana: 25
- Idaho: 26
- Nevada: 26
- New Hampshire: 26
- New Jersey: 26
- Alabama: 27
- New Mexico: 29
- Texas: 31
- National Average: 17%
Teacher Turnover: Percent of Early Head Start Teacher who Left

- Only 2% in West Virginia
- Over 40% in MT, ND, and NE
Conclusions

• Progress has been made since the 2007 Head Start Reauthorization

• National Academy of Sciences recommends teachers of ALL children have at least a 4-year college degree

• Some evidence that teacher qualifications are related to classroom practices

• Lack of salary parity in most states

• And high turnover

• Need for improved teacher salary and benefits to recruit and retain strong teachers, and reduce their stress
Thank you!

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State(s) of Head Start

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Questions?

Please contact Allison Friedman-Krauss

afriedman-krauss@nieer.org

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