

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Helmsley Charitable Trust Grants \$1.1 Million to TeachingWorks to Transform Teacher Education
Improved teacher preparation programs and new licensure assessments seek to raise bar for entering teaching profession

The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust recently awarded a \$1.1 million grant to TeachingWorks at the University of Michigan. The goal of the grant is to support the establishment of rigorous standards for entry to teaching, and to partner with teacher preparation programs in developing ways to prepare teacher candidates to reach this threshold of practice. The mission of TeachingWorks is to ensure that novice teachers are ready for responsible beginning practice.

Due to the large numbers of educators retiring from or exiting the profession, nearly two million new teachers will be needed in the next decade. This enormous shift in the workforce creates an unprecedented opportunity to change how new teachers are prepared for classroom practice. Currently, beginning teachers are often underprepared to begin professional practice and are left to develop capabilities on the job that could be part of their professional training. In addition, in most cases, teacher licensure does not require aspiring educators to demonstrate that they have the skills and knowledge for responsible first-year practice with students. As a result, many beginning teachers are not as effective at helping their students learn as they should be.

The grant supports TeachingWorks' efforts in two ways:

- First, TeachingWorks will collaborate with the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to develop and implement a new licensure assessment called the National Observational Teaching Examination (NOTE). The new exam is aimed at ensuring that all teaching candidates demonstrate mastery of key entry-level practices and content before entering the classroom. NOTE will establish a more rigorous threshold for entry to the profession focused on specific high-leverage instructional practices. Combining performance-based measures with tests of teachers' practical content knowledge, this new licensure assessment will be field tested in nine states this academic year.
- Second, TeachingWorks will collaborate with teacher education programs across the country to develop common approaches to professional training focused on these high-leverage instructional practices and practical knowledge of content. The grant supports small networks of teacher education programs and K-12 school districts that collectively commit to increasing the number of beginning teachers who can carry out the practices assessed in NOTE at the threshold level for responsible beginning teaching. Each network will identify common problems in preparing educators for practice and members will work together to build and try out solutions.

"At TeachingWorks, we are committed to ensuring that all students receive skillful teaching and that teachers enter the classroom 'safe to practice,'" said Deborah Loewenberg Ball, director of

TeachingWorks and dean of the University of Michigan School of Education. “To achieve this, we need to shift teaching to be like other fields in which one must demonstrate entry-level proficiency before taking on responsibility for clients. Support from the Helmsley Charitable Trust is key to our effort to foster collaboration among committed partners who share our goal of tackling the problem of inadequate initial training for teachers.”

“As states across the country adopt higher standards for students – a movement in which teachers are the most important drivers of change – we must ensure that future educators have the preparation they need to succeed in classrooms from day one,” said Rachel Leifer, a program officer of the Helmsley Charitable Trust’s Education Program. “TeachingWorks’ well-designed, comprehensive approach offers a rare opportunity to improve teacher preparation at broad scale.”

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About the Helmsley Charitable Trust

The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust aspires to improve lives by supporting effective nonprofits in health, place-based initiatives, and education and human services. Since 2008, when the Trust began its active grantmaking, it has committed more than \$1 billion to a wide range of charitable organizations. Through its National Education Program, the Trust views education as a lever to advance both American economic competitiveness and individual social mobility. In K-12, the Trust focuses on ensuring all students graduate high school prepared for college or careers by providing quality instructional resources for educators and supporting the adoption and effective implementation of high academic standards. In postsecondary education, the Trust is primarily interested in increasing the number of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) graduates who can participate in high growth sectors of the economy. The Trust also focuses on policy levers that improve postsecondary completion, particularly for underrepresented populations. For more information, visit www.helmsleytrust.org.

About TeachingWorks

The mission of TeachingWorks is to ensure that all students get skillful teaching by raising the bar for entry to independent practice. Our goal is to create a system that will make skillful beginning teaching commonplace. Achieving this will mean that every student in this country would receive responsible teaching in every subject, every day, and every year. We believe that great teachers aren’t born – they’re taught. We know that people can be taught to teach skillfully, and the evidence shows how powerful good teaching can be in terms of the impact on students’ development and growth. Research on the teaching of English language arts and mathematics over the last two decades has helped to identify the key instructional practices that matter for students’ learning. Teaching skillfully requires being able to explain a key idea in understandable terms, make a classroom environment safe for learning, select and use materials and assignments, diagnose and clear up students’ confusion, assess young people’s progress, build relationships with them, and communicate effectively with their families. For more information, visit www.teachingworks.org.