Recent research based on large datasets linking individual pupil records with specific teachers in many different cities and states has established beyond doubt that the quality of the teacher has a profound influence on pupil learning. Some researchers assert that this "teacher effect" is so large that it can be considered the single most important factor in student achievement gains in schools. More than ever, the nation needs assurance that colleges and universities are educating prospective teachers of the highest quality possible. The knowledge base for teacher education is better understood today than in 1983, when an alarm was sounded through the release by the Department of Education of the famous report, *A Nation at Risk*. During the past generation, agreement among teacher educators has been growing on essential principles for excellence in the standard route by which students in higher education come to earn credentials enabling them to begin careers as teachers. A well supported, widely adopted, fully integrated approach, however, has been elusive.

The Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Annenberg Foundation, and the Ford Foundation have undertaken an ambitious reform initiative, Teachers for a New Era, to stimulate construction of excellent teacher education programs at selected colleges and universities. An external evaluation of the national impact of the initiative has begun with support from The Rockefeller Foundation. Success will require radical change in allocation of resources, academic organization, criteria for evaluating participating faculty, internal accountability measures, and relationships with practicing schools. At the conclusion of the project, each of the selected institutions should be regarded by the nation as administering one of the best programs possible for the standard primary route to employment as a beginning professional teacher.

Teachers for a New Era is organized by three design principles described in detail in the *prospectus*. First, a teacher education program should be guided by a respect for evidence, including attention to pupil learning gains accomplished under the tutelage of teachers who are graduates of the program. Second, faculty in the disciplines of the arts and sciences must be fully engaged in the education of prospective teachers, especially in the areas of subject matter understanding and general and liberal education. Finally, education should be understood as an academically taught clinical practice profession, requiring: close cooperation between colleges of education and actual practicing schools; master teachers as clinical faculty in the college of education; and residencies for beginning teachers during a two year period of induction.

The 11 TNE institutions include:

- Bank Street College of Education
- Boston College
- California State University, Northridge
- Florida A&M University
The AED National Institute for Work and Learning (NIWL) is providing technical support and capacity building to the higher education institutions participating in the initiative through site support, technical assistance brokering, and cross-site workshops and Institutes. For more information on the work of NIWL, visit the NIWL Web site at www.niwl.org