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**Public Education Network Releases Comprehensive Guide to Help Communities Improve Teacher Quality in Public Schools**

*Leveraging Local Education Fund Experience, the Guide Provides Communities with Tools to Improve Teacher Quality and Meet Key Requirements of No Child Left Behind*

**Chicago, IL** – Public Education Network (PEN), a leading advocate for community-based public school reform, today released *A Community Action Guide to Teacher Quality* at a two-day summit of local education fund (LEF) leaders spearheading a national effort to improve the quality of teaching in America’s public schools.

Wendy D. Puriefoy, president of PEN; Cris Gutierrez, commissioner of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future; and Barnett Berry, executive director of the Southeast Center on Teaching Quality, along with 25 other national and local education leaders, met in Chicago to share techniques and practices for engaging the public in efforts to improve teacher quality in local school districts and nationwide.

The guide, which was released at the summit, offers step-by-step procedures on the use of data to assess teacher quality, on ways to create school and community environments that support teacher quality, and, most importantly, on ways to engage the community in support of teacher quality. The guide comes at a time of heightened interest in teacher quality since *No Child Left Behind* requires every class have a “highly qualified” teacher by the close of the 2005–2006 school year. Its release also coincides with the celebration of Teacher Appreciation Day, traditionally the first Tuesday in May.

“It is especially fitting on Teacher Appreciation Day that we acknowledge the vital importance of having a well-qualified teacher in every classroom. Unless and until we do, it will be impossible to deliver the high quality education that our children deserve from their public schools,” said Ms. Puriefoy. “To help communities reach that goal, we have turned to our 80 local education fund members for their expert guidance in crafting our *Community Action Guide*.”

Local education funds have been working to improve teacher quality since their inception in 1983; since then, they have invested more than \$1 billion in teacher quality. The event and the guide are part of a three-year, national teacher quality initiative conducted by PEN. Local education funds in Washington, DC; New York City, NY; Chattanooga, TN; Seattle, WA; and a statewide effort in West Virginia, are working to examine and improve teacher skills and capacity, working conditions, and compensation structures.

“Teacher quality has a direct and meaningful influence on student performance,” said Ms. Puriefoy. “Simply stated, students perform better when they have well-qualified teachers.

If a disproportionate number of low-income and minority students do not have well-qualified teachers, then our public school system is failing in its obligation to provide a quality education to all children in America.”

### **About Public Education Network**

Founded in 1991, Public Education Network (PEN) is a national organization of local education funds (LEFs) and individuals working to improve public schools and build citizen support for quality public education in low-income communities across the nation. PEN believes an active, vocal constituency is the key to ensuring that every child, in every community, benefits from a quality public education. PEN and its 80 local education fund members are building public demand and mobilizing resources for quality public education on behalf of nearly 11 million children in more than 1200 school districts in 31 states and the District of Columbia.

*A Community Action Guide to Teacher Quality* is funded by a grant from the US Department of Education’s Office of Educational Research and Improvement and is posted on the PEN website at [www.publiceducation.org](http://www.publiceducation.org).

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