

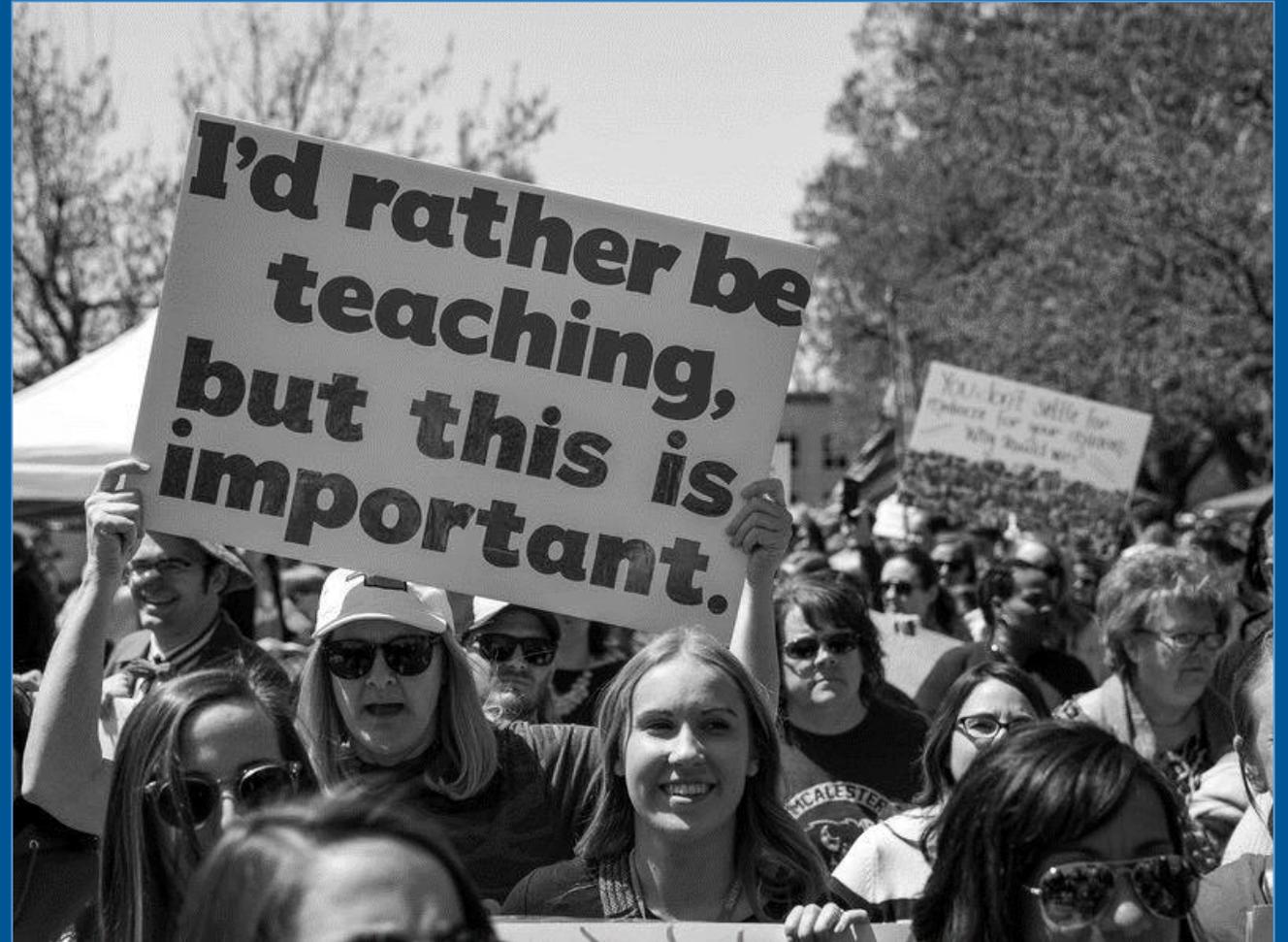
# Elevating the Teaching Profession in a Time of Nationwide Strikes

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# Context setting



Oklahoma teachers and supporters marched outside the state Capitol during a nine-day teacher strike in 2018. *Scott Heins/Getty Images*

# Some of the Reasons Teachers are Striking

- According to the National Center for Education Statistics, **average teacher salaries have dropped slightly over the past two decades** – down about 4% from 2009-10.
- EdBuild determined that the average cost-adjusted starting teacher salary for the 2012–2013 school year was approximately \$33,004 — **more than \$10,000 less than the average starting salary for college graduates generally** (\$45,739).
- ACT surveys show that high school students are overwhelmingly turned off by the low starting salary.
- It has been a struggle in the U.S. to attract and retain qualified teachers, and that building frustration has resulted in strikes in West Virginia, Oklahoma, Arizona, North Carolina, Kentucky, Virginia, Colorado, Washington, Los Angeles, Denver, and Oakland, California.

# Salary is Just One Piece of the Puzzle, Though

- Research consistently points to the effectiveness of the classroom teacher as the most important in-school factor for student achievement.
  - Past research has suggested *blanket* higher salaries are only **weakly related to student performance**, although they may help reduce turnover.
  - Research has also indicated *targeted raises and performance-based compensation* leads to **gains in student achievement** – one example showed as much as 4 to 11.5 weeks per year of additional learning in Tennessee.
- Teachers often cite factors like the **lack of career development** and professional growth opportunities or the **quality of their principal** as being the main reason they choose to leave the field – not low pay.

# Political Context Around Teacher Pay

- Everyone can agree educators should not be in poverty because they have chosen to teach. But **how much** to pay teachers, **who pays** for it, and **how to distribute that funding** are harder questions to answer.
  - Benefits and pension programs also have a cost.
- Federal, state and local governments as well as teacher unions have different perspectives on those questions. A number of top Democratic presidential candidates have also made their proposals.
- Generally, our society gives control of those answers to our 13,500 school districts, making systemic changes challenging.
- Raising teacher pay can benefit students as well as teachers, if we do it in a strategic way. Which strategy is where we differ.

# Background: Oklahoma

- In April 2018, about 30,000 teachers in Oklahoma refused to work for nine days, protesting low pay and years of cuts to school funding.
  - The last statewide raise had been in 2008.
- The state legislature passed the first tax increase in nearly three decades to give teachers raises and put more money into schools.
- State-funded, across-the-board teacher raises:
  - Teacher raises averaged \$6,100 (\$5,000-\$8,800) in March 2019.
  - Teachers will receive another raise of \$1,200 in May 2020.

# Background: Colorado and Denver

- In April 2018, teachers in Colorado demonstrated at the Capitol to call for more education funding.
- In February 2019, 2,000 teachers in Denver went on strike for the first time in 25 years.
  - This led to an average 11.7% raise and annual cost of living increases, and it resulted in changes to the merit pay system.

# Background: NIET's vision for teacher support

- The National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) started with the core goal of improving and scaling teacher excellence, taking a holistic approach based on research.
- NIET's foundational service, the TAP System for Teacher and Student Advancement, has four components to supporting teachers: **multiple career paths, ongoing job-embedded professional growth, instructionally focused accountability, and performance-based compensation.**
  - TAP has resulted in improvements in hundreds of schools and districts across the country.
- NIET believes **intentional, sustained, and high-quality investments in educators** directly result in success for all students and are essential to eliminating equity gaps. When teachers AND leaders are provided with opportunities to grow professionally and coached to instructional excellence, all students will improve.

# Possible solutions



# Laying the Groundwork for Solutions

- Help taxpayers understand the need for a greater investment – and illustrate the value educators have to the society at large.
- Address expectations that new investments come with accountability for how that money is spent.
- Think more creatively – and responsibly – on policy that provides long-term solutions and elevates the education profession in the eyes of future teachers: moving away from a 10-month calendar so they get a paycheck year round, reforming existing pension plans or benefits programs
- Have an honest conversation with ourselves as educators about how we talk about the teaching profession – since it is a profession.

# Possible Palatable Solutions to Attract, Retain and Reward Teachers

- Increase base pay, but save the largest pay increases for those teachers who teach in hard-to-staff schools and/or who show greater effectiveness and/or who take on additional roles.
- Establish teacher leadership structures that allow teachers to grow professionally while staying connected to the classroom, with appropriate pay.
- Create formalized roles for those teachers who are doing great work and who want to work year-round.
- Rethink employee benefits based on the desires of today's workforce, since many do not do much to attract or reward educators.
- Modernize the pension system.

# Lightning Round

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Questions?

