

Question:

You asked about teacher recruitment and retention strategies to address teacher shortages in the states.

Response:

The response below is broken into three sections: 1.) the national landscape of teacher shortages, 2.) strategies for addressing the teacher shortage in rural communities, and 3.) strategies for addressing the teacher shortage more generally.

National Landscape

News of teacher shortages in states such as [Arizona](#), [Indiana](#), [Kansas](#), and [Oklahoma](#) abound. Reports point to a mix of policies such as tenure, pay, collective bargaining rights and evaluations as limiting interest in the profession and pushing people who are in the profession out. [This](#) Washington Post story summarizes many of the recent media reports on shortages.

Recent state and national data confirm some of these suspicions.

- The number of [enrollees](#) in teacher preparation programs across the country fell from 719,000 in 2008-09, to 499,000 in 2012-13.
- Proportionate to the overall college-going population, [fewer](#) individuals are choosing to pursue a career in education.
- [More than 17 percent](#) of public school teachers leave education within five years of starting.
- Additional state data and national comparisons can be retrieved [here](#) and [here](#).

Teacher shortages have been, and continue to be greatest in at-risk/hard-to-staff schools (rural, inner-city, low-performing and high-poverty) and hard-to-staff subjects (math, science, computers and special education).

However, as described in detail in [this AIR report](#), long term trends suggest that interest in the profession and the supply of teachers rely largely on the state of the economy, and, despite the recent drop, teacher production has grown steadily since the 1980s. The report also points to three studies that found that less effective teachers are more likely to leave the profession than effective teachers and highlights evidence that the academic qualifications of the teachers who are entering the profession are improving. Also worthy of noting – a Ball State [study](#) that recently evaluated Indiana’s oft-highlighted teacher shortage issue found that there is actually an excess, rather than

Additional Resources

From ECS:

- ✓ State Policy Database pages on [Teaching Quality](#), [Certification and Licensure](#), [Alternative Certification](#), [Recruitment and Retention](#), [Recruitment and Retention for At-Risk Schools](#), and [Recruitment and Retention for High Needs Subjects](#)
- ✓ Research Studies Database page on [recruiting and retaining good teachers](#)

From Other Organizations:

- ✓ [The Supply and Demand for Rural Teachers](#) (ROCI, 2015)
- ✓ [Boosting Idaho Rural Students’ College Prospects by Expanding Access to Great Teaching](#) (ROCI, 2015)
- ✓ [Preparing Teachers to Teach in Rural Schools](#) (REL Central, 2008)

shortage, of teachers in the state. The authors do qualify the results, however, by acknowledging that there may be a shortage in specific areas such as STEM and special education.

Addressing the Teacher Shortage

Many states and districts have and continue to work towards attracting and keeping teachers in K-12 schools, urban, suburban and rural alike. Common recruitment strategies include: tuition reimbursement, loan forgiveness programs, signing bonuses, salary adjustments, or housing assistance. Common retention strategies include: teacher pay policies geared towards increasing base pay or establishing merit pay; offering high quality induction, mentoring, and professional development; providing opportunities to take on advanced roles such as a teacher leader or evaluator; improving overall working conditions; creating adequate opportunities for planning and teamwork amongst teachers; or ensuring that a high-quality leader that effectively supports his/her staff is in every school. Many of the strategies discussed below can and are being used to recruit teachers in rural schools. It is important to note that many, especially retention strategies, are developed and implemented at the local level and will therefore not be represented here.

Recruiting and Retaining Quality Teachers

Many states have policies and programs in place to improve student access to quality teachers, especially in at-risk and hard-to-staff schools. Some states provide incentives to teachers and teacher candidates who agree to teach in these schools in return for multi-year commitments to remain in the school and in the teaching profession. Examples of policies and programs designed to attract and retain quality teachers include:

- **Illinois:** [The Golden Apple Scholars](#) program identifies talented high school seniors, as well as first and second-year college students who have the promise and drive to be excellent teachers in high-need schools. The program provides scholars with four years of residential summer institutes and on-site classroom experience and mentoring from a Golden Apple teacher.
- **District of Columbia:** Bill 19-648 (2012) established the [Highly Effective Teacher Incentive Program](#) to encourage highly effective teachers to teach in four high-need (low-performing and low-income) schools for the start of the 2013-2014 school year. The incentives include: a one-time bonus of \$10,000; homebuyer and other housing assistance; up to \$5,000 to be expended on tuition assistance; and up to \$3,000 to be used as income tax credits.
- **Colorado:** S.B. 260 (2014) established the [Quality Teacher Recruitment Program](#). The program authorizes the department of education to award grants to organizations working in concert with school districts or board of cooperative educational services to recruit, select, train, and retain highly qualified teachers in areas that have had historic difficulty in attracting and keeping quality teachers. In December 2013, the Public Education Business Coalition (PEBC) and Teach for America (TFA) were selected as grant recipients. Each organization received \$1,470,000 for the two-year grant period and were expected to place teachers in partner districts by the start of the 2014-15 school year. The analysis for the program's outcomes over the first year can be accessed [here](#).

Additionally, in 2014 the U.S. Department of Education announced that it would require all State Education Agencies to develop plans to ensure equitable access to excellent teachers, and as of December 2015, all 50 states have Department-approved plans in place.

Alternative Routes

Alternative licensure routes are often used by states in an effort to expand the pool of teachers and to attract quality candidates who are otherwise unlikely to enter the profession. Every state offers some alternative certification for prospective teachers, but the eligibility and program requirements vary quite significantly from state to state. Because the number of people entering teaching through traditional undergraduate routes is dropping, states are eager to find creative ways to encourage professionals to make a career shift. By creating an alternative route, a state can offer opportunities to transition into teaching that require little to no coursework, waive pre-requisite requirements or eliminate periods of unemployment. Some states, including Washington, accommodate nontraditional backgrounds by limiting or removing standard coursework and major requirements for teacher candidates. Many states offer financial relief to participants by allowing them to teach and earn a salary while completing coursework requirements for a general certification.

Some states and districts are permitting more candidates to enter through these alternative routes in order to fill vacant teaching slots. For example, districts in [Oregon](#) are recruiting professionals without educational backgrounds to teach in their schools, and the [Oklahoma](#) State Board has approved in excess of 800 emergency certificates to allow individuals who haven't completed basic higher education and training requirements to enter the classroom.

The National Council on Teaching Quality (NCTQ) has collected [50-state data](#) on alternative routes to certification including eligibility requirements, preparation and usage and providers. Recommendations by the organization for the state of Washington can be retrieved [here](#).

Financial and Professional Incentives

Loan Forgiveness: Our research indicates that many teacher loan forgiveness programs focus on shortage areas or math/science teachers. For example, **North Dakota's** teacher loan forgiveness program requires teacher candidates to declare an intent to teach at a grade level or in a content area in which a teacher shortage exists. The superintendent of public instruction determines shortage areas. **The Teach for Texas Loan Repayment Assistance Program** provides repayment assistance using criteria similar to North Dakota loan forgiveness program for teachers in a grade level or content area experiencing a shortage. The state's Math and Science Scholars Loan Repayment Program is relatively new and provides repayment assistance for teachers who study and teach mathematics or science at a school receiving Title I funding. Recently, legislators in **Indiana** [proposed a bill](#) that would provide tuition reimbursement to teachers who graduated in the top 20 percent of their high school class, hold a teaching degree, and spend five years teaching in the classroom. Districts can also create loan forgiveness programs for their teachers, but as of 2011-12, only [2.4% of districts](#) nationwide did so.

Compensation, Recognition and Advancement: According to [this report](#), despite an increase over the past decade, teachers' salaries in the United States are not competitive when compared to the average salary of similarly educated workers. A number of states have set a statewide teacher salary schedule or use minimum pay requirements. ECS has this 50-state data so please let us know if that would be useful.

To address teacher shortages, many states have policies in place to recognize and advance excellent teachers. For example, **D.C.'s** [Leadership Initiative for Teachers](#) (LIFT) is a five-stage career ladder that provides high-performing teachers with opportunities for advancement inside the classroom, as well as additional responsibility and increased recognition and compensation. Similarly, **Iowa's** [Teacher Leadership Compensation System](#) rewards effective

teachers with leadership opportunities and higher pay and attracts promising new teachers with better starting salaries and more support. According to [this NCTQ report](#), in 2015, 16 states provide performance pay for teachers and seven states directly tie teacher compensation to teacher evaluation results.

In June 2015, **Delaware's** Committee to Advance Educator Compensation and Careers (CAECC), [established by legislation in 2014](#) provided [a report of recommendations](#) to better attract, retain, and support educators in the state. Among the recommendations were: a higher starting salary from the state; a new career pathway that aligns compensation, certification, and professional designation to more clearly recognize an educator's progression through career milestone; and the opportunity for up to 15 percent of educators to earn teacher leader roles. The committee will continue to meet in the next year with the assistance of two new educator subcommittees to work out further details.

Task forces have also been convened in many states including [Arizona](#), [Oklahoma](#), [Wisconsin](#), and [Hawaii](#). **Indiana** has two panels studying the issue. Recommendations from the Interim Study Committee can be retrieved [here](#) and include increased salary flexibility, review of teacher pay and benefit packages, financial incentives for STEM teachers and alternative certification programs, an annual analysis of teacher needs by subject area and location, and increased investment professional development . Another committee, led by State Superintendent Glenda Ritz, will likely provide alternative recommendations in a forthcoming report.

Induction and Mentorship Opportunities

[A 2012 report](#) by the [New Teacher Center](#) found that 27 states require some form of induction or mentoring support for new teachers, and 11 require two or more years of support. Three states—**Connecticut**, **Delaware** and **Iowa** require schools and districts to provide multi-year induction support to beginning teachers, require teachers to complete an induction program to obtain a professional teaching license, and provide dedicated state induction funding. Recommendations by the organization for the state of Washington are provided [here](#). [Research has shown](#) that these programs improve teacher satisfaction, performance and retention, and also improve student learning.

Evaluations and Feedback

The use of teacher evaluations can either help or hinder efforts to retain teachers. [NCTQ](#) highlights efforts made in three states –**Delaware**, **Florida** and **Louisiana** – that effectively use teacher evaluations for teacher training, professional development, improvement planning, compensation and accountability. Teacher satisfaction with the evaluation process improves when teachers perceive feedback to be focused on improvement instead of judgment.

Recent Unique Attempts to Combat Statewide Teacher Shortage Including a Selection of 2015 Enacted Policies

- States like [Indiana](#) and [Oklahoma](#) are turning to retired teachers to fill open teaching positions.
- Some [rural districts](#) and districts with [high concentrations of English Learners](#) are organizing recruitment campaigns in the Philippines, San Juan, Puerto Rico, and more.
- **Texas** is exploring [virtual teaching](#) as a solution whereby high quality teachers are streamed into a classroom to instruct a course. Aides or substitute take care of classroom management.
- **Oklahoma SB 20** (2015) allows the State Board to issue teaching certificates to out-of-state teachers with 5years of experience and waive requirements to take any competency examinations.
- **Oklahoma HB 1521** (2015) permits districts to offer a one-time incentive pay for recruitment and retention purposes.

- **Nevada** [AB 493](#) (2015) requires that each district reserve money sufficient to pay an increase in base salaries for at least 5percent of teachers and administrators in the district, first targeting schools rated as underperforming.
- **Nevada** [AB 27](#) (2015) removes an existing requirement that school districts must demonstrate a shortage of teachers in a certain subject area in order issue a teaching license to a person who is not a citizen or lawful permanent resident and instead directs districts to demonstrate that they have not been able to employ a person with the necessary skills or abilities to address an area of concern.
- **Nevada** [SB 474](#) (2015) creates the Great Teaching and Leading Fund to provide grants for: professional development programs, teacher and administrator preparation programs, teacher peer assistance and review programs, leadership and development training, and recruitment programs. Program priorities for FY 2015-2016 are professional development for teachers in science standards and content, implementation of the statewide performance evaluation system, teacher and principal recruitment and retention.
- **Connecticut** [SB 1098](#) (2015) requires, among other things, the Commissioner of Education to enter teacher certification reciprocity agreements with other states, decreases from three to two years the amount of teaching experience an out-of-state teacher needs to qualify for a professional teacher certificate, requires the Department of Education to study and develop strategies to increase minority teacher recruitment and retention and permits the State Board of Education to issue a temporary 90-day certificate in the endorsement areas of teacher shortage areas.
- **Maryland** [SB 635](#) (2015) requires the State Board, the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board, and at least two local school systems, one rural and one urban to consider and, if appropriate, develop an alternative teacher certification program for areas of the State experiencing a critical teacher shortage.
- **Oklahoma** residents are working on a 2016 ballot measure proposing a constitutional amendment that would add a 1percent sales tax to provide teachers with a raise.