

## Your Question:

You asked for examples of policy efforts to help shore up the substitute teacher pool.

## Our Response:

Many states are struggling to maintain a strong and stable pool of [substitute teachers](#) and existing shortages may be exacerbated in light of the [COVID-19 pandemic](#). Some states and [districts](#) have taken action to increase or improve the pool of substitute teachers by expanding the pool of candidates, improving compensation and providing substitute teachers with a pathway to full licensure.

This [50-state scan](#) from the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) includes information on substitute teacher licenses, requirements and evaluation that may be useful for understanding the policy landscape as it relates to substitutes, though the scan has not been updated since 2017. Please note: Education Commission of the States is not familiar with the methodology NCTQ uses to rate state policies nor do we endorse the rating system used in the NCTQ reports.

### State Examples

#### *Expanding the Pool of Candidates:*

Many states have considered policies to [bring retired teachers back to work](#), including as substitute teachers. Other legislation focuses on the opposite end of the spectrum by allowing students completing their bachelor's degree to substitute teach or by reducing training requirements for substitute teachers. Below are some examples of state action to expand the pool of substitute teacher candidates.

- **California:** The state provides an [emergency 30-day substitute teaching permit](#) that allows permit holders to substitute teach for no more than 30 days for any one teacher during the school year. Candidates must hold at least a bachelor's degree and complete the basic skills requirement. The state also provides an [emergency substitute teaching permit](#) for prospective teachers that allows students still completing their degrees to serve as substitute teachers if they have completed at least 90 semester hours of course work, have verification of enrollment and complete the basic skills requirement.
- **Louisiana [H.B. 8](#)** (2020): Outlines requirements and provisions for the re-employment of retired teachers as substitute classroom teachers, including specifics related to salary, retirement system contributions and notification of employment to the board of trustees.
- **Michigan [H.B. 4421](#)** (2018): Permits a school district or intermediary school district board to employ an individual without a teaching certificate as a substitute teacher if either of the following requirements are met: 1) the individual has at least 60 semester hours of college credit or an associate degree from a college, university, or community college; or 2) for substitute teaching a course in an industrial technology education program or a career and technical education program, the individual is engaged to substitute teach in a subject matter or field in which the individual has achieved expertise, as determined by the board of a school district or an intermediate school district and satisfying a number of requirements.
- **Missouri:** The state board of education recently [approved](#) a rule that allows candidates to receive a substitute teaching certificate by completing 20 hours of online training. The rule went into effect late December 2021.

- **New Jersey [S.B. 2832](#)** (2021): Allows students to apply for a substitute teacher credential if they: 1) are enrolled at regionally accredited institutions of higher education, 2) are applying for a substitute teacher credential between the enactment of this bill and June 30, 2023, 3) have completed a minimum of 30 semester-hour credits, and 4) are at least 20 years old. The bill requires the commissioner of education to examine issues and develop recommendations as to whether the 30 semester-hour requirement should be extended.
- **South Carolina [H. 3513](#)** (2018): Creates a new retired teacher certificate for substitute teaching. It provides that eligible retired educators must not currently hold a valid educator certificate and that renewal of a retired educator certificate does not require completion of professional learning or renewal credit. The bill specifies that retired educator teaching certificate holders are not exempt from district professional development requirements. The bill also requires the state board of education to develop implementation guidelines and requires the department of education to create forms and a process for applying.

### *Compensation:*

According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), the mean annual wage for a short-term substitute teacher in the U.S. as of 2020 was \$36,090. Providing competitive compensation can help states improve the substitute teacher pool by attracting more candidates. A number of local districts have increased substitute teacher salaries, including [Boulder Valley School District](#) in Colorado, [Rutherford County Schools](#) in Tennessee and [Amarillo Independent School District](#) in Texas. Some states have also taken legislative action on the issue. Below are examples of legislation addressing compensation for substitute teachers.

- **Delaware [H.B. 88](#)** (2018): Permits a student who is: 1) currently enrolled in an accredited institution for higher education in a program that will culminate in the student becoming eligible for teaching, and 2) who has earned at least 60 credits to be paid \$83 per day as substitute teachers, the same rate paid to those who hold a bachelor's degree but not a teaching license.
- **Tennessee [S.B. 379/H.B. 368](#)** (2017): Specifies that a substitute teacher who is a retired teacher is not required to continue to renew the teacher's license in order to work as a substitute teacher and requires that the rate of compensation for a retired teacher without an active teaching license must not be less than the rate of compensation set by the school district for a retired teacher with an active teaching license.

### *Substitute to Full-Time Teacher Pathways:*

Creating pathways for substitute teachers to become full-time teachers may help make the profession more attractive and eventually help states retain qualified substitutes as full-time teachers. Below is an example of legislation from Arizona and a resolution from Hawaii.

- **Arizona [S.B. 1071](#)** (2019): Requires the state board of education to adopt rules for certification that allow substitute teachers who can demonstrate primary teaching responsibility in a classroom, as defined by the state board of education, to use the time spent in that classroom toward the required capstone experience for standard teaching certification.
- **Hawaii [S.R. 59-2017](#)** (2017): Requests that the department of education and the University of Hawaii System develop programming and educational supports for educational assistants and long-term substitute teachers to earn teaching degrees and become full-time certified teachers.