Tackling Critical Teacher Shortages: Insights on Federal Policies & Programs

#TeacherShortages
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Opening Remarks

Michael DiNapoli, Jr., Deputy Director of Federal Policy, Learning Policy Institute
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Welcoming Remarks

Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA)
Presentation

Susan Kemper Patrick, Senior Researcher, Learning Policy Institute

Michael DiNapoli, Jr., Deputy Director of Federal Policy, Learning Policy Institute
The State of the Teacher Workforce
Current Data and Policy Implications
Teacher shortages occur when teaching positions are left vacant or filled with teachers who are not fully certified for their position.

Shortages disrupt students’ opportunities to learn as schools:

- Cancel classes
- Rely on virtual teachers or long-term substitutes
- Increase class size

Teachers who are not fully certified:

- Lack teacher training or content-specific expertise
- Are more likely to leave the profession

In October 2023, 36% of schools reported they increased class size due to teacher and staff vacancies. 

Source: School Pulse Panel (2024)

Across 16 studies, the odds of turnover were 47% lower for teachers with standard certification compared to those not fully certified.

Source: Nguyen et al (2020)
In a recent scan of state-reported teacher data, LPI found that 314,134 positions were either unfilled or filled by teachers not fully certified for their assignments, representing about 1 in 10 of all teaching positions nationally.

At least 6 million children affected by shortages

Teacher shortages contribute to inequity

In October 2023, 37% of schools in nationally representative survey reported having at least one teaching vacancy, while 52% of schools serving higher poverty communities reported at least one teaching vacancy.

Teaching vacancies in October 2023

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<td>21</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>By neighborhood poverty:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Higher poverty</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lower poverty</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>67</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: School Pulse Panel (2024)
Teacher shortages vary by subject and state

National data from October 2023 indicates that vacancy rates are two times higher for math and biology positions and three times higher for special education positions compared to English or social studies.

Source: School Pulse Panel (2024)

Teacher shortage areas by subject and state (2022-23):

- At least one subject area: 50 states plus D.C.
- Special education: 48 states
- Science: 46 states
- Math: 44 states

How can we measure the state of the teacher workforce?
State of the teacher workforce

• Focuses on important factors influencing teacher recruitment and retention
• Uses most recent national data to capture 40+ indicators across 3 categories:
  ▪ Teaching attractiveness
  ▪ Teacher equity
  ▪ Supply and demand
• Download each state’s data points
Racial diversity of the teaching workforce

Figure 1. The Share of Teachers of Color in the Teacher Workforce: 1987-2020

Note: Analysis by Learning Policy Institute. “Teachers of Color” combined includes all non-white teachers, including Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander teachers and teachers reporting two or more races. Sources: National Center for Education Statistics reports (see endnotes for complete list of sources).
A smaller and stalled teacher pipeline

Over the past 5 years, there are diverging trends across states:

- 17 states had enrollment increases of more than +5%
- 7 states had relatively flat enrollment
- 27 states had enrollment declines of more than -5%

**Teacher Preparation Enrollment and Completion Over Time in the United States**

Source: LEARNING POLICY INSTITUTE

Note: This analysis includes all 50 states plus the District of Columbia. Due to a reporting change in 2018-19, Title II published enrollment numbers from the academic years 2010-11 to 2020-21 that included completers (prior years did not). To create a consistent enrollment measure over time (including completers), we updated the enrollment values for these earlier years by adding the reported completer numbers to the reported enrollment numbers.

The quality of teacher preparation matters

Teachers who participate in comprehensive preparation:

- Tend to be more effective, as measured by classroom observations and student learning in certain subjects
- Are more likely to stay in the profession

Elements of comprehensive preparation:

- Content-specific training
- Knowledge of teaching and learning
- Intensive pre-service clinical practice

Comprehensive preparation that is accessible and affordable can create high-retention pathways into teaching.
• Raising salaries may influence the quantity and quality of applicant pool for open teaching positions

• Higher salaries are associated with lower teacher turnover

• Increasing salaries was identified as a top strategy to recruit and retain more teachers of color

**Average weekly wage of public school teachers plummets in 2022**

Average weekly wages of public school teachers and other college graduates (2022$), 1979–2022

Source: Economic Policy Institute
Starting salaries across the U.S.

Starting salary

The average starting teacher salary per state, adjusted for cost-of-living differences.

Source: National Education Association
Year of Data Collection: 2021-22

U.S. Average: $42,850

Lowest: 5 states below $40,000 (CO, MO, MT, NH, OR)

Highest: 3 states plus D.C. above $50,000 (DC, NJ, NY, WY)
Student loan debt among teachers

Support for beginning teachers is critical

- Across many studies, beginning teachers receiving quality mentoring and induction support tend to stay in the profession longer than those receiving no supports or lower quality supports.
- One study found that participation in a two-year induction program resulted in 2-4.5 additional months of learning in reading or math for students of teachers receiving intensive induction supports.
Policy recommendations
Policy recommendations & actions

- Expand loan forgiveness and service scholarships
- Expand the affordability and availability of high-retention preparation pathways
- Provide high-quality mentoring for all beginning teachers
- Increase teachers’ salaries and net compensation
Over 93% of all loans are held by the Department of Education

1.3 million teachers are still in repayment (37%)

Loan forgiveness and service scholarships

Federal Programs

• TEACH Grant
• Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program
• Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program

Federal Proposals

• DIVERSIFY Act
• Educators for America Act
• Loan Forgiveness for Educators Act
High-retention pathways into teaching

Federal Programs

- Teacher Quality Partnership, Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence, and IDEA-D Personnel Preparation Programs
  - $200 million FY23
- Title II-A ESEA: Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants
  - $2.2 billion FY23
- U.S. ED FY25 = $2.4 billion for these four programs

Federal Proposals

- Preparing and Retaining Education Professionals Act (PREP) Act
- Educators for America Act
Support for beginning teachers and teacher leadership

- Title II-A ESEA, TQP, Hawkins, and IDEA-D-PP programs
- AL, IA, KS, and TX have funded mentoring and induction programs
- 16 states with dedicated funding
- Matching grants for teacher induction and mentoring programs
- Opportunities for teacher leadership
Federal strategies to ensure competitive compensation

• Refundable tax credits
• Housing subsidies
• Salary incentives
• Loan forgiveness and service scholarships
Resources

The Federal Role in Ending Teacher Shortages
Linda Darling-Hammond, Michael DiNapoli Jr., and Tara Kini

Diversifying the Teaching Profession: How to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color
Desiree Carey-Thomas

In Debt: Student Loan Burdens Among Teachers

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Contact us

Michael DiNapoli
mdinapoli@learningpolicyinstitute.org

Susan Kemper Patrick
spatrick@learningpolicyinstitute.org

LPI Research
learningpolicyinstitute.org
Panel Discussion

• Jacqueline Rodriguez (moderator), Chief Executive Officer, National Center for Learning Disabilities

• Ternesha Burroughs, Secondary Math Teacher, Osseo School District; President, Education Minnesota–OSSEO

• Clifton Tanabe, Dean, College of Education, University of Texas–El Paso

• Reggie White, 2022–2023 Alabama Teacher of the Year; District Mentor Teacher, Birmingham City Schools
Q & A

Please write your questions on the index cards provided, raise your hand, and someone will come by to collect the card.
Panel Discussion
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