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## **New study finds that, one year later, California teacher shortages are worse**

*New update to January 2016 report reveals increase in teacher shortages in the state, with special education, low-income, and minority students most affected*

*Having gone through a teacher shortage in the mid-90s, I worry that we're going to be in that era again where we are desperate for a warm body, and that they're not given the proper training and setup to be successful. And who is affected by that is kids; and that's a huge worry to me.*

*—California district superintendent*

~ [Report URL](#)

PALO ALTO, CA—A just-released follow-up to a January 2016 report on teacher shortages in California shows that shortages have worsened in the past year, with especially severe shortages continuing in special education, math, and science.

The report, *Addressing California's Growing Teacher Shortage: 2017 Update*, will be released by the Learning Policy Institute February 8. The update compares data from 2015-16 with earlier data, finding that while roughly the same number of teachers are entering the profession each year, the increasing demand for teachers in California is far outpacing the supply.

"The updated data paint a disturbing picture, showing that enrollment in teacher preparation programs in California remains near historic lows while the number of underprepared teachers in classrooms has grown sharply over the last several years," said LPI Research and Policy Associate Desiree Carver-Thomas, lead author of the report.

"This latest evidence shows that the pattern of many years ago may be repeating itself now: substandard credentials and permits are rapidly increasing and students in special education, high-minority, high-poverty, and high-EL schools are the hardest hit," added report co-author Linda Darling-Hammond, President and CEO of LPI and Professor Emeritus at Stanford University. "While the state has made initial long-term investments in increasing the supply of

well-prepared teachers, more immediate action is needed to ensure a robust, well-prepared teacher workforce now and into the future.”

This update comes on the heels of [a survey](#) of members of the California School Boards Association, released in late November, whose responses reflect a similar picture.

Updated data show the following:

- **The number of new teachers entering the field is near historic lows while the need for new teachers continues to rise:** Despite a small increase in teacher preparation enrollments between 2013–14 and 2014–15, the number of newly credentialed teachers did not increase. The number of teaching candidates enrolled last year was just one quarter of the number enrolled in 2001–02. While 11,487 teachers were newly credentialed, the need for teachers is increasing rapidly, with 22,315 projected new hires for 2016-17.
- **Significantly more students are being taught by underprepared teachers:** In 2015–16, California issued more than 10,000 intern credentials, permits, and waivers—more than double the number issued in 2012, placing people in classrooms who had not completed—or sometimes not even started—teaching programs. The greatest growth has been in emergency-style permits known as Provisional Intern Permits (PIPs) and Short-Term Staff Permits (STSPs) with more than 4,000 individuals teaching on PIPs and STSPs in 2015-16, nearly five times as many as in 2012–13.
- **The number of qualified math and science teachers continues to shrink.** Between 2012 and 2016, the proportion of math and science teachers entering the field on substandard credentials or permits doubled, going from 20% to nearly 40% of the total (over 1500 in all), while the number of such teachers entering with full credentials dropped from 3,200 to 2,200 over that time period.
- **More special education teachers are entering the classroom on substandard credentials or permits than are entering with full teaching credentials.** Just 36% of new special education teachers in 2015–16 had a preliminary credential. The remaining 64% of new special education teachers—more than 4,000—entered the field as interns or with permits or waivers.
- **California appears unprepared to meet the expected increase in demand for bilingual education teachers as schools develop and expand bilingual programs under Proposition 58.** The passage of the proposition last fall allows for the expansion of bilingual instruction for the first time since a 1998 proposition sharply curtailed bilingual programs. There are many fewer bilingual teacher education programs and only half as

many newly prepared teachers in this field (just 700 in 2015-16) as in the mid-90s, when bilingual education was at its peak.

- **Shortages disproportionately impact low-income and minority students.** Teachers hired on emergency-style credentials are twice as likely to teach in high-poverty schools than in low-poverty schools and three times more likely to teach in high-minority schools than in low-minority schools.

### **Recommendations**

The report notes that the numbers of newly credentialed teachers in the most severe shortage fields have continued to decline — despite the well-advertised demand for their skills and even as there have been small increases in teacher preparation enrollments — and concludes that specific incentives are needed to bring teachers into these fields.

Rather than filling more classrooms with underprepared teachers, the report recommends that California invest in rapidly building the supply of qualified teachers in the fields and locations where they are most needed, while creating incentives for experienced, effective teachers to re-enter and remain in the classroom. Specifically, the report recommends that the state invest in the following approaches (for details on these recommendations, please see the report):

- **Targeted service scholarships or loan forgiveness:** These approaches can cover the cost of tuition and living expenses to teacher candidates who prepare for and commit to teach in high-need fields and locations
- **Teacher residency models and other high-retention teacher preparation programs:** These programs, completed in one year at the postbaccalaureate level, can boost the supply of teachers entering fields and locations with the most acute shortages. These well-prepared teachers can immediately fill vacancies with the training to have successful and lasting careers.
- **Eliminate barriers to re-entry for retired teachers in shortage fields, or postpone their exit from the field:** Retired teachers are an untapped resource that can help meet immediate hiring needs. More experienced teachers could be a boon to many schools, since evidence shows that teachers, on average, continue to improve student outcomes with each year of experience, including into the second and third decades of their careers.

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