

Improving Educator Recruitment and Retention by Making Public Education an Attractive and Competitive Career Path

American Association of School Personnel Administrators
THE NATIONAL EDUCATOR SHORTAGE SUMMIT
JANUARY 19-20, 2023

Ann Nutter Coffman, Manager, Teacher Quality
National Education Association



Presentation



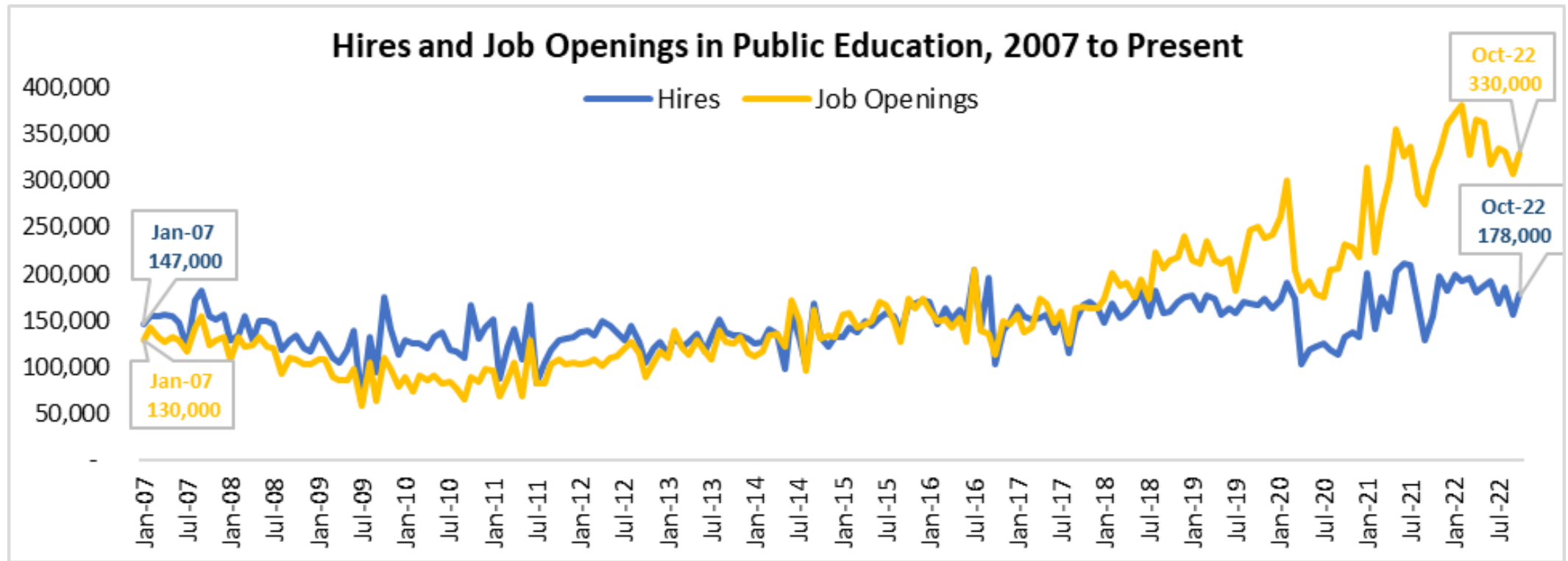
What are 2 things that your school, district, and/or state are already doing to solve the educator shortage in your area?

“For 15 years, I was a vocal music teacher, and we did some amazing things at my school. I even led my students to perform at the famed John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. But due to teacher shortages...I have been reassigned to cover science and English language arts in the last 3 years. Teachers are being pulled in a million different directions to fill the gaps. This Band-Aid approach says to our students that - in the teaching profession - advanced, content-specific professional should just teach what they’re told and not what they have dedicated their academic and professional lives to teaching.”



Marvin Burton, Jr.,
Advanced Professionally
Certified Vocal Music,
Middle & High School
Teacher,
18 Years in Education,
Forestville, MD

Job openings have outpaced hires since 2017, and the gap expanded considerably during the pandemic



Source: NEA analysis of BLS Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) data

Who is **more** likely to consider leaving?

- ▶ Teachers of color
- ▶ Teachers with poor well-being
- ▶ Teachers who are paid less than \$50,000 per year
- ▶ Teachers who have experienced violence or harassment

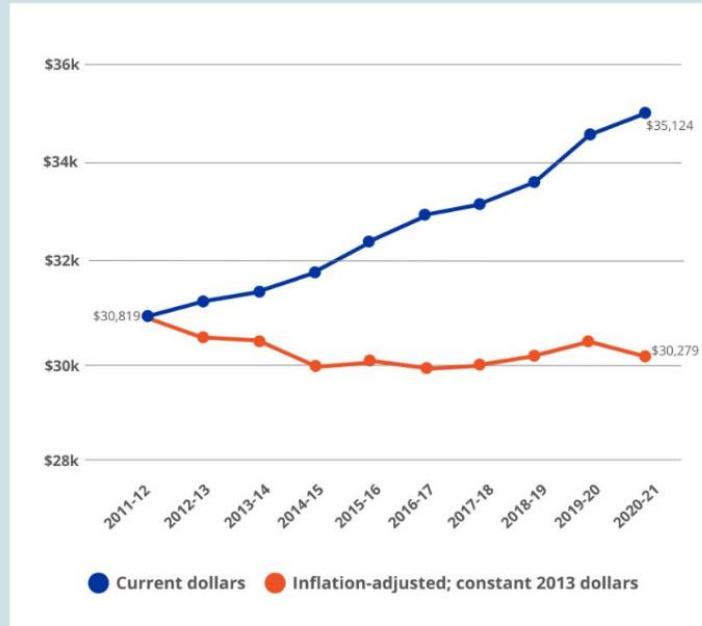
Who is **less** likely to consider leaving?

- ▶ Teachers who receive administrative support
- ▶ Teachers who are actively involved in school decision-making
- ▶ Teachers who have access to at least one employer-provided mental health support

The Decline in ESP Pay

Education support professionals are earning less than they did 10 years ago, when adjusted for inflation.

Source: ESP Earnings Report, April 2022, NEA Research.



ESP Earnings Report

- ▶ ESPs earn an average of at least \$10,000 below a basic living wage in all but one state across the country
- ▶ More than a third of all ESPs working full time earn less than \$25,000 per year

1 OF 2

Education support professionals are earning less than they did 10 years ago, when adjusted for inflation.

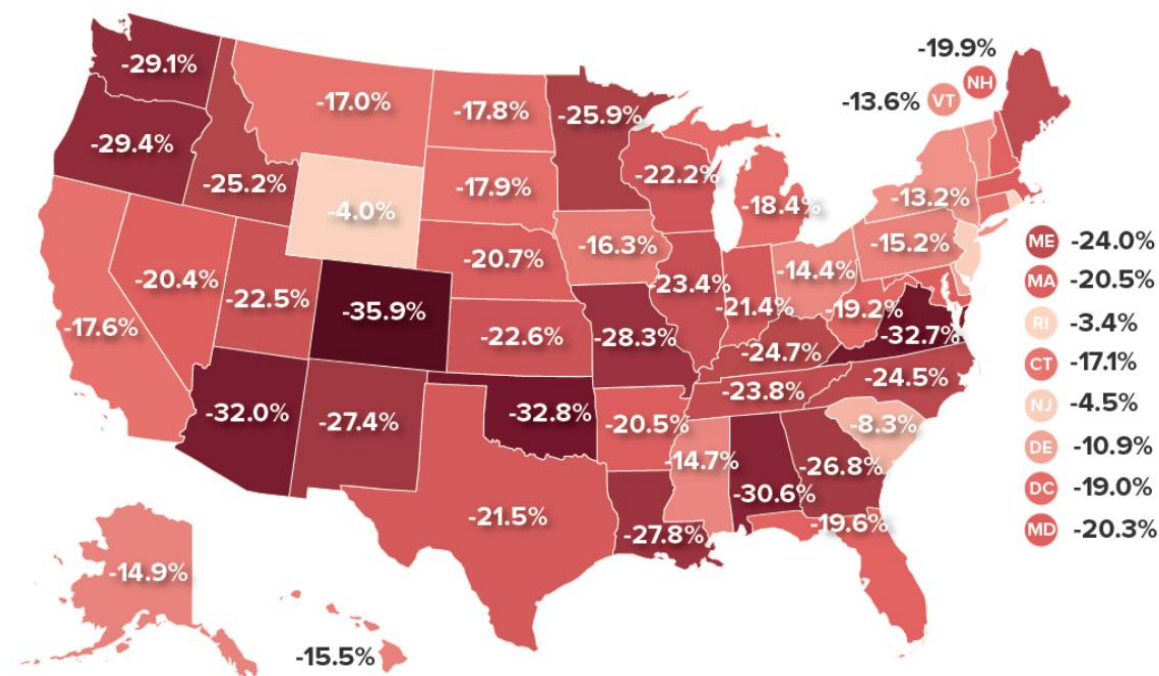


Presentation



How underpaid are teachers in your state?

Depending on the state, teachers make between 3.4% and 35.9% less than other comparable college-educated workers

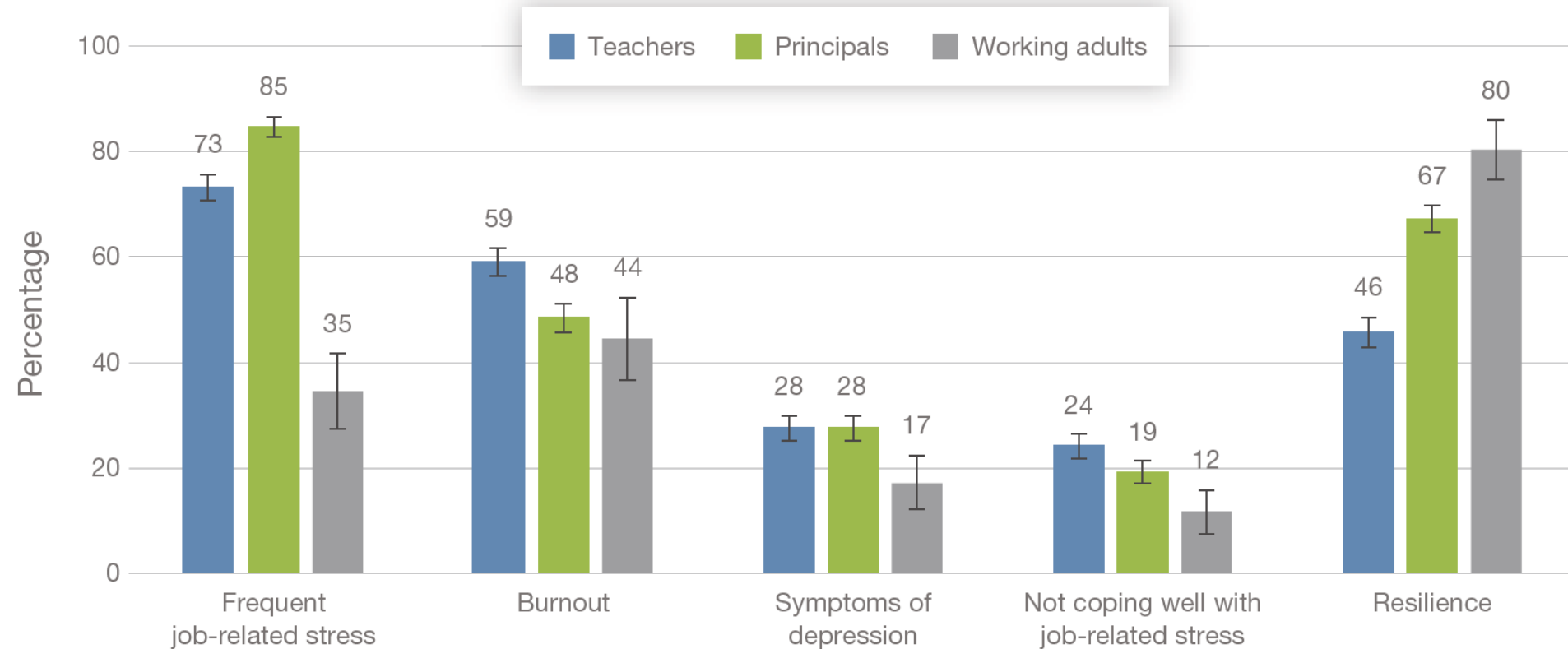


Notes: Figure shows state-specific regression-adjusted weekly wage penalties for public school teachers (elementary, middle, and secondary) relative to their college-educated, nonteaching peers. See Allegretto and Mishel 2019, Appendix A, for more details on data and methodology.

Source: Author's analysis of pooled 2016–2021 Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Group data accessed via the EPI Current Population Survey Extracts, Version 1.0.29 (EPI 2022a), <https://microdata.epi.org>.

FIGURE 1

Well-Being of Teachers, Principals, and Working Adults in January 2022



NOTE: This figure shows the percentage of teachers (dark blue), principals (green), and working adults (light blue) who reported experiencing each indicator of well-being. The vertical black bars represent the 95-percent confidence interval for each estimate. Teachers $N = 2,349$; principals $N = 1,532$; working adults $N = 500$.

Top Reasons Teachers Would Reconsider Leaving the Profession



Table 1. Long-Term Solutions to the Educator Shortage

Recruitment	Recruitment & Retention	Retention
Comprehensive Educator Preparation*	Competitive and Attractive Pay and Benefits*	Strong, Short Salary Schedules*
Culturally Responsive Preparation*	Student Debt Relief and Forgiveness*	Comprehensive Induction and Mentoring*
Grow Your Own and Apprenticeship Programs*	Working Conditions*	Relevant and Useful Professional Learning*
Teacher Residencies	Educator Voice, Respect, and Professional Autonomy*	Career Lattices and Ladders*
Financial Support for Educator Preparation and Student Teaching*	Hiring Practices*	License and Certification Reciprocity

**These solutions address the needs of all educators: teachers, SISPs, and ESPs.*

What Can We Do?

1. Increase base pay and benefits

Districts with higher pay and benefits:

- Attract more and higher-quality candidates (Figlio, 1997; Sun et al., 2022)
- Have lower levels of teacher attrition (Gray & Tate, 2015; Hendricks, 2014)
- Have higher levels of achievement and smaller achievement gaps among Black and Hispanic students (Garcia & Han, 2022)

Bonuses

- Once time-limited bonuses are finished, attrition returns to normal levels (Glazerman et al., 2013)





Other things we can do...

1. Competitive Pay and Benefits

➤ Substitute pay

- Substitutes make decisions about positions in part on pay, work schedule, and teacher & administrator support (Gershenson, 2012; J. Liue et al., 2022; Strauss & Strauss, 2003)

➤ Paid family leave and sick leave

- Particularly important for retaining substitutes, bus drivers and other personnel who don't typically receive coverage

➤ Pension Protection

- Retention rates increase dramatically once an educator has vested in a pension plan (Bolvie, 2017)

➤ Provide Childcare and Housing

- Educators can't afford to live in the communities in which they teach and work (Mongeau, 2015)
- Survey data show housing incentives would be extremely or very important in deciding whether or not to return (Podolsky et al., 2019)

“When most people think of Hawaii, they assume it’s all a paradise...One of the biggest challenges for our schools is finding teachers, counselors, and other school staff who can afford to stay on Oahu and teach in our public schools. Because of the astronomical costs of living on the island and the opportunities available on the mainland, many teachers leave Hawaii for better pay, benefits, and working conditions.

As a result, we don’t have a lot of homegrown educators teaching our island schools. Most of the teaching staff are long-term substitute teachers or Teach for America recruits who leave within a year. These disruptions caused by this churn shortchange our kids.”



Nicole “Nikki” Kiona,
Academic Counselor,
11 Years in Education,
Wai’anae, Hawaii

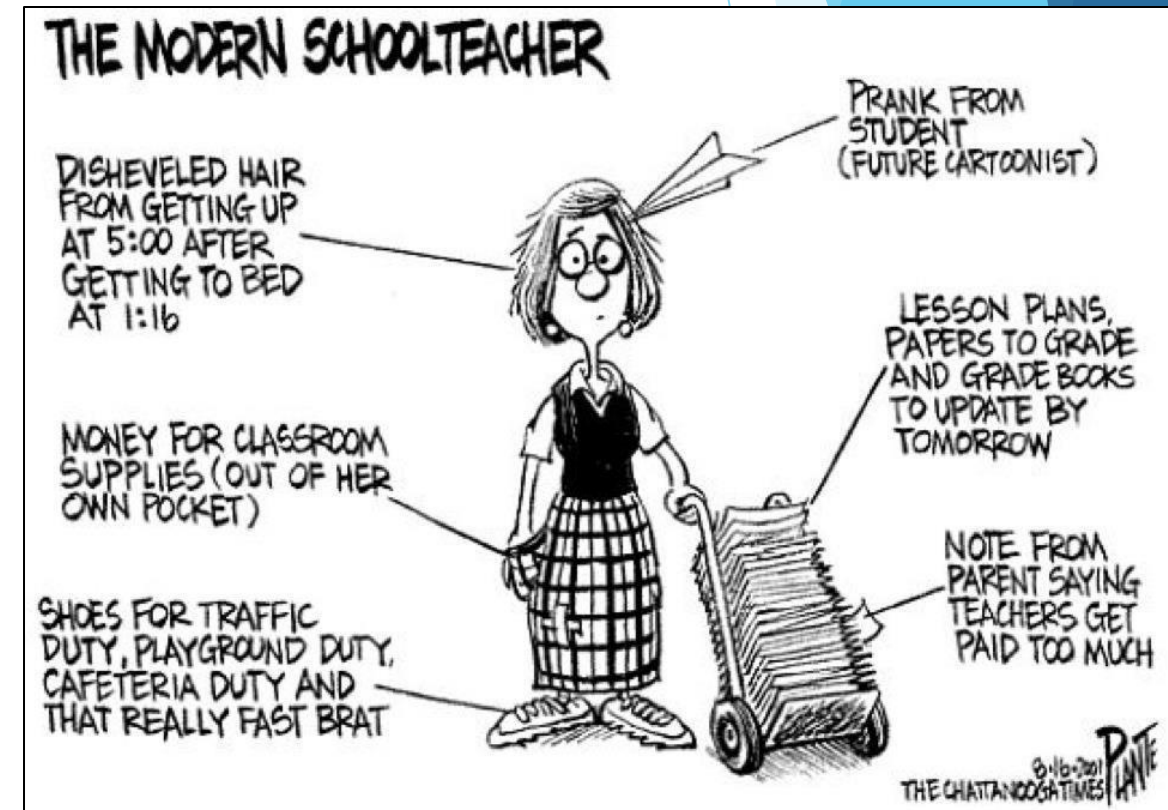
2. Working Conditions

Students learning conditions are educators' working conditions.

- Increase staffing levels - reduce caseloads and class sizes
 - ▶ Top stressors for educators in 2022 - supporting learning post-pandemic, managing student behavior, extra work due to staff shortages, and supporting students' mental health and well-being (Steiner et al., 2022)

➤ Mental Health Supports

- ▶ Pre-12 staff have much higher levels of stress and burnout than other workers (Marken & Agrawal, 2022; Steiner et al., 2022; Steiner & Woo, 2021)
- ▶ Teachers who are burned out are not only more likely to consider leaving the profession (Steiner et al., 2022; Steiner & Woo, 2021), but their classroom environments are also likely to foster student learning (P.A. Jennings & Greenburg, 2009; Klusmann et al., 2008)
- ▶ 1/3 of teachers of color report experiencing discrimination based on race or ethnicity and are more likely to report burnout, depression and thoughts of leaving the profession (Steiner et al., 2022).
- ▶ Teachers with access to a least one employer-provided mental health support have been shown to be less likely to report burnout and depression and more likely to say that they are coping well with job-related stress (Steiner et al., 2022)



2. Working Conditions

- Inclusive environment - environments that support and retain educators of color & LGBTQ educators
 - Implement policies that promote a culturally responsive and inclusive environment, include under-represented populations in curricular changes, provide racial and social justice-centered professional learning, create opportunities to diversity leadership roles (Dixon et al., 2019; Grooms et al., 2021)
- Restructure workday - time - major opportunity
 - U.S. teachers at all levels spend more time in the classroom teaching than teachers in nearly any other industrialized country (OECD, 2021b)
 - Duty free breaks work (Stanford, 2022)
- Safe and healthy work space
- Resources for teaching and learning
 - Sufficient instructional materials, supplies, support and a clean and safe working environment can improve retention and recruitment rates while those with insufficient technology, outdated textbooks, and inadequate supplies limit the ways in which educators can effectively teach and negatively impact teacher morale (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Podolsky et al., 2019)



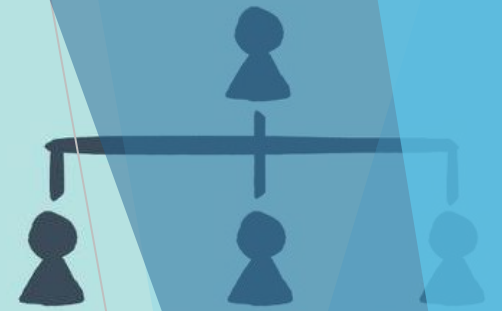
2. Working Conditions

► Administrator and leader development

- Capable and well-trained school administrators, by way of leadership development programs, can improve working conditions and lower both principal and teacher attrition rates (K.M. Brown & Wynn, 2009; Jacob et al., 2015)
- High-quality principals encourage educators to pursue leadership roles, collaborate by including staff in decision-making, view administration as a team effort, effectively communicate, facilitate emotional, environmental, and instructional support (Podolsky et al. 2019; Simon & Johnson, 2015; Thibodeaux et al., 2015).



Oversee hiring decisions



Manage all faculty & staff at a school



Decide how funds are used

PRINCIPAL

A Day in the Life of a School Principal

“Like many other school districts across the country, we were hit hard by the substitute shortage. There has not been a school day this past year when all the substitute positions were filled in our district. When we’re short subs, there is a ripple effect on the teaching staff, with many of us being pulled from our schools duties or planning periods to fill in, which isn’t great for our students or educators. One middle school teacher had to sub 92 times, which is more than half of the school year. Pay and benefits are always major issues in attracting and retaining subs in our district. Our local union was able to collectively bargain and negotiate a 16% pay increase for substitute educators, which helped fill some of the sub-slots that were so desperately needed to keep our schools running.”



Brannin Dorsey,
Kindergarten & First Grade Teacher,
23 Years in Education
Fremont, CA

3. Educator Voice, Autonomy & Respect



The lack of educator voice is a contributing factor to teacher dissatisfaction and efforts should be made to increase teachers' say in decision-making processes, which would result in increased teacher retention (Garcia et al., 2022; Ingersoll, 2006; McCarthy & Rubenstein, 2017; Podolsky et al., 2019)

3. Educator Voice, Autonomy and Respect

- Expand collective bargaining
- Include educators in transformation
- Professional autonomy
 - Most educators report little influence over basic decisions as curriculum, instructional materials, content of professional learning, discipline policies and educator hiring practices and evaluations (Garcia & Weiss, 2019a)
 - Schools that allow autonomy have higher job satisfaction among their educators (Ingersoll, 2006)
 - Without involvement, more likely to quit (Garcia & Weiss, 2019a)
- Hiring Practices
 - Complex practices - teacher hired later in the summer or after the school year start have lower effects on student achievement and more likely to leave the profession (Jones et al., 2011; Papay & Kraft, 2016)



“Many educators in my school district resigned at the end of the 2021-2022 school year. Some left because of the cumulative effect of issues like COVID-19 concerns and safety protocols, the impact of standardized testing, culture war attacks, and the Uvalde school shooting that happened close to our community. For educators, it hasn’t been a single issue that has driven them from the profession - it has been compounding. And it has been emotionally and mentally exhausting. Teachers are in the middle of a polarizing political landscape, and the attack on educators has increased the pressure and stress we feel daily. Dictating what we can teach in our classes, banning books, and disrespecting our craft have become breaking points for many educators who have dedicated their lives and careers to ensuring students succeed. It’s been a gut punch after some of the most difficult years of our careers. Teachers need to be treated as professionals instead of being used as a political football.”



Alejandra Lopez
2nd grade teacher
5 Years in San Antonio
San Antonio, TX

4. Recruitment

- Grow Your Own/Apprenticeships
- Residencies - essential form of teacher preparation
- Profession-ready teachers through comprehensive Educator Preparation Programs
 - Without clinical experiences more likely to leave (Ingersoll et al., 2014)
 - Alternatively prepared teachers are 25% more likely to leave (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017)
- Welcoming to LGBTQ and Educators of Color
- Scholarships/grants
 - TEACH grants
 - Teacher Loan Forgiveness
 - Public Service Loan Forgiveness
- Paid student teaching



“After more than three decades as a teacher’s assistant, my pay was \$31,000. I’ve always had to work multiple jobs to make ends meet, including as a school bus driver and part-time custodian. I don’t love the pay, but I love what I do.

This past year our union helped negotiate a 14% pay increase, but it is still embarrassingly low. Today, with my principal’s encouragement, I am studying to become a special education teacher and will be the first of my father’s and mother’s children to graduate from college. I want to give back to kids with special needs, particularly those with dyslexia like me. I want to show them that there is a path where they, too, can make a difference in the world.”



Arthur Anderson,
Teacher’s Assistant and
Inclusion Specialist,
32 years in Education,
Chesapeake, Virginia

5. Retention Policies



Teaching has been described as a “flat profession” (Rebora, 2015).

Within one year, March 2020 to March 2021, the percent of teachers who said they would remain in the classroom until retirement dropped from 74% to 69% (Zmarro et al., 2022)

5. Retention policies

- Reduce time to career-level pay
 - Can take an entire career to reach the top
- Induction and mentoring
 - Educators who receive high-quality, targeted support at the beginning of their careers have been shown to be more effective and more likely to stay in teaching (Bastian & Marks, 2017; Garcia & Weiss, 2019c; Ingersol & Strong, 2011)
- Access to Professional Learning
 - Teachers not finding professional learning useful are more likely to leave (Garcia & Weiss, 2019c)
 - Less than 2/3 of ESPs (62%) said that the PD provided by their employer was relevant to their work (NEA, 2017)
- Career lattices and ladders - systems of growth
 - Teachers who take on leadership roles are more likely to stay (Berry et al., 2010)



5. Retention

➤ Reciprocity

- ▶ Limited research suggests that non-reciprocal licensure may discourage teachers from re-entering the profession after relocating (Goldhaber et al., 2015; Podolsky et al., 2019)
- ▶ Teacher Mobility Compact

➤ Build collaborative and supportive cultures in classrooms and schools

➤ Administrator Training



“Enrollment in teacher education programs is down significantly...I’ve been teaching for 21 years, and I would normally be asked to take a student teacher in the spring and fall. Sometimes they wanted me to take two in the spring semester because there used to be that much of a demand. I haven’t had a student teacher in my classroom in years...whenever the student teachers discover the money they’d make and compare all the demands on them, many switch career paths.

The shift of taking away teachers’ professional discretion, imposing all-encompassing oversight, and micro-managing everything we do in the classroom has become a huge barrier to attracting and retaining high-quality educators to the profession. Teaching is not about a warm body in the classroom following a scripted curriculum that will produce successful students.”



Amber McCoy,
4th grade teacher,
21 years in Education,
Huntingdon, WV





Additional Resources

<https://bit.ly/m/neaedshortages>

Presentation



Ann Nutter Coffman
acoffman@nea.org