5 SHIFTS TO ADDRESS THE NATIONAL EDUCATOR SHORTAGE

FINDINGS FROM THE
NATIONAL EDUCATOR SHORTAGE SUMMIT

FOREWORD

We know that the educator shortage is a nationwide crisis. As a national educational organization, the American Association of School Personnel Administrators has been addressing the issue on multiple fronts by dedicating resources, professional development, advocacy, and data to support our members. In February 2022, we realized it was time to do more.

With the help of key advocates and friends of education, the 2022 National Educator Shortage Summit was the first of its kind. We brought together various partners and players to address and discover our similarities, as well as our differences. As the educator shortage continues to grow, now is the time to start addressing it from a collective perspective by leveraging the knowledge and influence of multiple stakeholders. Organizations cannot solve the shortage alone. It is our hope that the collection and analysis of data from the Summit will start a collective conversation to drive action at varying levels.

This is not another teacher shortage white paper. What follows disrupts traditional calls to action, and look sacross al shortage areas in education. Together, we can move from shortage to a surplus.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

While shortages in education have been widely covered in the media over the past year, researchers, consultants, and education leaders have warned of the looming dysfunction on the horizon for more than a decade. Teacher vacancies tend to dominate the headlines, but schools struggle to fill a variety of positions, from bus drivers and food service workers to building leaders, technology professionals, and health service providers. Economists use the term "disequilibrium" to describe a mismatch between supply and demand that results in a surplus or shortage. Although market forces drive towards a return to equilibrium, this change doesn't happen overnight.

Education has experienced periods of disequilibrium in the past. In the late 2000s, the Great Recession produced a surplus of educators. Graduates of teacher preparation programs couldn't find jobs while fewer people left education for career opportunities in other industries. Even though this type of disequilibrium benefits students and schools, high educator unemployment rates still need to be managed. At the same, time a handful of states realized that their retirement systems were headed towards insolvency and a gap that had opened between what states promised retirees and what they had set aside for those individuals. Given the retirement system challenges, states changed policies and incentivized early retirements. Many educators took advantage of the offer, which helped move staffing back towards a state of equilibrium. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the education labor market was already beginning to drift towards a talent shortage. The Great Resignation exacerbated this trend as resignations and retirements hit record levels nationally in 2021. On March 28, 2022, U.S. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona issued a call to action to school districts, higher education leaders, and states requesting that they work together and leverage federal resources to address the teacher shortage. This call to action recognizes that addressing the myriad of factors contributing to current educator shortages requires coordinated effort.
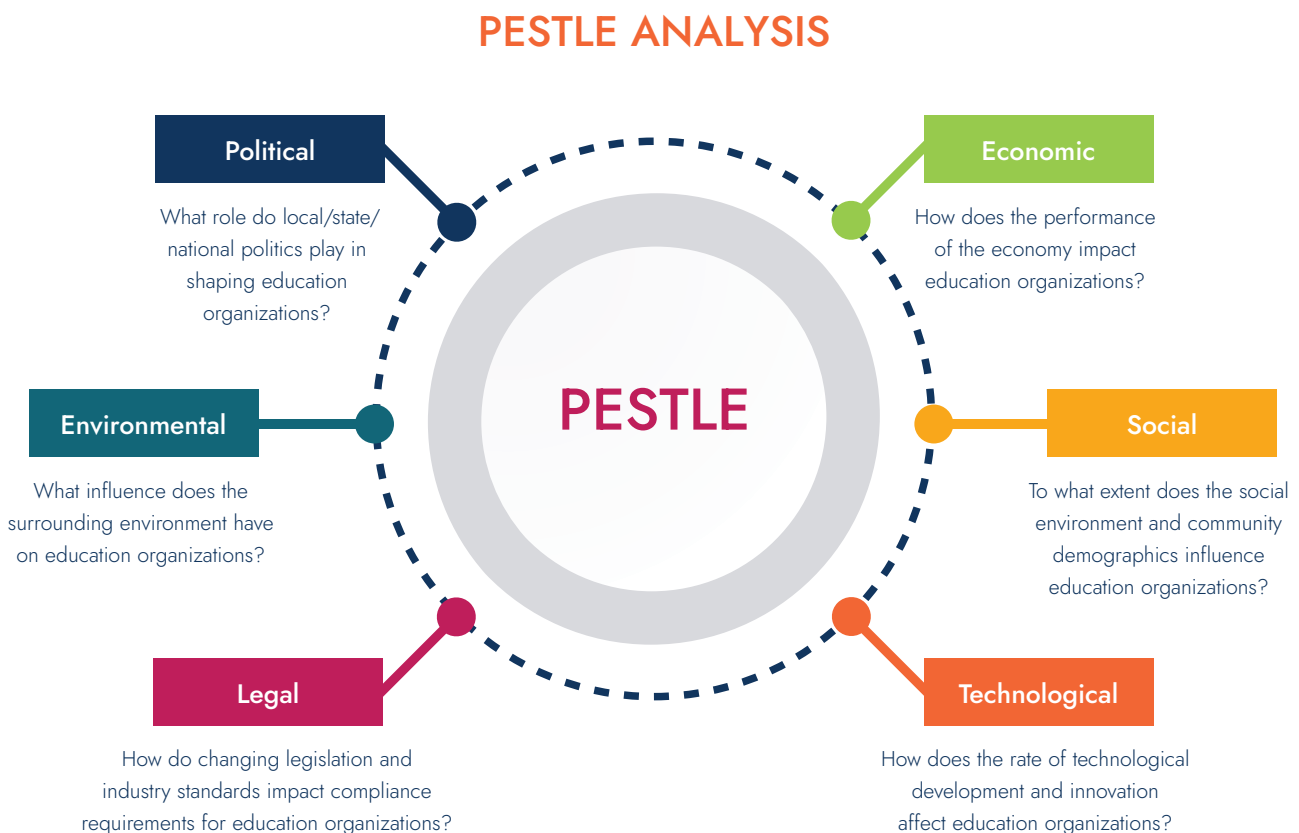
MOVING TOWARDS A BETTER FUTURE TOGETHER

To promote conversations across traditional silos, the American Association of School Personnel Administrators (AASPA) convened PK-20 stakeholders to discuss educator workforce and pipeline shortages. The term "educator" is used broadly to encompass all staff working in schools. The goal of the National Educator Shortage Summit was to initiate comprehensive conversations among the PK-20 education community, promote the sharing of diverse perspectives, and identify opportunities to replicate promising practices. Over two days in February 2022, featured speakers shared shortage research while more than 200 participants engaged in roundtable conversations to prioritize challenges and potential solutions to bring back to their state, district, or organization. Although many conversations are occurring on this topic nationally, AASPA was interested in creating an environment for stakeholders to build relationships and envision a path forward together. The Educator Shortage Summit was intended to be a first step toward building momentum for collaborative, ongoing action to address the educator shortage.

UNDERSTANDING CURRENT CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS CONTRIBUTING TO SHORTAGES

Labor shortages are complex problems created by a web of intersecting factors. As part of the Educator Shortage Summit, participants discussed factors contributing to the current educator shortage. The key issues that emerged from those conversations are presented in the form of a PESTLE analysis. PESTLE is an acronym that stands for the six segments of the macro environment: (1) political, (2) economic, (3) social, (4) technological, (5) legal, and (6) environmental. A PESTLE analysis provides a way to audit and document key external factors that influence an organization, industry, or economy.

PESTLE ANALYSIS

Political
What role do local/state/ national politics play in shaping education organizations?

Economic
How does the performance of the economy impact education organizations?

Environmental
What influence does the surrounding environment have on education organizations?

PESTLE

Social
To what extent does the social environment and community demographics influence education organizations?

Legal
How do changing legislation and industry standards impact compliance requirements for education organizations?

Technological
How does the rate of technological development and innovation affect education organizations?

A PESTLE analysis identifies short-term and long-term trends and issues. Once these are documented, organizations can then decide what actions are needed to minimize risk, create efficiencies, build partnerships, identify disruptive innovations, enhance workforce capabilities, and maximize competitive advantages. Although it is a simple framework, a PESTLE analysis facilitates externally-focused, strategic thinking. This PESTLE analysis documents outside forces currently impacting labor shortages in the education market. PK-20 stakeholders can use this summary to gain a clearer picture of the key factors contributing to the educator shortage and discuss which factors are having the greatest impact in their own community. With this knowledge, leaders can strategically focus on the shifts that address their most pressing pain points.

Description	External Factors Impacting Educator Shortages
Political Impact of local, state, and federal government Political factors include tax policies, rules, regulations, and funding.	✦ Intense debates at the intersection of education and political hot topics (e.g., critical race theory, policies for transgender students, living wage) ✦ Education used as a political platform during election cycles for local, state, and federal appointments ✦ Political instability of school and state boards of education during election cycles ✦ Current and future political support and funding for education (e.g., CARES Act) ✦ Shifts in the degree of local, state, and/or federal control ✦ Structure and purpose of organizations that provide oversight for education (e.g., accountability vs. innovation, control vs. support) ✦ Disconnect between state focus and local needs
Economic Impact of the economy on finances Economic factors include inflation, unemployment rates, interest rates, cost of living/ labor.	**Individual-level Factors** ✦ Cost of educator preparation programs compared to entry-level salaries ✦ Education salaries compared to other professions/industries that required same level of edu nurses, psychologists) ✦ Cost of obtaining and maintaining certification/licensure ✦ Unpaid clinical/student teaching experiences ✦ Lack of reasonable pathways for mid-career changers (e.g., shorter duration, ability to continue working while pursuing license/certification) ✦ Lack of career trajectory and growth options **Organizational-level Factors** ✦ Inequity in funding sources and formulas (urban vs rural vs suburban) ✦ Rising costs (inflation, wage expectations) without increases in budget to meet them ✦ Increased competition for student enrollment and associated funding among public, private, and charter schools ✦ Declining unemployment rates and a hot labor market for entry-level or lower wage positions ✦ Increased competition for candidates with transferable skills/qualifications (e.g., bus drivers, teachers, IT)

Description	External Factors Impacting Educator Shortages
Social Impact of beliefs, norms, and demographic trends. Social factors include opinions and attitudes, media, demographics, and population growth/decline.	✦ Increased public attention on school boards and education in general ✦ Public perception of public education and a lack of respect for the teaching profession (e.g., it's easy, it's part-time, anyone can do it) ✦ Some educators speak poorly of their own profession and discourage students from pursuing a career in education ✦ Negative media coverage ✦ Lack of role models for diverse candidates due to low diversity of current educators and individuals enrolled in preparation programs ✦ Challenges experienced by current educators of color such as social isolation, devaluing of their contributions, microaggressions, or being assigned extra work or more difficult assignments ✦ Declining enrollment in educator preparation programs may lead to closures and the creation of program deserts. ✦ Shifting community demographics (e.g., SES, race, ethnicity, special education, refugee status) that schools are serving ✦ Changes in social skills, emotional needs, mental health, and behavior of the general school-age population ✦ Tendency to place new teachers in most challenging roles ✦ Educators' lack of autonomy/decision-making authority ✦ Increasing expectations to take on additional duties outside of traditional work roles without additional support or compensation
Technological Impact of technology advances and innovation. Technological factors include automation, research and development, and emerging technologies.	✦ A more connected society increases access to information about actual, lived experience in the profession (good or bad) ✦ Growing virtual educator industry ✦ Increased technology use is driving the need for employees with greater technology skills ✦ Technology has facilitated a trend towards remote work arrangements in other industries ✦ Variance in capabilities (e.g., internet bandwidth, internet speed, software applications) hampers the ability to take advantage of technological advancements ✦ Lack of data on the teacher labor market (i.e. state and federal supply and demand data) makes it challenging to monitor and address trends ✦ Limited data on candidate outcomes to inform alignment of preparation curriculum with certification exams and the current education context

Description	External Factors Impacting Educator Shortages
Legal Impact of current and proposed legislation or standards. Legal factors include legislation, internal policies, and industry/professional standards	✦ Legislation in areas such as employment law, health and safety, and pandemic policies ✦ Unfunded mandates increase pressure on school budgets ✦ Complexity and inefficiencies in certification and licensure processes (e.g., teacher, school nurse, bus driver) make them challenging and cumbersome to navigate. ✦ Variation in licensure requirements by state and a lack of licensure reciprocity ✦ Low passage rates on licensure exams Variation in alternative certification options ✦ State laws that limit discretion (e.g., degree of local control over educator evaluation and compensation varies) ✦ Restrictions on state pension for retiree re-employment ✦ District policies restrict when employees can take time off
Environmental Impact of the physical environment and environmental policies. Environmental factors include environmental policies, climate, and geographic location.	✦ Location relative to population centers impacts size of the applicant pool ✦ COVID pandemic has placed increased demands on educators (e.g., learning gaps, behavioral issues, mental health, maintaining a clean/safe environment for learning) ✦ Poor working conditions such as lack of materials/supplies and deteriorating worksite infrastructure ✦ Concerns over school safety and violence in schools ✦ Educators feel unprepared for the realities of teaching and the education environment due to gaps in preparation and access to authentic clinical experiences ✦ Lack of accessible support, resources, and mentoring

5 SHIFTS TO ADDRESS THE NATIONAL EDUCATOR SHORTAGE

Across industries, shortage management tactics tend to include practices like peaking interest in the profession early, offering financial support for education and licensure, providing alternative pathways, and increasing compensation. While Summit participants shared many ideas and examples aligned to these traditional methods of addressing talent shortages, the group came to believe that strategic and coordinated action needs to occur to resolve labor shortages. Cross-industry research supports the importance of looking beyond the symptoms of talent shortages to address underlying issues driving turnover and diminishing interest in the profession. Employee engagement has hit a low point, and most adults experience at least one symptom of workplace stress (Buckingham, 2022). As a result, employees are re-evaluating their relationship to work and their career goals. Traditional changes may yield incremental improvements and short-term relief, but they will not stem the exodus of educators seeking opportunities elsewhere.

This white paper moves beyond surface-level responses to examine deeper, systemic issues that contribute to mismatches between educator supply and demand. Five comprehensive shifts are presented in contrast to traditional calls to action. A discussion of each shift contains high-level recommendations, along with examples of actions that different stakeholder groups can take to address the educator shortage. Representatives from stakeholder organizations, including government, associations, nonprofits, preparation programs, and PK-12 education organizations can use this paper to chart a pathway forward. Ensuring each student has the future they deserve requires disruptive change. It involves redesigning talent systems in education to create workplaces that both attract new people into education and also retain those who want to stay.

Traditional Call to Action
Comprehenseive and Systemic Actions

01
Create pathways to careers in education.
Reduce barriers to careers in education while preserving standards of excellence.

02
Provide educators with more resources.
Design comprehensive human capital management systems.

03
Increase educator pay.
Establish transparent and equitable total rewards systems.

04
Support employee wellness.
Strengthen educators' sense of purpose, belonging, and connection.

05
Promote the profession.
Deliver exceptional employment experiences.

Shift 1

Traditional Call to Action	Comprehensive & Systemic Action
Create pathways to careers in education.	**Reduce barriers to careers in education while preserving standards of excellence.**

Career pathways, such as Grow Your Own (GYO), aim to prepare individuals from the community to work within the community. Nearly every state has at least one educator GYO program (Garcia, 2020), and these pathways provide a valuable conduit to careers in education. Despite these efforts, the pipeline of future educators is unable to keep pace with the demand in education. Additional attention is needed to identify opportunities to expand the talent pipeline in existing programs while maintaining high standards. This involves examining candidates' journeys through pathways to uncover barriers that prevent them from completing programs, as well as identifying impediments that dissuade individuals from enrolling in pathway programs.

41% of former teachers cited the ability to seamlessly transfer their license between states as a factor in deciding whether to return to the classroom.

High-Level Recommendations

✦ **Transparent Workforce Data:** Publish accurate and timely data on career options in education (e.g., supply/demand, preparation program completion)

✦ **Data-Driven Career Counseling:** Help prospective educators use workforce data to make career decisions

✦ **Increased Affordability:** Decrease educator preparation expenses through a variety of programs (e.g., student loan forgiveness, program cost reductions, and scholarship programs)

✦ **Preparation Programs Completion:** Assist prospective educators with overcoming barriers (e.g., costs, transportation, childcare, duration, unpaid/low wage internships) to beginning and/or completing programs

✦ **Preparation Program Alignment:** Ensure programs adequately prepare candidates for job requirements.

✦ **Licensure & Certification:** Address hurdles to obtaining licensure and certification (e.g., costs, understanding the process, options for licensure attainment) while expanding licensure reciprocity both nationally and internationally

Shift 1: Sample Stakeholder Actions

Federal Government

Transparent Workforce Data
- Reduce the lag time in releasing Title II Reports containing national teacher preparation data.
- Facilitate the collection and reporting of educator supply and demand data by state.

Increased Affordability
- Incentivize institutes of higher education and alternative preparation programs to reduce costs for educator preparation programs.
- Develop a national scholarship program that helps individuals who commit to working in K-12 education to pay for graduate school and/or training programs. This could mimic the GI Bill that helps qualifying veterans and their family members cover all or some of the costs for school or training.
- Make college student loan or alternative preparation program debt forgiveness easier to attain and increase the forgiveness amounts for individuals in education careers.

Preparation Program Completion & Alignment
- Support innovative preparation programs and pathways designed to address barriers and improve educator outcomes through expanded funding, research, and highlighting promising programs.

Licensure & Certification
- Develop a national licensure process for educators (e.g., FAA certification rules for pilots).
- Facilitate the development of a traveling teacher program modeled after travel nurse positions.
- Streamline visa application processes for educator shortage areas.

State Officials

Transparent Workforce Data
- Collect and publish statewide educator workforce data including areas of surplus and shortage, student-educator demographic parity, educator attrition rates, and the number of graduates from preparation programs broken down by certification area.
- Develop resources to help future educators understand preparation program options and navigate certification processes.

Increased Affordability
- Provide funding to districts so they can compensate individuals during preparation experiences (e.g., student teaching, administrator residency, driver-in-training).
- Provide funding to districts so they can develop integrated GYO programs that match their local needs and labor markets.
- Apply for existing GYO programs to be nationally recognized and eligible for federal funding or support under legislation such as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Preparation Program Completion
- Investigate opportunities to expand alternative certification options (e.g., district-led and other not IHE-based preparation programs).

Shift 1: Sample Stakeholder Actions

State Officials

Licensure & Certification
✦ Permit alternatives to standardized testing to demonstrate competency for certification.
✦ Consider different certification and licensure endorsement configurations that would allow individuals who fail a portion of the licensure exam to teach subjects/grades that correspond to passage areas.
✦ Work with other states to expand systems of licensure reciprocity.
✦ Offer licensure reciprocity to trailing spouses such as military spouses.
✦ Sponsor a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) for teachers (e.g., Tennessee's Teacher Occupation Apprenticeship).
✦ Develop a state-run teacher residency program (e.g., Mississippi Teacher Residency)
✦ Work with educator preparation providers to offer coursework and opportunities for current teachers to receive additional endorsements in areas such as Special Education, English as a Second Language, or other areas with statewide shortages.

Associations & Nonprofits

Data-Driven Career Counseling
✦ Assist career changers with understanding how their skills and abilities translate into education careers.

Preparation Program Completion
✦ Collect data on barriers to beginning and completing preparation programs.
✦ Create educator advisory councils comprising current and prospective educators to uncover barriers to education professions and advocate for change.

Licensure & Certification
✦ Advocate for changes to the educator licensure process that improve access and equity while maintaining high standards.
✦ Host state-level bootcamps to assist candidates with obtaining licensure and preparing to enter education professions.

Preparation Programs

Data-Driven Career Counseling
✦ Publicize information about shortage and surplus areas of education to guide program selection.

Increased Affordability
✦ Work with local organizations to drive donations to scholarship programs and support educators through reduced price continuing education.
✦ Create pathways from community colleges to four-year colleges.

Shift 1: Sample Stakeholder Actions

Preparation Programs

Preparation Programs Completion
- Collect data to identify the reasons for program attrition and provide support to address them.
- Offer flexible scheduling options (e.g., evening or weekend classes/training, online learning options, hold classes in community centers and local education agencies).
- Eliminate admission requirements that don't predict successful program completion and identify opportunities to assist individuals with meeting program requirements.

Preparation Program Alignment
- Collaborate with local education agencies to identify preparation gaps and opportunities to ensure curriculum prepares educators for the demands of the job.
- Update curriculum to meet current needs, including the use of educational technology.

PK-12 Districts & Education Organizations

Data-Driven Career Counseling
- Provide career counseling to help future educators understand high-demand career opportunities in education that align with their interests by leveraging resources such as O*NET Online.

Increased Affordability
- Assist employees with applying for federal, state, or association student loan forgiveness or scholarship programs to pursue licensure/certification.
- Compensate individuals during preparation experiences (e.g., student teaching, administrator residency, driver-in-training).
- Offer part-time positions for prospective educators who are in school that provide on-the-job learning experiences (e.g., substitute teaching or education aide positions).
- Guarantee positions to prospective educators who complete their clinical experiences in the district.

Licensure & Certification
- Offer tutoring and study resources for passing licensure exams.
- Assist individuals with understanding and completing licensure requirements.
- Become an educator preparation provider (state approval required).
- Sponsor visas for international candidates.

Licensure Flexibility: The U.S. Department of Defense engages states through the Defense-State Liaison Office (DSLO) to consider improvements to teacher licensure and certification for military spouses. To better accommodate military spouses, who move an average of every three years, DSLO asked states to consider three avenues to help them continue careers in education: maximize flexibility when accepting existing standard certificates, treat alternative licensure from another state as equivalent to alternative licensure in the new state, and establish special temporary certificates that last the duration of a military assignment. Additionally, DSLO asked states to consider expediting applications from military spouses and eliminating burdensome requirements.

https://ednote.ecs.org/teacher-license-reciprocity-for-military-spouses/

Shift 2

Traditional Call to Action	Comprehensive & Systemic Action
Provide educators with more resources.	**Design comprehensive human capital management systems.**

While a lack of proper resources can lead to increased job dissatisfaction, piling on additional perks won't improve employee engagement. Instead, organizations should treat talent management as a high-level strategic issue and develop a coherent set of policies and practices to attract, develop, and support employees throughout their time with the organization. In addition, organizations need to invest in preparing managers to be stewards of their most valuable resource: employees. Gallup estimates that managers account for 70% of the variance in employee engagement (Gallup, 2015), so this investment can make the difference in an employee's decision to leave or stay with the organization.

Research demonstrates that administrative support, strong instructional leadership, and equitable leadership practices can positively influence teachers' perception of school working conditions, which can increase retention. © University Council for Educational Administration, January 2018.

High-Level Recommendations

✧ **Organizational People Strategy:** Develop comprehensive strategies to recruit and retain educators. Unpack your organization's competitive advantages and leverage them appropriately.

✧ **Strategic Leadership:** Ensure leaders are empowered, strategic decision makers accountable for organizational outcomes.

✧ **People Managers:** Select and develop people who manage others to be inclusive human capital managers.

✧ **Talent Acquisition:** Find, attract, and hire qualified educators.

✧ **Talent Development:** Foster employee learning and growth through feedback, interaction, and job-specific training and development.

Shift 2: Sample Stakeholder Actions

Federal Government

Organizational People Strategy

✦ Support states and local education agencies through funding, programming, and high-quality technical assistance to develop, implement, improve, and expand human capital management systems. This can be similar to the support currently offered through the Teacher and School Leader (TSL) Incentive Program.

Talent Acquisition & Development

✦ Assist education organizations with understanding how existing federal funding (e.g., Title I, ESSER) can be used to attract and retain educators.

State Officials

Organizational People Strategy

✦ Support the preparation and hiring of principals of color, which tends to lead to more diverse educator populations.

Strategic Leadership

✦ Assist education leaders with understanding and responding to key performance indicators to improve educator recruitment and retention.
✦ Create a leadership development program for education leaders.

People Managers

✦ Create a statewide academy for new principals with professional development, networking, and mentoring focused on strengthening people management skills.
✦ Ensure educator leadership standards (e.g., principal standards, superintendent standards) include responsibilities for talent management and development

Talent Acquisition

✦ Help connect job seekers with job opportunities in education organizations throughout the state.
✦ Provide support (e.g., resume workshops, interview training) to assist diverse candidates with obtaining positions in education.
✦ Gather and share high-quality human capital resources and examples from across the state.

Talent Development

✦ Create a statewide mentoring network that pairs newer education professionals with more experienced colleagues and offers differentiated programming and support for both groups.

Shift 2: Sample Stakeholder Actions

Associations & Nonprofits

Strategic Leadership
✦ Assist education leaders in leveraging national and state datasets to inform recruitment and retention strategies.

People Managers
✦ Provide professional development aligned to the Human Capital Leaders in Education standards.

Talent Acquisition & Development
✦ Convene stakeholders to share ideas on how to use ESSER funds to attract and retain educators.
✦ Help connect job seekers with job opportunities in education organizations.

Preparation Programs

Organizational People Strategy
✦ Partner with other graduate and undergraduate programs to provide expanded opportunities for administrators to complete coursework in leadership, strategy, and human resources.

Strategic Leadership
✦ Develop and monitor key performance indicators associated with program outcomes (e.g., program completion rates, licensure exam passage rates, graduate placement).

People Managers
✦ Include coursework on human capital management aligned to the Human Capital Leaders in Education (HCLE) standards in administrator preparation programs.

Talent Development
✦ Crosswalk principal licensure standards with HCLE standards. Address gaps in preparation program curriculum.
✦ Explore opportunities to expand the amount of time prospective educators spend in their clinical experiences (e.g., multi-year residencies for aspiring teachers).

PK-12 Districts & Education Organizations

Organizational People Strategy
✦ Develop an HR strategic plan and/or ensure the organization's overall strategic plan includes a people strategy and goals for talent management and development.
✦ Align human capital practices with the organization's mission, vision, and strategy.
✦ Conduct stay interviews or surveys to understand why employees choose to stay with your organization. Use this feedback to help define your competitive advantage.
✦ Include the top Human Resources Officer on the executive leadership team.

Strategic Leadership
✦ Develop and monitor key performance indicators for HR processes.

Shift 2: Sample Stakeholder Actions

PK-12 Districts & Education Organizations

People Managers
- ✦ Communicate expectations for managers as leaders of people and provide training and support to help them successfully manage others.
- ✦ Ensure education organization leaders are selected, developed, and held accountable as human capital leaders.
- ✦ Ensure supervisors are equipped to provide career management support to their staff.

Talent Acquisition
- ✦ Analyze the effectiveness of recruitment strategies and talent sources. Adjust tactics as needed.
- ✦ Strengthen partnerships with preparation programs, local businesses, and community groups to develop mutually beneficial opportunities that address talent shortages.
- ✦ Examine application and hiring processes to identify factors that unnecessarily narrow the talent pool (e.g., inflated job requirements, unnecessarily burdensome application, bias, process inefficiencies).
- ✦ Engage with candidates all year.
- ✦ Work with other districts to share educators in shortage areas or allow students without access to advanced coursework to take those courses virtually with teachers in another school or district.

Talent Development
- ✦ Develop a comprehensive onboarding program that supports employees throughout their first six months to one year with the organization.
- ✦ Provide growth and development opportunities to all employees that align with the current roles and/or prepare them for career advancement opportunities.
- ✦ Improve employee transfer and exit practices to facilitate transitions.

Talent Acquisition & Development: The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) created the Human Capital Resource Center (OhioHCRC.org) to provide state-level resources for establishing comprehensive, human capital management systems grounded in Ohio's policies and practices. To guide the development of the Resource Center, ODE gathered feedback from Ohio PK-20 stakeholders and assembled a statewide Human Capital Advisory Team that included representatives from Ohio schools, professional associations, institutes of higher education, and educational service centers. Their goals through this resource center are to:

- ✦ Promote the importance of improving human capital management systems (HCMS) in education
- ✦ Move beyond isolated policies and actions to a comprehensive approach to human capital management
- ✦ Help all educators recognize their responsibilities as human capital leaders
- ✦ Develop meaningful partnerships across the state and within local districts and schools.

Shift 3

Traditional Call to Action	Comprehensive & Systemic Action
Increase educator pay.	**Establish transparent and equitable total rewards systems.**

The term "total rewards" encompasses compensation along with all forms of financial and experiential incentives, rewards, and benefits provided to employees. While base salaries tend to receive a disproportionate amount of attention, other forms of compensation and benefits are often overlooked. By adopting a broader perspective, PK-20 stakeholders can assemble a portfolio of offerings aligned with the needs and desires of prospective candidates and current educators.

The top priorities for Gen Z and Millennials when selecting an employer are work-life balance and learning and development opportunities. Furthermore, more than 60% expressed a preference for a hybrid work arrangement that would allow them to split time between remote and on-site work. (Deloitte, 2022)

High-Level Recommendations

✧ **Employee-centered Total Rewards Strategy:** Align total rewards with employee wants and needs, including access to competitive wages, growth opportunities, and physical and mental health supports.

✧ **Transparent Offerings:** Ensure employees are aware of and utilizing total rewards offerings. Communicate offerings through your employee value proposition (EVP).

✧ **Flexible Staffing Models:** Support work-life integration by exploring flexible or non-traditional work arrangements (e.g., flex schedules, work from home, combining part-time roles).

✧ **Funding & Policy Flexibility:** Increase funding allocations and policy flexibility related to personnel budget expenditures.

✧ **Pay Equity:** Monitor systems, structures, and processes to ensure internal and external pay equity.

✧ **Incentives for Education Careers:** Offer incentives to individuals working in education (e.g., student loan forgiveness, tax incentives, housing assistance, and other perks).

Shift 3: Sample Stakeholder Actions

Federal Government

Flexible Staffing Models
- Highlight best practices and lessons learned from implementing flexible work arrangements in Federal agencies under the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 (TEA). Envision and communicate how telework best practices could be applied in the education sector.

Funding & Policy Flexibility
- Support states and local education agencies through funding and programming to understand, design, and maintain comprehensive and transparent total rewards systems.

Pay Equity
- Provide technical assistance to help education organizations understand and implement equitable and compliant total rewards practices.

Incentives for Education Careers
- Make educator college student loan or alternative preparation program debt forgiveness easier to attain and/or increase the forgiveness amounts.
- Provide more extensive tax incentives for full-time, part-time, and/or substitute educators.

State Officials

Transparent Offerings
- Encourage education organizations to publish pay schedules and salary ranges.

Flexible Staffing Models
- Create a committee to investigate changes to staffing models and/or learning models (e.g., year-round school and moving employees to 260-day contracts, virtual or hybrid schools).
- Create a resource center to help PK-12 organizations design flexible work arrangements.

Funding & Policy Flexibility
- Examine funding structures and state salary schedules that do not allow for district flexibility.
- Provide districts the ability to experiment with and/or consider compensation plans that compensate individuals for factors other than degrees such as performance, additional duties, working in hard-to-staff buildings or in subjects experiencing staff shortages (i.e., differentiated compensation, performance pay, alternative compensation, strategic compensation).
- Review policies that limit or discourage retirees from returning to work in education.

Pay Equity
- Explore policies that would encourage education organizations to audit their compensation practices.

Shift 3: Sample Stakeholder Actions

State Officials

Incentives for Education Careers:

✦ Research and consider portable retirement plan options that allow current educators to move to another state without losing benefits or for people in other industries to move into education.

✦ Create state-level educator student loan debt forgiveness programs and/or expand loan repayment programs funded by the states. These programs would require staff to commit to work in specific jobs or locations for a defined time period.

✦ Provide tax incentives through credits and/or deductions to full-time, part-time, and substitute educators.

✦ Provide tax incentives to businesses that offer substantial educator discounts or reward programs (e.g., housing rent reduction).

✦ Provide incentives for individuals receiving unemployment to work as substitutes in PK-12 education organizations.

✦ Incentivize healthcare organizations in the state to offer low-cost or free comprehensive, on-site health clinics for PK-12 educational organizations.

✦ Provide housing subsidies or improve access to affordable housing to individuals working in PK-12 education organizations

✦ Recognize educators publicly across a variety of positions in higher education, educator preparation, and PK12 education organizations.

✦ Encourage districts to recognize previous work or military experience when determining starting salaries while maintaining pay transparency and legal compliance.

Associations & Nonprofits

Employee-Centered Total Rewards Strategy

✦ Collect feedback from educators related to their satisfaction with total rewards offerings. Lobby for new total rewards options that meet staff needs.

Flexible Staffing Models

✦ Convene stakeholder groups to share best practices and co-design innovative staffing models.

Funding & Policy Flexibility

✦ Advocate for increased flexibility for education organizations to design total rewards systems.

Pay Equity

✦ Coordinate the collection of salary and benefits data for benchmarking that comply with Federal antitrust guidelines.

Incentives for Education Careers

✦ Lobby legislatures and states to provide additional incentives to individuals working in PK-20 education organizations.

✦ Create and administer educator recognition programs that span jobs in education.

Shift 3: Sample Stakeholder Actions

Preparation Programs

Transparent Offerings
- Communicate information about the types of total rewards individuals may receive from their future employers.
- Ask districts to share information about total rewards when attending career fairs at preparation program institutions.

Pay Equity
- Share information on equitable compensation practices and how leaders can promote pay equity as part of administrator preparation programs.

PK-12 Districts & Education Organizations

Employee-Centered Total Rewards Strategy
- Ask staff about their satisfaction with total rewards options. Track and monitor total rewards utilization and return on investment (ROI).
- Design total rewards programs that match staff needs and requests.
- Provide a variety of health insurance packages for staff and allow them to select the package that best matches their needs.
- Provide equitable and adequate opportunities for career advancement.

Transparent Offerings
- Develop an employee value proposition.
- Communicate compensation and total rewards offerings on job postings and websites. Share information about the value of total rewards provided to staff.
- Utilize technology to provide information and training on total rewards options, and/or self-service centers for staff to manage their benefits.
- Provide employees with information about career advancement opportunities.

Flexible Staffing Models
- Investigate flexible or nontraditional work arrangements (work from home, virtual classroom, etc.) for positions/ jobs the organization has strategically selected.

Pay Equity
- Monitor for pay equity internally and make corrections when pay is not equitable. Review total rewards policies and practices ensuring practices are inclusive and equitable.
- Ensure compensation for educators is market competitive by reviewing market data every three to five years.

Incentives for Education Careers
- Support educators to apply for federal, state, or association student loan forgiveness.
- Work with the community to create a listing of discount or rewards programs for educators.
- Recognize previous relevant work or military experience when determining starting salaries.

Employee-centered Total Rewards Strategy: Lamers Bus Lines highlights total rewards available to one of its target demographics for filling school bus driver positions—parents. The organization offers a child ride-along program that enables parents who drive a school bus to avoid daycare expenses. Other benefits include the opportunity to be compensated for driving a bus to their child's extra-curricular activities, to be off work on snow days and other school holidays with their children, and to be more involved in their child's education.

https://www.golamers.com/top-5-reasons-parents-should-become-school-bus-drivers/

Shift 4

Traditional Call to Action	Comprehensive & Systemic Action
Support employee wellness.	**Strengthen educators' sense of purpose, belonging, and connection.**

As employees across industries resign from their jobs, researchers have been able to pinpoint a few trends. The top predictor of resignations is a toxic organizational culture (Sull, D., Sull, C., & Zweig, B., 2022). By and large, people are leaving their organizations in search of jobs that offer more than just compensation. Employees are in search of positions and organizations that ignite their sense of purpose, offer true spaces of belonging, and encourage them to connect with others. In response to the educator shortage, as an industry, it's important to move away from creating and investing in programs that focus merely on employee wellness rather than overall wellbeing. Now is the time to lean into developing programs and HC processes that offer purpose, belonging, and connection opportunities for educators.

Across age and salary groups, more than 9 out of 10 employees are willing to trade a percentage of their lifetime earnings for greater meaning at work. (Achor et al., 2018)

High-Level Recommendations

Meaningful Work: Help educators feel like they are part of something bigger than themselves.

Autonomy: Maximize educator voice and choice.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI): Build a welcoming workplace culture that values diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Community Building: Provide opportunities for educators to build supportive social relationships (e.g., professional networks, employee resource groups).

Shift 4: Sample Stakeholder Actions

Federal Government

Meaningful Work
✦ Emphasize the opportunity for educators to engage in public service and give back to the community.
✦ Profile educators and share their stories of what makes work meaningful for them.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
✦ Provide technical assistance and guidance for compliance with legislation related to diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion.
✦ Help districts understand how to use Title funds to increase diversity in the educator workforce.
✦ Provide funding to strengthen educator preparation programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and other Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs).

Community Building
✦ Create a fellowship program that enables educators to engage in projects to have a greater impact on the education profession.

State Officials

Meaningful Work
✦ Emphasize the opportunity for educators to engage in public service and give back to the community.
✦ Profile educators and share their stories about what makes work meaningful for them.
✦ Invite students to share stories about the impact educators have had in their lives.

Autonomy
✦ Solicit educator voice in the development of education bills.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
✦ Provide professional development and guidance for improving diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion.
✦ Form a DEI advisory group to understand the experiences of educators from diverse backgrounds and develop and implement strategies for increasing workforce diversity.
✦ Provide funding and assistance to help individuals from diverse backgrounds enroll in preparation programs and obtain employment in education.
✦ Provide funding to strengthen educator preparation programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and other Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs).
✦ Adopt a policy to promote educator diversity throughout the state.
✦ Collect and share statewide data on educators of color, including enrollment in prep programs, completion of those programs, demographics of current workforce, and retention of educators of color.

Community Building
✦ Invest in partnerships between districts and teacher preparation programs, particularly those with a diverse candidate population.

Shift 4: Sample Stakeholder Actions

Associations & Nonprofits

Meaningful Work
- Engage in positive storytelling. Share the rewards and impact of being an educator.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
- Host a DEI Summit to provide education organizations a forum to address challenges and share best practices.
- Engage DEI experts to speak at events and work with member organizations.

Community Building
- Establish committees to connect educators with common interests and give them opportunities to have a greater impact on the profession.
- Convene groups of educators and other partners to prepare them for civic engagement and connect them with their state representatives for advocacy purposes.

Preparation Programs

Meaningful Work
- Emphasize the opportunity for educators to engage in public service and give back to the community.
- Increase program participants' access to authentic clinical experiences.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
- Create or connect program participants with affinity groups.
- Evaluate curriculum through a DEI lens. Implement language- and race-conscious pedagogies.

Community Building
- Support future educators and current educators by building networks that allow people to connect.
- Engage alumni from diverse populations to serve as mentors to program participants.
- Establish cohort groups to help future educators develop a professional learning community with their peers.

PK-12 Districts & Education Organizations

Meaningful Work
- Cultivate a collective, shared organizational purpose.
- Encourage managers to learn what their employees find meaningful.
- Reduce bureaucratic workloads and maximize the amount of time employees have to engage in meaningful work.
- Help educators see their daily impact.

Autonomy
- "Re-recruit" current employees by expressing appreciation for their work and inviting them to participate in leadership opportunities.
- Provide opportunities for employees to exercise greater creativity and ownership over their work.
- Engage staff in identifying innovative solutions to local issues.

Shift 4: Sample Stakeholder Actions

PK-12 Districts & Education Organizations

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
✧ Create stakeholder committees to provide a voice to all stakeholders. Include diverse thoughts, ideas, and perspectives in decision making.
✧ Develop onboarding and mentoring programs to provide support to educators of color early in their careers.
✧ Review current employee programs and policies for bias and inequities. Identify processes that may impede diversity and inclusive excellence.
✧ Invest in opportunities for educators of color to develop their abilities and qualifications for leadership roles.
✧ Invest in programs or processes that improve workplace culture.

Community Building
✧ Explore team teaching models to look for opportunities to reduce isolation when educating students.
✧ Examine educators' schedules and provide protected time for them to collaborate with peers.
✧ Create partnerships with community organizations to help educators increase their impact.
✧ Establish employee resource groups.

Community Building: During the 2018-19 school year, the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC) at Arizona State University piloted a new approach to internships and residencies in partnership with two school districts facing severe teacher shortages. Rather than the traditional 1-to-1 mentor model, this professional pathway model builds teams of two to three students who work together across multiple classrooms under the direct supervision of an experienced certified teacher. Each team is supported by a Site Lead, who is a member of the MLFTC faculty. The team model strengthens the systems of support that teacher candidates receive in their internships and residencies and provides candidates with opportunities to work collaboratively to resolve challenges they encounter.

https://workforce.education.asu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/asu_gates_overviewonly_v4.pdf

Shift 5

Traditional Call to Action	Comprehensive & Systemic Action
Promote the profession.	**Deliver exceptional employment experiences.**

Stories have the power to evoke strong emotions and inspire action, but it's challenging to change the image of the education profession when many of the detractors come from within the profession itself. You can't buy the public relations equivalent of a vocal employee who enthusiastically endorses your organization as an employer. Educators who are dissatisfied with their profession are likely to discourage others from pursuing careers in education, and promotional campaigns will fail to build a sustainable pipeline if there is a disconnect between candidate expectations and the realities of working in education. Work first has to be done to change the narrative from within by delivering exceptional employment experiences so that educators become promoters of the profession.

When students were asked to rank the top three reasons they were interested in teaching, 42% said they were inspired by one or more of their own teachers (Croft et al., 2018).

High-Level Recommendations

✧ **Customer Service:** Treat employees like customers in the workplace.

✧ **Work-Life Integration:** Promote work-life balance through flexibility and support for all employees.

✧ **Data-driven Improvements:** Look across the entire candidate and employee journey to uncover and address causes of attrition.

✧ **Employee Value Proposition (EVP):** Develop and deliver on your employee value proposition. Monitor and address gaps between expectations and experiences.

✧ **Internal Ambassadors for the Profession:** Equip employees to be promoters of careers in education.

Shift 5: Sample Stakeholder Actions

Federal Government

Work-Life Integration
✦ Fund research into factors impacting retention, turnover, and burnout.
✦ Support districts and other organizations by investing in offerings that support educators' overall wellbeing.

Data-driven Improvements
✦ Publicize research-based practices that improve retention and reduce burnout.

Employee Value Proposition (EVP)
✦ Evaluate opportunities to streamline or curtail bureaucratic documentation and recordkeeping requirements

Internal Ambassadors for the Profession
✦ Identify high performers and give them a platform to be ambassadors for the education profession.

State Officials

Work-Life Integration
✦ Identify work-life integration needs on a state level through data collection. This data can be widely shared and used by organizations to prepare for workforce trends.
✦ Invest in systems and supports to reduce educators' stress.
✦ Map the location of community, mental health, and family service agencies throughout the state to help educators find resources.

Data-driven Improvement
✦ Collect and share statewide data on educator exits and transfers.

Employee Value Proposition (EVP)
✦ Evaluate opportunities to streamline or curtail bureaucratic documentation and recordkeeping requirements that don't benefit students.

Internal Ambassadors for the Profession
✦ Identify high performers and give them a platform to be ambassadors for the education profession.

Shift 5: Sample Stakeholder Actions

Associations & Nonprofits

Work-Life Integration
✧ Disseminate research on strategies to improve work-life integration.

Employee Value Proposition (EVP)
✧ Assist education organizations with developing an employee value proposition.

Internal Ambassadors for the Profession
✧ Identify high performers and give them a platform to be ambassadors for the education profession.

Preparation Programs

Customer Service
✧ Design programs from the point of view of candidates and the experiences that you want them to have.
✧ Make it easy for individuals to get answers to their questions about preparation programs.

Work-Life Integration
✧ Provide support to program participants with caregiving responsibilities.

Data-driven Improvements
✧ Gather feedback from program participants and graduates to inform preparation program improvements.

Employee Value Proposition (EVP)
✧ Identify gaps between program graduates' expectations and actual work experiences. Identify ways to better prepare them to work in education.

Internal Ambassadors for the Profession
✧ Recognize alumni who have made significant contributions to education and help amplify their voice as advocates for careers in education.

PK-12 Districts & Education Organizations

Customer Service
✧ Increase transparency by making information readily accessible.
✧ Utilize technology-enabled processes, such as self service, to eliminate wait time and improve data sharing.
✧ Design processes from the point of view of your employees and the experiences that you want them to have.

Shift 5: Sample Stakeholder Actions

PK-12 Districts & Education Organizations

Work-Life Integration
- ✦ Engage educators to understand how to serve their need for work-life integration.
- ✦ Normalize the use of employee assistance programs and other supports for wellbeing by promoting them and embedding them in school systems.
- ✦ Offer support for childcare, elder care, or adoption.
- ✦ Offer comprehensive, on-site health clinics for staff that offer low-cost or free physical or mental health care services.
- ✦ Create policies and job arrangements that enable employees to work while still meeting their personal responsibilities (e.g., boundary exceptions for students of employees, child ride-along programs for bus drivers, reduce hours for benefits eligibility, combine part-time roles to create full time positions).

Data-driven Improvements
- ✦ Collect data to understand the needs and desires of key talent groups. Create personas that represent specific employee or candidate segments to guide the design of employee programs and processes.
- ✦ Create candidate and employee journey maps to better understand their current experiences and pain points.
- ✦ Conduct stay interviews and exit surveys to understand why employees choose to leave your organization and what keeps them there.
- ✦ Examine trends in transfers within the organization.
- ✦ Identify opportunities to better serve employees by reallocating spending to programs that match employee preferences.

Employee Value Proposition (EVP)
- ✦ Engage staff to define your employee value proposition.
- ✦ Ensure that hiring managers and recruiters understand your EVP and communicate it to candidates.
- ✦ Hold leaders and supervisors accountable for fulfilling the promise of your EVP to current employees.

Internal Ambassadors for the Profession
- ✦ Implement an employee referral program.
- ✦ Empower employees with the information and resources to become ambassadors for your organization.

Develop Ambassadors for the Profession: Prior to the 2018-19 school year, Berkeley County Schools launched BCS 101, an ambassador program designed to provide participants with a better understanding of district operations, programs, and services. Over six monthly meetings, the program prepared participants to serve as ambassadors for Berkeley County Schools.

Conclusion

This paper describes the myriad factors that contribute to the shortage of educators in PK—12 schools, as well as actions stakeholders can collectively take to make a difference. The barriers and actions we identified are summarized in the table below:

Barriers to Change and Guidelines for Collective Action

	What holds us back	Refocusing on actions
Strategic & Systemic	Shortages are complicated and embedded in historic systems of practice.	Implement strategic and comprehensive solutions that focus on remediating root causes and changing practice.
Student-centered	Having student-centered values does not always translate into making decisions that are best for students and their families.	Disrupt and redesign processes to create positive student, educator, family, and community member experiences in and around education. Everything should come back to supporting each student.
Collaborative	Comprehensive change cannot occur when diverse stakeholders in the education space work in silos.	Join forces with other stakeholders to plan and act strategically.
Equitable	Even the best systems can have inequities built within them.	Identify and dismantle systemic biases and ask supporters to do the same. Undertake thoughtful action to understand the past while moving towards a more productive future.
Data-driven	The ability to identify root causes and garner support is inhibited by a lack of actionable data.	Create mechanisms to collect, evaluate, and communicate preparation and staffing data.
Future-focused	Routine is comfortable. The more complex the issue, the more likely it will receive pushback.	Focus on moving forward, rather than reliving the past, to build a better future.

PK—12 stakeholders—including federal and state governments, associations and nonprofits, educator preparation programs, and local education agencies—=are encouraged to use this paper to accelerate their progress in addressing the educator shortage. For example, the five shifts explored above can serve as a framework for organizing state-level summits on staffing shortages or helping stakeholder groups identify opportunities for collaboration. Through a common understanding of the issue, a unified vision, and focused action, the essential task of eliminating educator shortages is within our reach.

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Georgia Southwestern State University
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Greenville County Schools
GTL Center/CEEDAR Center at American Institutes for Research
Hamilton County Schools
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Head Start of Lane County
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International Alliance Group, LLC
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MSD Washington Township
Muscogee County School District
NASDTEC
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of School Psychologists
National Center for Grow Your Own
National Council for the Social Studies
National Council on Teacher Quality
National Education Association
New Heights Charter School of Brockton
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