



FEBRUARY 2017 LEGISLATIVE BRIEF: TEACHER SHORTAGE

WHAT IS IT?

A teacher shortage is defined by the inability to supply qualified and effective teachers in Oklahoma schools. Oklahoma's teacher shortage has been determined by analyzing multiple factors including emergency certification data, annual shortage areas as calculated by the U.S. Department of Education and data from the current Educator Supply and Demand study, published in 2015.

HOW DID IT COME ABOUT?

Emergency certification data over the past five years show a dramatic increase from 32 emergency certificates in 2011-2012 to the current 1,123 for the 2016-2017 school year. According to the 2015 Educator Supply and Demand Study, during the past five years, the number of traditional educator preparation program completers has declined while the number of educators with nonstandard certifications has increased. This study also provided projections that shortages are likely to grow and that the state faces competition with the private sector and surrounding states for teachers. Lastly, results show that teachers earn substantially less on average than workers with similar characteristics in other occupations.

Oklahoma teachers have not had a pay increase since 2008, making the difficult decision to leave the profession an economically driven one for some. According to OSDE surveys, another reason for leaving the field is the lack of meaningful time to pursue professional growth as well as scarcity of resources. There is a clear link to the 2010 elimination of the Teacher Residency Program and retention rates. The absence of this funded program for new teachers and their mentors is a strong signal that efforts to support teachers in their initial years impact their long-term retention.

WHAT'S NEW?

Superintendent Hofmeister's Teacher Shortage Task Force, launched in September 2015, produced 27 recommendations, seven of which were passed legislatively. All of the recommendations fell into categories of recruiting, retaining and rewarding Oklahoma teachers.

2016 Legislative examples signed into law include: (1) HB 2946: Out-of-state reciprocity; (2) HB 2371: Retired teachers as mentors; (3) HB 3114: Teacher-Leader framework; (4) HB 3025: Alternative certification eligibility; (5) HB 3102: Adjunct teacher extended time.

Stakeholders including educators, the business community, legislators and families continue to collaborate to provide solutions to the state's teacher shortage.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are Oklahoma's current shortage areas as reported to the USDE?

Arts and Music; Business; Career and Technical Education; Computer Science; Early Childhood Education; Elementary Education; English Language Arts; Foreign Languages; Health Education; Physical Education; Humanities; Library Science; Mathematics; School Counselor; Science; Social Studies; and Special Education.

Is there an application for emergency certification?

Prospective teachers cannot apply for emergency certification. A district superintendent must request the exception for a specific vacancy and candidate once it has been made evident that the position has been posted and remains unfilled after a period of time.

What are the ten pathways to certification?

Traditional
Alternative Placement Program
Teach for America
Troops to Teachers
ABCTE (American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence)
Title I Paraprofessional
Career Development Program for Paraprofessionals
Non-traditional Special Education – Boot Camp
Career Tech Instructor
Four-Year Olds and Younger

What is a teacher's salary?

Oklahoma's minimum starting salary is \$31,600. The state average salary is \$44,921, which includes benefits such as health insurance and retirement.

Is there loan forgiveness for teachers?

Yes, in the following programs:
Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program
Teacher Loan Forgiveness
Perkins Loan Cancellation for Teachers
State-sponsored Student Loan Forgiveness Programs (especially in high-need areas)

On average, how long do teachers stay in Oklahoma classrooms?

An OSDE 13-year analysis shows that teachers stay in the classroom, on average, six years.

What is our reciprocity with other states?

The State Board of Education honors the out-of-state certificate without requiring a number of years of experience or additional competency examinations.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

- Educator Supply and Demand Study: <http://www.okhighered.org/studies-reports/teach-supply/>
- Teacher Shortage Task Force Report: <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/educator-effectiveness>
- OSDE Teacher Certification: <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/teacher-certification>