



Teacher Shortages

Who's at the Head of the Class?

For Education Leaders

Your success as a school leader depends on the instruction and outcomes that take place within classrooms. That means that one of your key jobs is creating a climate and engaging a system that will identify, attract, and retain the very best teachers. Unfortunately, that job is made more difficult by the teacher and substitute teacher shortage that exists and is growing.

According to the 2019 Biennial Minnesota Teacher Supply and Demand report done by Wilder Research in collaboration with the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing Standards Board (PELSB) the following concerns exist:

- More than half (52.5%) of teachers holding an active teaching license are not currently working as teachers in Minnesota public schools.
- The total percentage of individuals teaching on special permission out of their licensure area or without a standard teaching license is 3.8 percent. A high percentage of those teachers include career and technical education fields, world languages, special education, and STEM.
- School districts continue to report a perception of “difficult” and “very difficult” to fill teaching positions.
- Nearly half of Minnesota’s school districts report substitute teacher shortages a “serious problem”.
- The percentage of teachers of color remains stagnant while the percentage of students of color continues to grow in Minnesota. Nearly 96 percent of teachers are white while students of color make up about 34 percent of the student population.

“Hiring is hard, and hiring is the single most important thing you can do to improve your school.” (Kilian Betlach, elementary school principal, Oakland, CA)

While it is difficult to **identify candidates** that will best meet your district and student needs; employment applications, reference requests, and interviews *can* be designed to highlight potentially great teachers.

- An adequate teacher has mastered the fundamentals of teaching through their college career and practice teaching. Their learned skills are demonstrated by their class rank or GPA.
- A good teacher has the above mastery and is able to make the subject matter relevant to students and engage students in active learning. A good teacher has solid personal and teaching references.
- A great teacher has all of the above and a passion for learners and learning. A great teacher is empathetic, enthusiastic and willing to adapt to diverse student needs; a

great teacher is able to embrace changing and emerging best practices and structure.

Attract teaching candidates through competitive salaries and benefits, job fairs, teacher residencies, creative pathways into the profession, and other enhanced incentives. Reduce barriers and provide increased salary recognition for experienced teachers changing districts or states.

Open positions within timely hiring cycles contribute to the number and quality of interested applicants. Districts can encourage employees to submit resignations and transfer requests early in the spring to clear the way for the hiring process.

Retain teachers. Individual needs, life stage, and geographic preference all impact a teacher's choice to stay or leave. Those factors are not determined by the school district but other factors influencing job satisfaction are, including: salaries and benefits, supportive leaders, opportunities for personal and professional development, encouragement to be creative and influential, perceived respect, and a positive school/district culture.

Sample interview questions to help your district identify great teachers:

- How do you respond to change you did not choose and may even disagree with? Please give an example.
- Give examples of when it is appropriate for you to connect with your class as a group and when is it appropriate for you to connect with individual students?
- What is your communication process if you observe something in the school that you think is inappropriate or that you disagree with?
- Do you prefer to work with colleagues or work independently?
- Please share some key strategies for working with a large class size.
- What experience do you have with parents and/or community relations?
- Describe a valuable parent/teacher conference.

Attracting and retaining excellent educators is one of the most important drivers of a well-functioning education system—a system that must prepare diverse students with complex needs to participate in today's knowledge-driven economy. – *Ann Podolsky, Tara Kini, Joseph Bishop, Linda Darling-Hammond, Solving the Teacher Shortage, Learning Policy Institute, September, 2016,*



These materials are provided by
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