

What Is the Issue and Why Does It Matter?

Districts across the country are facing severe shortages of teachers — especially in certain subjects (math, science, special education, career and technical education and bilingual education) and in specific schools (urban, rural, high-poverty, high-minority and low-achieving).¹ Research suggests that, while some attrition is expected and necessary, persistent shortages can be costly for districts and have negative impacts on workforce quality, student outcomes and school climate.² Further, staffing inadequacies and turnover tend to have the greatest impact on schools and students that can afford it the least.

Many experts argue that efforts to address shortages should be less about recruiting teachers generally, and more about recruiting and retaining the right teachers, in the right subjects, for the right schools.

National labor market data suggest that the turnover rates in public education are lower than turnover rates in most other industries.³ But high retention rates in some schools and districts mask high attrition rates in others. The severity of the teacher shortage problem varies significantly by state, district, school and subject. As such, many experts argue that efforts to address shortages should be less about recruiting teachers generally and more about recruiting and retaining the right teachers, in the right subjects, for the right schools.⁴ Several states have recently enacted targeted teacher recruitment legislation in one or more of the following areas to attract teachers to high-need schools and subjects:

- **Research and Data Collection:** Convening work groups and collecting teacher supply and demand data.
- **State and District Innovations:** Giving state and local education agencies the flexibility to design their own targeted teacher recruitment strategies.
- **Career Pathways and Grow-Your-Own Programs:** Creating career pathways and grow-your-own programs for high school students.
- **Preparation and Licensure:** Altering teacher preparation and licensure requirements.
- **Financial Incentives:** Providing financial incentives such as scholarships/grants, loan forgiveness and hiring bonuses/salary increases.
- **Retired Teachers:** Providing incentives for retired teachers to return to the profession.

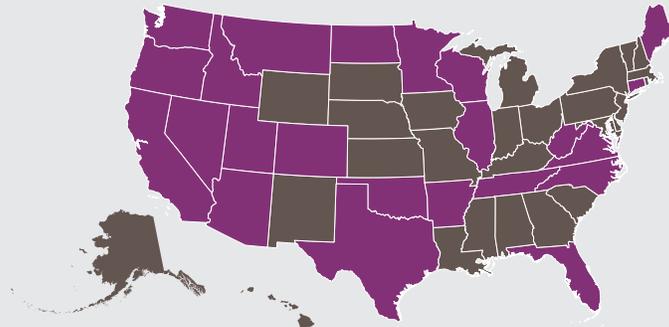


How Many States Enacted Legislation in 2017?

Based on a review of 2017 legislative activity concerning targeted teacher recruitment:

- At least 47 bills were enacted in 23 states to recruit teachers to high-need schools and subjects.
- Three bills were vetoed; three were partially vetoed.

Which States Enacted Legislation in 2017?



State	Legislation	Status
Arkansas	H.B. 1303	Enacted
	H.B. 1425	Enacted
	S.B. 26	Enacted
	S.B. 27	Enacted
	S.B. 555	Enacted
Arizona	S.B. 1038	Enacted
	S.B. 1040	Enacted
	S.B. 1042	Enacted
California	A.B. 45	Vetoed
	A.B. 99	Enacted
	S.B. 113	Enacted
Colorado	H.B. 1003	Enacted
	H.B. 1176	Enacted
	S.B. 296	Enacted
Connecticut	H.B. 7212	Enacted
Florida	H.B. 293	Enacted
	H.B. 7069	Enacted
Idaho	H 113	Enacted
Illinois	H.B. 3820	Enacted
	S.B. 1739	Enacted
	S.B. 1991	Enacted
Maine	L.D. 1569 (H.P. 1080)	Enacted
Minnesota	H.F. 890	Vetoed
	H.F. 2	Enacted
Montana	H.B. 119 S.B. 115	Enacted Enacted

State	Legislation	Status
North Carolina	H.B. 155	Enacted
	S.B. 257	Enacted
	S.B. 315	Enacted
	S.B. 599	Enacted
North Dakota	H.B. 1015	Vetoed
	S.B. 2037	Enacted
Nevada	A.B. 7	Enacted
	S.B. 548	Enacted
Oklahoma	H.B. 1206	Enacted
	H.B. 2157	Enacted
	S.B. 15	Enacted
	S.B. 428	Enacted
Oregon	S.B. 182	Enacted
Tennessee	H.B. 166	Enacted
	H.B. 329	Enacted
Texas	H.B. 2039	Enacted
	H.B. 3349	Enacted
	S.B. 1	Enacted
Utah	H.B. 43	Enacted
	H.B. 212	Enacted
Virginia	S.B. 1583	Enacted
Washington	H.B. 1115	Partially vetoed
	H.B. 1341	Partially vetoed
	H.B. 1445	Enacted
	H.B. 1654	Enacted
Wisconsin	A.B. 64	Partially vetoed
West Virginia	H.B. 2637	Enacted

Research and Data Collection

Some states are convening work groups and collecting teacher supply and demand data to ensure they have a proper understanding of their teacher shortage issues and the strategies they might employ. An increasing number of states are also working with higher education institutions to ensure they are recruiting and preparing candidates for positions in which vacancies exist.

In 2017, at least six states enacted legislation supporting new research and data collection related to teacher shortages. In these states, at least eight bills were enacted and one was partially vetoed.

State	Legislation	Status
Colorado	H.B. 1003	Enacted
Florida	H.B. 293	Enacted
Illinois	S.B. 1991	Enacted
North Carolina	H.B. 155	Enacted
	S.B. 257	Enacted
	S.B. 599	Enacted
Oregon	S.B. 182	Enacted
Washington	H.B. 1341	Partially vetoed*
	H.B. 1654	Enacted

**The governor vetoed the section that created the Professional Educator Collaborative, which would have been required to consider what barriers and deterrents hinder the recruitment and retention of professional educators — including those from underrepresented populations — among other things.*

Examples of Enacted State Legislation in 2017

-  **Colorado:** [H.B. 1003](#) requires the department of higher education and the department of education to examine teacher recruitment, preparation and retention and to prepare a strategic plan to address teacher shortages.⁵
-  **Oregon:** [S.B. 182](#) requires the chief education office to conduct research on teacher workforce conditions, supply and demand to support a plan for increasing the supply of culturally diverse candidates and recruiting effective teachers to work in high-need schools and subjects.

State and District Innovations

Some states are enacting legislation that gives state and local education agencies the flexibility to design their own targeted teacher recruitment strategies.

In 2017, at least three states enacted legislation providing funding and other supports for state and district teacher recruitment innovations. In these states, at least four bills were enacted.

State	Legislation	Status
California	A.B. 99	Enacted
	S.B. 113	Enacted
Oklahoma	S.B. 15	Enacted
Utah	H.B. 43	Enacted

Examples of Enacted State Legislation in 2017



California: [S.B. 113](#) appropriates funds to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing for a competitive grant program that helps districts prepare, attract and support teachers, principals and other school leaders in high-need subjects and schools.



Oklahoma: [S.B. 15](#) directs the Oklahoma Department of Education and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to develop and implement teacher recruitment programs, giving priority to programs that address the areas of shortage identified, and recommendations made, in the Oklahoma Study of Educator Supply and Demand.⁶



Utah: [H.B. 43](#) creates and funds a four-year Pilot Teacher Retention Grant Program, administered by the state board of education, that provides grants to districts and charter schools for stipends, recruitment, retention and professional development of teachers in American Indian- and Alaska Native-concentrated schools.

Career Pathways and Grow-Your-Own Programs

Some states and districts are creating career pathways and grow-your-own programs to recruit local high school students into the profession, provide them high-quality training and prepare them for lifelong teaching careers in their community. These programs are often used to recruit teachers of color and/or to recruit teachers to urban and isolated, rural schools.

In 2017, at least three states enacted legislation supporting teacher career pathways and grow-your-own programs. In these states, three bills were enacted and one was vetoed.

State	Legislation	Status
Minnesota	H.F. 890	Vetoed
	H.F. 2	Enacted
North Carolina	S.B. 257	Enacted
Washington	H.B. 1445	Enacted

Examples of Enacted State Legislation in 2017



Minnesota: [H.F. 2](#) amends the alternative teacher professional pay system to fund a grow-your-own initiative. Provides access to grants and encourages schools, districts and postsecondary institutions to offer introduction to teaching/education concurrent enrollment courses.



North Carolina: [S.B. 257](#) creates the Future Teachers of North Carolina Program to encourage high-achieving high school students with strong academic, interpersonal and leadership skills to consider teaching as a career. The bill requires that dual credit courses be offered by high schools in conjunction with state college partners.



Washington: [H.B. 1445](#) creates the Bilingual Educators Initiative to recruit, prepare and mentor bilingual high school students to become future bilingual teachers and counselors. Subject to the availability of funds, the bill requires pilot projects in two to four school districts where the immigrant student population is growing rapidly. Pilot projects must include middle school outreach, activities in ninth and 10th grade that help build student initiative and promote careers in teaching and counseling, and college preparedness activities and credit-bearing curricula in 11th and 12th grades. The bill requires that eligible program participants continue to receive supports in college, including mentoring and loan forgiveness.



Preparation and Licensure

Some states are altering teacher preparation and licensure requirements to help fill ongoing vacancies. Strategies include creating traditional educator preparation programs that train candidates to work in specialty subjects or with specific student populations; creating/expanding alternative route or abbreviated educator preparation programs; and providing licensure requirement exceptions for teachers willing to work in hard-to-staff subjects and schools.

In 2017, at least 12 states enacted legislation to limit shortages by providing alternatives to teacher preparation and exceptions to licensure requirements. In these states, at least 16 bills were enacted, one was vetoed and three were partially vetoed.

State	Legislation	Status	Type
Arkansas	H.B. 1425	Enacted	License exception
Arizona	S.B. 1042	Enacted	License exception
Maine	L.D. 1569 (H.P. 1080)	Enacted	License exception
Illinois	H.B. 3820	Enacted	License exception
Minnesota	H.F. 890 H.F. 2	Vetoed Enacted	Alternative routes Alternative routes
Nevada	A.B. 7 S.B. 548	Enacted Enacted	License exception General preparation
North Carolina	S.B. 257 S.B. 315 S.B. 599	Enacted Enacted Enacted	General preparation General preparation License exception
Oklahoma	H.B. 1206	Enacted	License exception
Texas	H.B. 2039 H.B. 3349 S.B. 1	Enacted Enacted Partially vetoed*	General preparation Alternative routes Alternative routes, general preparation
Virginia	S.B. 1583	Enacted	License exception
Washington	H.B. 1115 H.B. 1654	Partially vetoed** Enacted	Alternative routes Alternative routes
Wisconsin	A.B. 64	Partially vetoed***	General preparation

*The governor vetoed several items in the appropriations bill, but the sections related to alternative routes and general preparation for teachers were approved.

**The governor vetoed the section that would have expanded the alternative route programs to applicants seeking teacher certification with endorsements in subject matter shortage areas. The remainder of the bill, which dealt with other teacher-related issues, was approved.

***The governor vetoed several items in the appropriations bill, but the sections creating targeted teacher recruitment grant programs were approved.

Examples of Enacted State Legislation in 2017



Nevada: [A.B. 7](#) (license exception) permits licensed teachers without proper endorsements to teach in underperforming public schools for up to three school years, if they were hired due to a teacher shortage.



Texas: [S.B. 1](#) (alternative routes, general preparation) requires that appropriated Teach For America funding be used to prioritize employment of TFA math teachers, to the extent practicable. The bill requires TFA to work



with the commissioner of education to improve retention rates and report on attrition rates and demographics of TFA teachers in the state. The bill also directs the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to develop state university programs that encourage students to become certified to teach bilingual education, English as a second language or Spanish in school districts with critical needs.

 **Wisconsin: A.B. 64** (general preparation) provides grant funding through the department of public instruction for cooperative educational service agencies to coordinate with universities and colleges to provide practicums, student-teacher placement and internships for undergraduate college students in rural school districts. The bill also provides new funding to the department of workforce development to award grants to nonprofit organizations that operate a program to recruit and prepare individuals to teach in public or private schools located in low-income or urban school districts.

Financial Incentives

Many states provide financial incentives – such as scholarships or grants, loan forgiveness, and/or hiring bonuses or salary increases – to recruit teachers to high-need schools and subjects. Affordable housing options and mortgage loan assistance programs are less common, but also exist in some states and districts.

In 2017, at least 14 states enacted legislation providing financial incentives for teachers to work in shortage areas. In these states, at least 19 bills were enacted and two were vetoed. The governor in **California** vetoed the only related legislation passed by the legislature.

State	Legislation	Status	Type
Arkansas	H.B. 1303	Enacted	Scholarship/grant
	S.B. 26	Enacted	Scholarship/grant
	S.B. 27	Enacted	Loan forgiveness
	S.B. 555	Enacted	Hiring bonus/salary increase
Arizona	S.B. 1038	Enacted	Scholarship/grant
	S.B. 1040	Enacted	Loan forgiveness
California	A.B. 45	Vetoed	Affordable housing
Colorado	S.B. 296	Enacted	Scholarships/grant
Connecticut	H.B. 7212	Enacted	Loan forgiveness
Oklahoma	H.B. 2157	Enacted	Hiring bonus/salary increase
Florida	H.B. 7069	Enacted	Scholarship/grant
Illinois	S.B. 1739	Enacted	Scholarship/grant
Minnesota	H.F. 890	Vetoed	Hiring bonus/salary increase, loan forgiveness
	H.F. 2	Enacted	Hiring bonus/salary increase, loan forgiveness, transportation reimbursement grant
Montana	H.B. 119	Enacted	Loan forgiveness
	S.B. 115	Enacted	Hiring bonus/salary increase
North Carolina	S.B. 257	Enacted	Scholarship/grant, loan forgiveness
North Dakota	H.B. 1015	Vetoed	Loan forgiveness
	S.B. 2037	Enacted	Loan forgiveness
Tennessee	H.B. 329	Enacted	Scholarship/grant
Utah	H.B. 212	Enacted	Hiring bonus/salary increase
Washington	H.B. 1445	Enacted	Loan forgiveness

Examples of Enacted State Legislation in 2017

 **Arkansas:** [S.B. 26](#) (scholarship/grant) and [S.B. 27](#) (loan forgiveness) create the structure, but do not fund, a scholarship and loan forgiveness program for students who agree to teach in a high-need subject (for the scholarship) or a high-need geographic area (for loan forgiveness) for a minimum of five consecutive years.

 **Montana:** [S.B. 115](#) (hiring bonus/salary increase) funds a portion of an annual stipend for any teacher who is (1) a full-time employee in a high-poverty area or a school impacted by a critical quality educator shortage and (2) is certified/recertified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Provides that for this stipend, the state will pay \$1,000 and another \$2 for each \$1 contributed by the teacher’s school district — up to a maximum state contribution of \$2,000.

 **North Carolina:** [S.B. 257](#) (loan forgiveness) re-establishes the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program and the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission to recruit, prepare and support students to be STEM or special education teachers. The bill provides loan forgiveness to eligible candidates.

Retired Teachers

The increasing number of annual teacher retirements in some states is exacerbating already present shortages. To help address this, some states have enacted legislation to provide incentives for retired teachers to return to the profession. A few of these states are offering incentives only for those teachers willing to work in shortage areas.

In 2017, at least five states enacted legislation to recruit retired teachers back into the teaching profession. There were no related vetoed bills.

State	Legislation	Status
Colorado	H.B. 1176	Enacted
Idaho	H 113	Enacted
Oklahoma	S.B. 428	Enacted
Tennessee	H.B. 166	Enacted
West Virginia	H.B. 2637	Enacted

Examples of Enacted State Legislation in 2017

 **Colorado:** [H.B. 1176](#) permits a rural school district experiencing a critical shortage of teachers, bus drivers or food service cooks to hire retirees in these areas; and permits retirees to receive a salary without any reduction in benefits. The bill is repealed July 1, 2023.

 **Idaho:** [H 113](#) permits a retired teacher who is 60 years of age or older and who is not receiving a reduced benefit for early retirement to return to work at any time, regardless of the length of the break in service, with no reduction in benefits.



Examples of Legislation Introduced in 2018

Targeted teacher recruitment policies remain top of mind for state legislators across the country. Examples of recently proposed state legislation include:



Alabama: [H.B. 261](#) would establish the Alabama Math and Science Teacher Education Program to provide loan repayment awards to eligible math or science public school teachers in areas of the state facing teacher shortages.



Hawaii: [S.B. 2278](#) would establish the Teacher Home Assistance Program to provide housing vouchers to full-time, public school teachers. This program would include teachers at hard-to-staff public charter schools whose household income does not exceed 80 percent of the area median income.



Illinois: [H.B. 4280](#) would establish the Growing Future Educators Program to train high school graduates previously identified as English-language learners to become secondary language educators.



Virginia: [S.B. 349](#) would require the board of education to provide for the issuance of a provisional license, valid for no more than five years, to any person who does not meet the legal requirements for licensure but who has the appropriate level of experience or training in a subject with a critical shortage or agrees to teach in a geographic area with a critical shortage.

Resources

- [Teacher Shortages: What We Know](#)
- [Fixing the Holes in the Teacher Pipeline: An Overview of Teacher Shortages](#)
- [Understanding and Addressing Teacher Shortages in the United States](#)
- [Understanding Teacher Shortages: A State-by-State Analysis of the Factors Influencing Teacher Supply, Demand, and Equity](#)
- [State Policy Yearbook Database](#)

ENDNOTES

1. Nat Malkus, Kathleen Mulvaney Hoyer, and Dinah Sparks, *Stats in Brief: Teaching Vacancies and Difficult-to-Staff Teaching Positions in Public Schools* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, November 2015), <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015065.pdf>; and Stephanie Aragon, *Teacher Shortages: What We Know* (Denver: Education Commission of the States, May 2016), <https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Teacher-Shortages-What-We-Know.pdf>.
2. Dan Goldhaber, Betheny Gross, and Daniel Player, “Teacher career paths, teacher quality, and persistence in the classroom: Are public schools keeping their best?” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 30, no. 1 (November 2010): 50-87, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/pam.20549/abstract>; and Andrene Castro et al., *Policy Brief 2018-1: Addressing the Importance and Scale of the U.S. Teacher Shortage* (Charlottesville, VA: University Council for Educational Administration, January 2018) <http://www.ucea.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Addressing-the-Importance-and-Scale-of-the-US-Teacher-Shortage.pdf>.
3. “Job Openings and Labor Turnover — December 2017,” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, December 2017) <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/jolts.pdf>.
4. Debra Viadaro, “Teacher Recruitment and Retention: It’s Complicated,” *Education Week*, January 23, 2018, <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2018/01/24/teaching-shortages-many-answers-for-a-complex.html>.
5. Cynthia Cole, Robert Mitchell, and Katy Anthes, *Teacher Shortages Across the Nation and Colorado: Similar Issues, Varying Magnitudes* (Denver: Colorado Department of Higher Education, December 2017), https://highered.colorado.gov/Publications/Reports/teachereducation/2017/TeacherShortages_Nation_Colorado_Dec2017.pdf.
6. Alex Berg-Jacobson and Jesse Levin, *Oklahoma Study of Educator Supply and Demand: Trends and Projections* (Washington, D.C.: American Institutes for Research, September 2015), <https://www.okhighered.org/studies-reports/teach-supply/2015-report.pdf>.

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