Testimony From
Association of Texas Professional Educators
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atpe.org

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About ATPE

- Association of Texas Professional Educators
- Founded in 1980
- Exclusive to Texas
- Members include classroom teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, bus drivers, retired educators, and more
About ATPE

• More than 100,000 members
• Largest educator group in Texas
• Largest independent educator group in the U.S.
About ATPE

• Member-owned and governed
• House of Delegates meets annually, approves policies
• Adopts ATPE Legislative Program:
  • Currently 37 positions on issues
  • Covers school funding, teacher recruitment, compensation, and more
• View at atpe.org
Importance of Pipeline

Researchers agree educators are the most important school-based factor affecting student success

• recruitment, preparation, induction, ongoing support, compensation, retention
• alignment is key
Recruitment & Preparation

Recruitment should be more selective. Attracting the best and brightest:
• improves student outcomes
• raises prestige of the profession
• reduces costly turnover
Recruitment & Preparation

We cannot place ill-prepared educators in the classroom and expect them to achieve excellence.

• continue to raise ed prep standards
• ensure ALL certification paths entail adequate training and field experience
Induction & Mentoring

State should identify, prioritize, and fund effective induction

Proven results:

• increases effectiveness of beginning teachers.
• helps retain teachers, reducing costly turnover.
• strengthens partnerships between ed prep programs and districts.
Induction & Mentoring

An effective mentoring program is one of the best induction tools

• up-front investment yields long-term savings – excellent ROI
• all new teachers should have access to trained mentors
• requires proper matching and adequate time
Ongoing Support

• Essential to growing and retaining effective teachers

• Assess and ensure good working conditions
  ➢ Commonly cited reason for teachers leaving
  ➢ Example: TELL Texas

• Incentivize meaningful and flexible professional development
MSS creates appropriate and necessary floor for base pay

- some districts would pay below the base if allowable
- few districts pay at minimum, but many have local step-pay systems that foster retention
- state law affords flexibility above the base
Compensation – Minimum Salary Schedule

Our members believe the MSS has room for improvement

• too low – assess what districts pay and consider more appropriate base
• too flat – need more room between steps
• doesn’t account for regional factors
• needs more steps to foster greater retention
Compensation – Differentiating Above Base

ATPE supports differentiated pay above an adequate base

Multiple ways to differentiate:

• by individual performance based on goals (evaluations, student performance, local goals)
• by job duties / leadership roles that offer professional growth beyond just admin roles
• by group performance based on team goals that incentivize collaboration
Compensation – Differentiating Above Base

Principles to consider when designing a plan

• Plans should be sustainable and adequately funded over time
• Plans should be transparent to participants, with buy-in from local educators
• Amounts must be meaningful enough to influence participant decision making
• Participants should be highly involved in plan development and revision
Retention

Retaining strong educators, especially in schools with high turnover:

• promotes growth in student achievement.
• improves equitable access to high-quality educators across and within districts.
  • Schools with high-need students need the best teachers, but turnover is often highest in these schools.
• reduces high costs of empty classrooms.
  • Texas teacher turnover cost estimated at $500 million/year.
Other Helpful Initiatives

• Gather input from teachers & principals on improving teacher quality.
• Study districts/campuses that are high-performing outliers.
• Modify weights to focus fiscal, instructional, and human resources on high-poverty, predominantly minority, and low-performing schools.
• Identify and report on distribution of teacher quality.
• Consider policy recommendations of 2010 ATPE-funded “Study on the Distribution of Teacher Quality in Texas Schools,” and similar research.
• Include teacher quality measures in accountability system.
Thank you!

Q&A