

Executive Summary

The Teacher Vacancy Task Force (TVTF) was established in March 2022 by Governor Abbott to examine teacher retention and recruitment challenges across Texas. The TVTF met every other month during the past year with the primary objectives of understanding challenges school systems are facing related to teacher vacancies and developing recommendations for regulatory or other policy changes for the Texas Education Agency and the legislature. The TVTF was comprised of teachers and school system leaders in public education hailing from a variety of school systems and geographies and serving student populations that are representative of the diversity of Texas as well as a wide range of grade-levels and content areas.

Through examining research and evidence, considering the perspectives of educators across the state, and continuous stakeholder input, the TVTF developed recommendations focused on support for teachers in the key areas of compensation, training and support, and working conditions.

Compensation

Theme 1: Increase Overall Compensation and Support Strategic Compensation Strategies

- A. Fund an increase in overall teacher salaries by increasing the basic allotment and other state funding mechanisms, while increasing the requirement that school systems prioritize new funding towards teacher salaries
- B. Update the minimum salary schedule to reflect the value of Texas teachers and promote differentiated compensation
- C. Provide technical assistance for school systems to engage in strategic compensation through the Teacher Incentive Allotment, established by the 86th Texas Legislature, and staffing considerations to further increase and differentiate salaries

Theme 2: Enhance Teachers' Total Compensation Package

- A. Reduce the cost of healthcare insurance for teachers
- B. Prioritize teacher wellbeing through mental health supports, expanding access to childcare, and other benefits
- C. Temporarily subsidize the retire/rehire surcharge

Theme 3: Provide Incentives and Support for Hard to Staff Areas

- A. Collect and report real-time data about teacher vacancies in tandem with the development of a statewide teacher employment web application
- B. Subsidize certification and hiring incentives for Special Education and Bilingual/ESL Teachers
- C. Create targeted marketing campaigns and incentives to recruit teachers back into the profession

Training and Support

Theme 4: Improve the Pipeline and Pre-service Preparation of Novice Teachers

- A. Expand high-quality Grow Your Own (GYO) pathways for high school students and paraprofessionals seeking to become certified teachers
- B. Establish and fund a Teacher Residency pathway
- C. Expand Educator Preparation Program (EPP) capacity to produce teacher residents through technical assistance support

Theme 5: Expand Training and Support for Teacher Mentorship and Teacher Leadership Opportunities

- A. Develop cooperating teacher and mentor teacher training that leverage job-embedded and research-based best practices
- B. Increase funding for and scale of the Mentor Program Allotment (MPA) established by the 86th Legislature in House Bill 3
- C. Provide opportunities and technical assistance to create and expand teacher leadership opportunities

Theme 6: Provide Access to and Support for High-Quality Instructional Materials

- A. Expand awareness of and access to High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) to reduce time teachers spend searching for and creating materials
- B. Require EPPs to integrate instruction on curriculum and assessment literacy into coursework and provide training for EPP faculty/staff on curriculum and assessment literacy best practices

Working Conditions

Theme 7: Demonstrate Respect and Value for Teacher Time

- A. Develop and conduct teacher time studies with school systems to inform staffing and scheduling policies and decisions
- B. Provide technical assistance to school administrators to redesign master schedules that increase teacher time for planning and development
- C. Expand training and technical assistance supports for school systems to design and implement strategic staffing models

Theme 8: Ensure Discipline Supports

- A. Expand access to counseling staff, services, and partnerships that support both students and teachers
- B. Provide preparation, training, and ongoing coaching for school administrators on best practices related to school discipline and fostering a supportive learning environment