



# Educator Pipeline Policy Landscape

## National Landscape

Across the nation, severe [teacher shortages](#) remain in certain subject areas (such as math, science, special education and bilingual education) and schools with specific characteristics (such as urban, rural, high-poverty, high-minority and low-achieving). Variations in state teacher policies (e.g., regarding salaries, licensure requirements and teaching conditions) and other state-level impacts (e.g., quantity of preparation program providers, demographics, etc.) make for [variations](#) in the types of shortages experienced in each state.

## State Landscape

### **Recruitment Challenges**

According to recent data (see [here](#) and [here](#)) from the U.S. Department of Education, fewer college students are pursuing teaching careers and fewer students are completing Educator Preparation Programs. In addition to a declining candidate supply overall, many states struggle to ensure EPPs are preparing teaching candidates for [grades and subjects](#) in which vacancies exist. The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) conducted a [50-state review](#) of state efforts to align teacher supply and demand that found that many states do not publish teacher supply data, and even fewer connect that data to program completion.

**Targeted teacher recruitment** and **alternative teacher certification programs** are two strategies aimed at alleviating some of these recruitment challenges.

### **Targeted Teacher Recruitment**

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. [States are passing legislation to:](#)

- Collect and [examine teacher supply and demand](#) data.
- Provide [flexibility to districts](#) to design their own targeted recruitment strategies.
- Create [career pathways and grow-your-own programs](#) for high school students.
- Provide incentives for retired teachers to return to the profession.

### **Alternative Teacher Certification**

The goal of alternative teacher certification programs is to provide a quicker path into the teaching profession than traditional programs while still providing more preparation than might be required for an emergency credential. These programs allow individuals who have already obtained a bachelor's degree to bypass the time and expense involved in attaining a teaching degree or completing a graduate program. States are passing legislation to alter teacher preparation and licensure requirements and/or support [alternative certification programs](#).

### **Retention Challenges**

[National data](#) from 2012-13 suggest that just under 8 percent of teachers leave the profession within five years and are unlikely to return to the classroom, but



high retention rates in some schools and districts mask high attrition in others. Teacher attrition rates increased through much of the 1990s and 2000s but have [decreased slightly](#) in recent years. To help address retention challenges, more states and school districts are turning to **evaluation and feedback** policies as well as **teacher leadership opportunities** to help elevate the profession.

### Evaluation and Feedback

School leaders have an opportunity to provide support to teachers by conducting regular [evaluations of teaching](#), providing ongoing feedback – both positive and constructive – and offering targeted professional development that aligns with individuals’ needs and goals. A primary goal of any teacher evaluation system should be to help every teacher – even the most effective – continuously improve.

### Teacher Leadership

According to a frequently cited [definition](#), teacher leadership is “the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals and other members of school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement.” Leadership opportunities can include both formal and informal activities, such as participating in a formal mentorship program or informally mentoring colleagues. Teacher leader roles [are typically](#) at the organizational level, instructional level, or centered on professional development. States are passing legislation to:

- Support high-retention preparation pathways, including [teacher residencies](#).
- Provide opportunities for high-quality [induction and mentoring](#).
- Improve teacher [professional development](#).
- Support [teacher leadership](#) and [advancement](#).

### Compensation

Teachers’ salaries in the United States do not compete with the average salary of similarly educated workers and wage competitiveness for teachers has [worsened over time](#). When it comes to [average teacher salaries](#), one analysis found that Idaho ranked 44th in 2018. In [this analysis](#), Idaho ranks slightly above the U.S. average for teacher wage competitiveness. Although not the only contributing factor, insufficient pay and pay that fails to reward the best and brightest plays a role in the struggle to recruit and retain high quality teachers.

### Financial Incentives

Most often teacher pay and pay structures are determined by school districts. Even when state policies establish pay floors, salary schedules and incentives, districts can provide additional funding to attract and keep teachers. In many cases, states permit/encourage/fund district innovations but do not mandate district participation. Most states are implementing one or more **financial incentive** strategies to influence teacher pay, elevate the profession, and improve teacher recruitment and retention. These strategies can be placed into a few primary categories: salary requirements, diversified pay, pay-for-performance and other financial incentives. States are passing legislation to:

- Provide [salary increases](#).
- Provide [financial incentives](#) such as scholarships/grants, loan forgiveness and hiring bonuses/[strategic compensation](#).
- Provide incentives for retired teachers to return to the profession.