

2025 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

FROM

CAPITOL TO CLASSROOM:

MAKING AN IMPACT



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ON TEACHER WORKFORCE:

- ▶ Support teacher retention through increased compensation and benefits packages of at least \$15,000
- ▶ Invest in teacher recruitment strategies, including scholarships for aspiring teachers
- ▶ Strengthen teacher development by raising the standards for all education preparation pathways and providing meaningful professional development opportunities

Where We Stand on Teacher Workforce

When we invest in our Texas teacher workforce, we invest in the future workforce of Texas. Teachers make the difference. They cultivate curiosity and brighten the future of Texas. Teachers also represent the single most important in-school factor impacting student outcomes, and high-quality teachers are strongly linked to student achievement, significantly increasing high school graduation rates, college completion, and salary earnings. However, the health of our Texas teacher workforce faces challenges including recruitment issues, retention problems, and teacher shortages in critical areas, which has resulted in even more uncertified teachers and further strain on our already over-stretched teacher workforce.

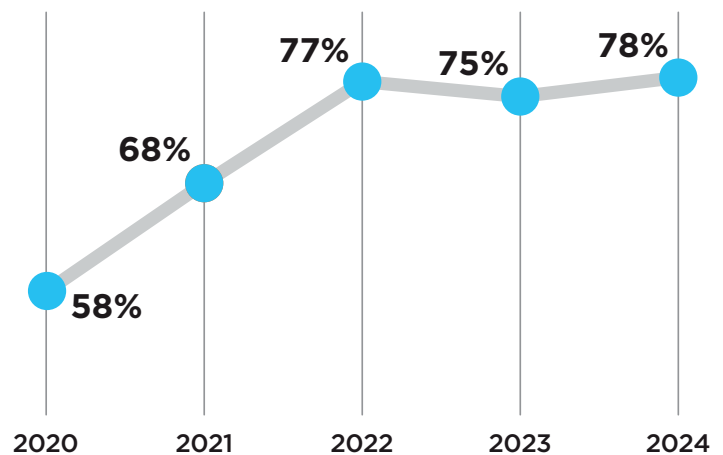
Now more than ever, the Texas legislature should support retention, recruitment, and development practices that strengthen our teacher workforce. When Texas supports its teachers, Texas supports its future.

An Investment in Today's Texas Teachers Is an Investment in Texas' Future Workforce

Established in March 2022 to examine teacher retention and recruitment challenges across Texas, The Teacher Vacancy Task Force (TVTF) developed recommendations focused on support for teachers in the key areas of teacher compensation, training and support, and working conditions. Since publishing their recommendations in 2023, the quality of teacher hires available in Texas has changed with a sharp increase in uncertified teachers, with as many as 33% of recently hired teachers in

Teachers Considering Leaving the Classroom

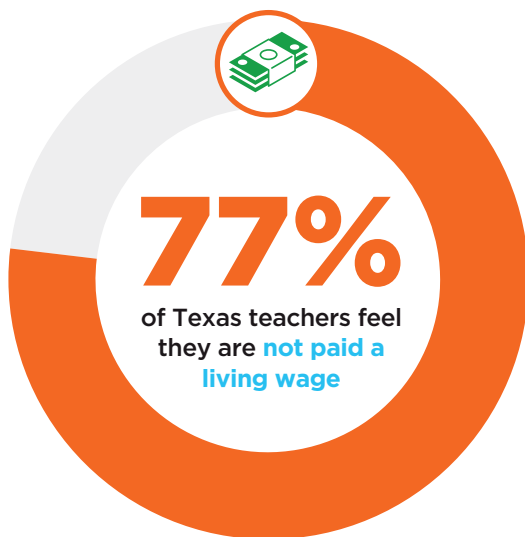
% of Texas teachers seriously considering leaving



Source: Charles Butt Foundation 2024 Texas Teacher Poll

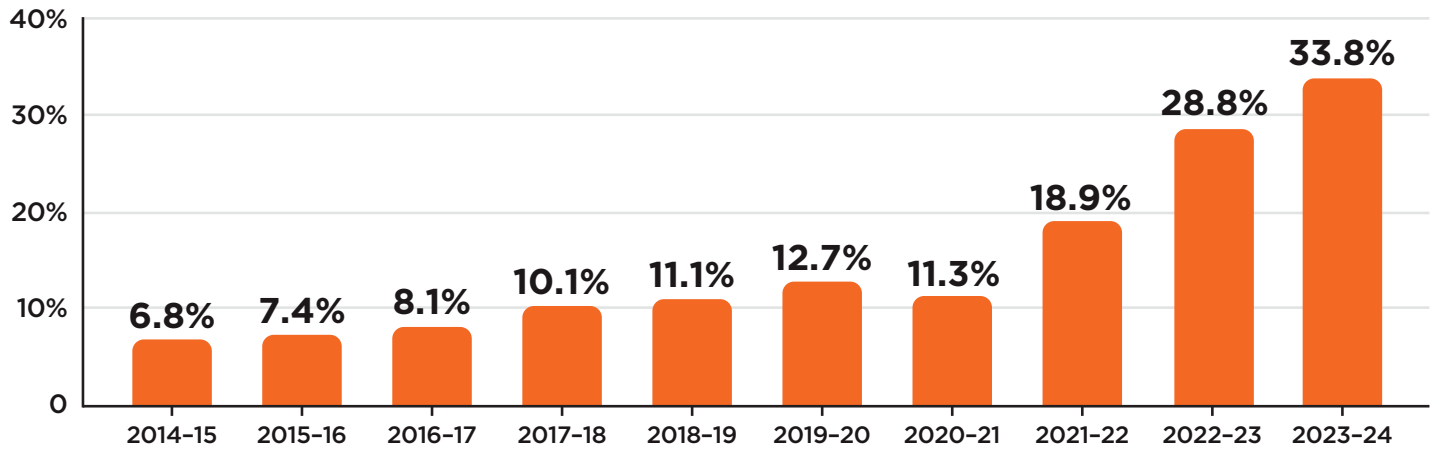
the 2023-24 school year.¹ The recent rise of uncertified teachers in Texas is disproportionately impacting rural school districts. While the practice of hiring unlicensed teachers may fill an immediate staffing need in classrooms, research shows it has several negative consequences including a decrease in academic achievement and higher teacher turnover.²

For the past three years, over three-fourths of Texas teachers have seriously considered leaving the profession, marking the highest levels of teacher dissatisfaction in decades. The continuation of this trend indicates this is no longer a temporary response to pandemic challenges and is instead a new reality for our students in Texas classrooms. On average, Texas teachers earn 23.5% less than other college graduates³ and 77% of Texas teachers feel they are not paid a living wage. Teachers who feel they do not earn a living wage were recently asked what salary would reflect a living wage. The median salary cited among this group is \$80,000.⁴ When asked, 70% of school leaders agree increased salaries would improve teacher retention.⁵ For Texas to keep a competitive workforce, we must invest in and enhance teachers' total compensation packages.



Source: Charles Butt Foundation 2024 Texas Teacher Poll

One in Three New Texas Teachers Are Uncertified



Source: Texas Education Agency

Teacher Scholarships Drive Higher Retention Rates and Improved Student Achievement

Texas can lead the way in making the teaching profession an attractive and competitive career choice. However, the idea of becoming a teacher isn't top-of-mind for tomorrow's leaders. Only 3% of Texans who took the SAT in 2023⁶ cited an interest in teaching, and most parents in Texas do not support the idea of their children becoming teachers.⁷ As Texas grapples with teacher shortages, revitalizing our approach to teacher recruitment has never been more important. The Texas legislature should support strong incentives that elevate the status of teaching and draw diverse talent into our public schools.

Scholarships for aspiring teachers are one of the best recruitment tools available. They reduce the cost of a college education in exchange for a commitment to serve public school students. As a result, teacher scholarships increase access to the best preparation programs, attract diverse teacher candidates, and address teacher shortage areas. Studies have shown that teacher scholarship programs contribute to better retention rates and greater student achievement.⁸

High-quality Field Experience is Essential for Preparing Effective Teachers

All teacher candidates, regardless of pathway, should have extensive clinical field experience before becoming a teacher of record. In addition to the challenges faced by exponential growth in uncertified teachers, the majority of teachers who do receive certification earn their credentialing through for-profit alternative certification programs (ACPs) – many of which only require up to 30 hours of in-classroom experience. Data shows that ACPs are linked to worse teacher retention rates and lower student achievement. In a recent study from The University of Texas at Austin, students in grades four through nine gained up to two extra months of learning in math and reading when assigned a university-certified teacher.⁹ The learning gains were even more pronounced for economically disadvantaged students. It is clear that low-quality ACPs often contribute to the very problems they intend to solve.

Teacher development doesn't end upon certification. Like all professionals, teachers deserve support throughout their careers, especially in the initial years of teaching. Research shows high-quality mentorship improves teacher retention and student performance. One study found that comprehensive mentorship programs cut new teacher turnover in half.¹⁰ By building a culture of support and a network of resources, the state of Texas can ensure each teacher is properly equipped to provide the quality of education our students deserve.

Sources

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