



EDUCATOR RETENTION
TASK FORCE



THE GOVERNOR'S EDUCATOR RETENTION TASK FORCE RESEARCH & ANALYSIS REPORT

DECEMBER 2023

THE GOVERNOR'S EDUCATOR RETENTION TASK FORCE

Research and Analysis

LETTER FROM THE GOVERNOR

December 1, 2023

During the first 100 days of my administration, I established the Educator Retention Task Force through Executive Order 2023-07 to hear directly from educators about the retention crisis facing the profession and to create recommendations to improve educator retention.

Over the past several months, the members of the Task Force engaged nearly 10,000 current and former educators across the state to understand their needs and concerns; studied promising practices from Arizona-based programs and those in other states; and developed thoughtful recommendations that will support educators and encourage increased retention. The Task Force also commissioned this report that provides important research and analyses that can inform future conversations about improving educator retention.

I am grateful for the time the Task Force members invested in this work and for their willingness to be open about their experiences and challenges.

I would also like to thank the Morrison Institute for Public Policy for conducting the 2023 Educator Working Conditions Study in partnership with the Task Force. Additionally, I am grateful to The Hunt Institute for facilitating the process to create the Task Force's recommendations and for their work in drafting this report. My gratitude also goes to the partners who helped distribute the working conditions survey across the state and to the thousands of educators and former educators who responded. I am thankful for their engagement and their voices which were essential in informing this report and the Task Force's recommendations.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katie Hobbs', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Katie Hobbs

Governor

State of Arizona

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INTRODUCTION

Educators are the [number one factor](#) influencing student growth and achievement. Yet, across the country, districts and school leaders are [struggling](#) to retain educators and fill vacant classrooms. As of 2022, there were an [estimated 55,000 teacher vacancies](#) across the country and [270,000 positions](#) filled by underqualified educators. In many states, the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated educator attrition, leading states to examine not only how to fill vacancies, but also how to strengthen and diversify the [shrinking](#) educator pipeline.

Arizona is not immune to these challenges. As of September 2022, [68 percent](#) of teaching positions in the state were either left vacant a few weeks into the school year or filled by individuals not meeting the standard teacher requirements. The state has also struggled with one of the [highest turnover rates](#) in the country, leaving less experienced educators in the classroom over time. Concerns over educator salary, working conditions, and field attractiveness contribute to these high attrition rates; Arizona [ranks second to last](#) for wage competitiveness, making the profession less attractive to prospective educators, and educators in the state have seen a decline in pay of [six percent](#) over the past decade (adjusted for inflation).

Retaining, and by extension, recruiting, a high-quality educator workforce is pivotal for enhancing the well-being of Arizona's citizens. Evidence supports the truth that highly effective educators can alter the trajectory of a child's future:

- When evaluating the most influential factors related to student performance in reading and math assessments, teachers were found to have a [two to three times](#) greater influence than any other aspect of schooling, including services, facilities, and school leadership.
- Students assigned to highly effective teachers are [more likely](#) to pursue higher education, earn higher salaries, and less likely to experience early parenthood.
- Students who benefit from teachers focused on improving behavior and other hireable skills display [increased rates](#) of high school graduation, SAT participation, and intentions of college attendance.

To address the educator retention crisis in the state, Governor Katie Hobbs issued an [Executive Order](#) to create the [Governor's Educator Retention Task Force](#) (the Task Force) to:

- Develop a report on or before December 1, 2023, that identified recommendations for improving educator retention in Arizona, incorporating feedback from a representative and diverse range of stakeholders and Arizona citizens.
 - Discuss educator retention rates in Arizona,
 - Review educator pay and benefits from across the United States,
 - Analyze findings from the Arizona Educator Retention Survey,
 - Review effective retention practices focused on including educators of color, high-need schools, and subject areas,
 - Review educator and classified staff certification requirements, the effectiveness of alternative pathways, and their impact on teacher retention, and
 - Analyze educator preparation programs in the state including the Arizona Teachers Academy and Arizona Teacher Residency program.

The Task Force was comprised of 19 members from across the state, including educators, administrators, educational support professionals, and school board members; a list of the Task Force members can be found in [Appendix A](#).

. Their work included:

- Dividing into four working groups around Pay and Compensation, Working Conditions, Retention Innovations, and Teacher Preparation and Certification to examine the landscape in Arizona and learn best practices and successful strategies from experts.
- Meeting as a full Task Force to review the results of the 2023 Educator Working Conditions Study conducted by the Morrison Institute for Public Policy at Arizona State University and to create recommendations to strengthen educator retention in Arizona (see *The Governor's Educator Retention Task Force Recommendations*).

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The research and analysis included in this report served to inform the work of the Task Force and provides additional context and support for the recommendations ultimately put forward.

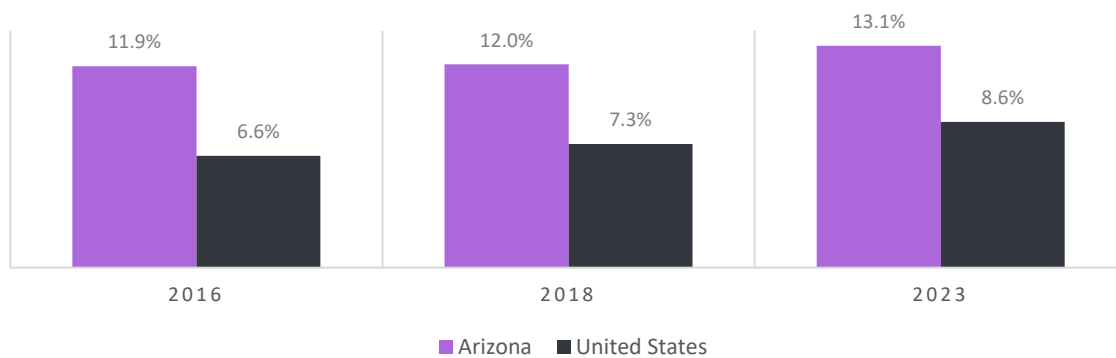
The Educator Workforce in Arizona

RETENTION

Arizona has struggled with teacher retention historically. Ten years ago, Arizona had the highest teacher attrition rate in the country at 24 percent and in 2018, 12 percent of educators planned to leave the profession.

In the 2021-2022 school year, 58 percent of Arizona schools struggled or failed to fill teacher vacancies on campus compared to 47 percent of schools nationwide. As of 2023, Arizona continues to have one of the highest rates of educators planning to leave the profession at 13 percent, compared to 8 percent nationally.

PERCENT OF EDUCATORS PLANNING TO LEAVE THE PROFESSION



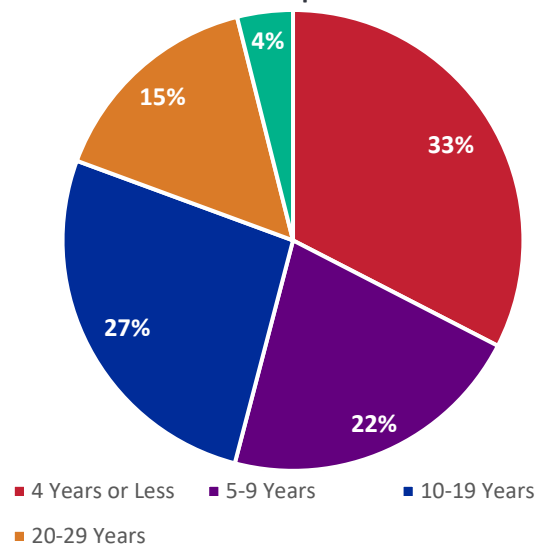
[Source](#)

EXPERIENCE

Studies show that teacher effectiveness continues to steadily increase until the 12th year of teaching when returns begin to level off, with the largest gains in student achievement occurring during a teacher’s first five years in the classroom. In Arizona, the majority of educators are within their first four years of experience and the steep drop off for teachers with five to nine years of experience suggests a high rate of attrition in the early years of the profession. While most new educators enter the profession in their 20s, Arizona has a steady stream of new educators entering the profession into their 50s and 60s.

As teachers leave the profession, schools have struggled to find qualified educators for classroom vacancies. During the 2019-2020 school year, 3,115 teaching positions were filled by international teachers, emergency certified teachers, emergency substitutes, and long-term substitutes, impacting an estimated five percent of active classrooms. The

ARIZONA TEACHERS BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE | 2022-2023



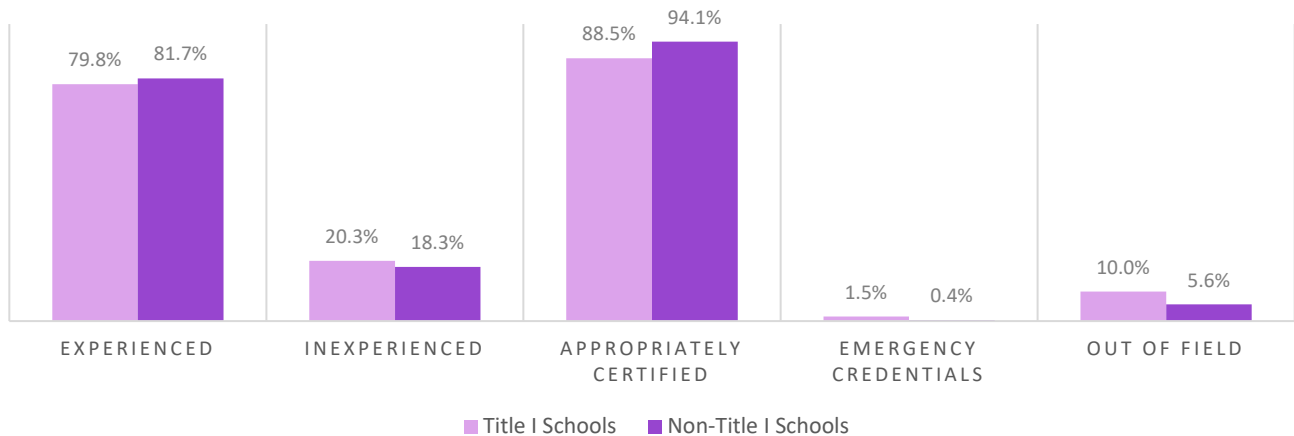
[Source](#)

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classrooms most likely to be impacted are in Title I-eligible schools and those students are more likely to have a teacher that is less experienced and teaching with an emergency credential or out of their field.

EDUCATOR QUALIFICATION BY SCHOOL TYPE | 2021-2022



[Source](#)

SHORTAGE AREAS

As Arizona struggles to ensure that all students have access to a high-quality educator, there are specific subject areas that are more affected than others. The areas identified as [shortages](#) in Arizona for 2023-2024 are:

Subject Matter	Discipline	Grades
English as a Second Language	Bilingual Education	Pre-K - 12
Language Arts	English	6 - 8
Mathematics	Basic and Advanced Mathematics	6 - 8
Science	General Science	6 - 12
Special Education	Cross Categorical	Pre-K - 12
Special Education	General Curriculum	Pre-K - 12
Special Education	Early Childhood	Pre-K - 3
Special Education	Severely and Profoundly Handicapped	Pre-K - 12
Special Education	Emotional Disabilities	Pre-K - 12
Special Education	Cognitive Disabilities	Pre-K - 12

Special Education

Challenges recruiting and retaining special education educators is a national concern; in the 2021-2022 school year, [45 percent](#) of schools reported a vacancy in special education, making this the highest area of need for educators nationally. Two major contributing factors are the wide range of disciplines within the subject area that spread certified educators thin and the [legal requirements](#) that prohibit states from waiving certification or license requirements for special education teachers and related services personnel on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis. In Arizona, finding special education teachers is a [long-term](#) challenge.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)

Historical [barriers](#) to hiring STEM teachers have included location, respect for the teaching profession, attractive alternative STEM career opportunities, and declining interests among students in pursuing teaching careers. These shortages disproportionately impact low-income schools, students of color, and those in urban and rural school settings. Nationally,

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over half of public school districts and more than 90 percent of districts serving large populations of Black and Hispanic students reported significant challenges in recruiting and retaining STEM educators.

Rural Communities

In addition to specific subject areas, rural communities also disproportionately encounter challenges recruiting teachers; research indicates low-income rural public schools experience a 28 percent higher attrition rate than low-income urban districts. One contributing factor is that while rural areas tend to have lower living costs, teacher salaries remain less competitive in rural areas compared to other regions. High transportation costs and limited housing options further exacerbate this problem.

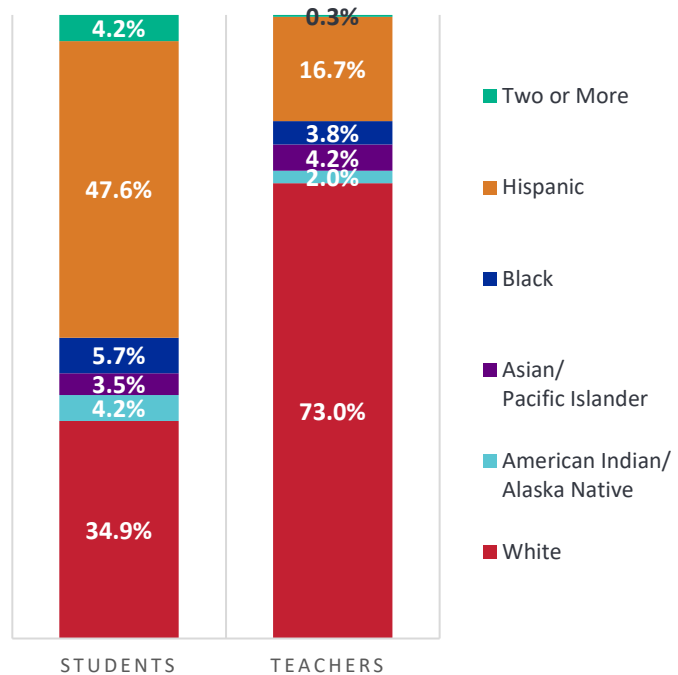
DIVERSITY

Extensive research has found that a diverse educator workforce is beneficial to all students, but especially students of color. When students are taught by an educator who reflects their racial identity, their test scores improve in both math and reading in early grades, and they are less likely to face exclusionary discipline practices and more likely to attain a postsecondary credential or degree. Despite this evidence, the teaching profession in the United States is characterized by its white and female composition, a trend that has persisted over the past three decades. In fact, the percentage of female teachers has grown during this time and while the profession has become more racially and ethnically diverse overall, the percentage of Black teachers has decreased. This pattern is mirrored in Arizona; as of the 2022-2023 school year, 76 percent of Arizona classroom teachers are female and 73 percent are white.

The barriers to entering the education workforce begin when individuals of color are in school themselves:

- During their formative years, students of color are more likely to be enrolled in schools where most of their peers are also students of color and/or from low-income backgrounds. These schools typically suffer from inadequate funding, fewer qualified teachers, and limited educational resources, which diminishes the likelihood of students matriculating to college.
- Students of color experience lower enrollment and graduation rates from postsecondary institutions, making recruitment of educators of color more challenging.
- Educators of color, particularly Black educators, are more likely to have financed their college education through student loans, causing them to carry more debt. Therefore, students of color and low-income students, who often lack generational wealth or may be supporting additional family members, take on additional risks when attending college, likely leading them to pursue more financially lucrative careers.

STUDENT VS. TEACHER DIVERSITY IN ARIZONA | 2022-2023



[Source 1](#), [Source 2](#)

Then, once educators of color enter classrooms, professional challenges make it more difficult for them to stay than for their white peers:

- Studies have shown that educators of color report higher levels of discrimination, microaggressions, and other forms of racism while on the job relative to their white counterparts. One study found educators of color working in predominately white schools receive lower evaluation scores, which may lead educators to leave their schools for other opportunities.

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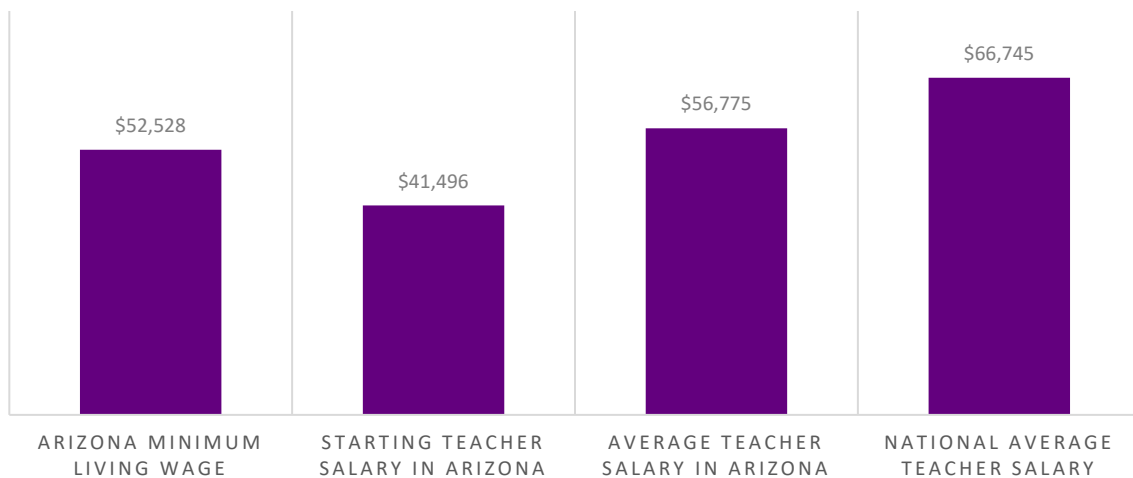
- Educators of color often face an “[invisible tax](#),” a term describing the expectation that they will take on additional duties related to their racial or ethnic identities. For example, teachers who speak more than one language may be asked to perform additional duties, such as document translation or facilitating communication with families who do not speak English, often without receiving additional compensation.
- Black male educators report spending a significant amount of time [mentoring and counseling](#) and are tasked with disciplinary roles for students of color in their schools. [Research](#) indicates that the time dedicated to these responsibilities can put Black teachers who aspire to principal or superintendent positions at a disadvantage because they have not had instructional leadership opportunities.

Educator Compensation

The average starting pay for teachers in Arizona is \$41,496, ranking [27th nationally](#). The average salary for all classroom educators in the state is \$56,775, which ranks 32nd nationally, indicating issues with wage compression.

Despite Arizona’s mid-ranking teacher salary, the minimum living wage for Arizona is [\\$52,528](#), designating beginning educators as low-income earners despite requiring fully certified educators to hold Bachelor’s degrees. Arizona is the 50th state in [wage competitiveness](#), meaning educators earn the lowest compared to other college graduates, and relative to other college-educated professionals, Arizona teachers earn [32 percent](#) less annually. In fact, the top paid teacher with a bachelor’s degree in Arizona makes [\\$52,130](#), which is still less than the minimum living wage for the state; regardless of level of experience, a teacher with a bachelor’s degree in Arizona with one child cannot afford the basic standard of living.

COMPARISON OF ARIZONA TEACHER SALARIES | 2023



[Source](#)

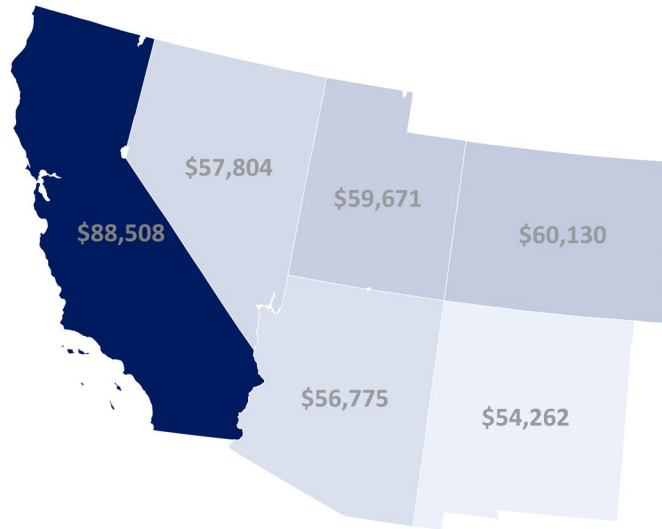
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EDUCATOR COMPENSATION ACROSS THE UNITED STATES

Compared regionally, the average teacher salary in Arizona is lower than all neighboring states, apart from New Mexico (not weighted or adjusted for cost of living).

REGIONAL COMPARISON OF AVERAGE TEACHER SALARY | 2021-2022



[Source](#)

On average, teachers experience a pay penalty relative to other college graduates; in Arizona, public school teachers earn [33 percent](#) less on average than non-teacher college graduates in the state. Criticisms that teachers only work a nine-month contract per year and, therefore, their salaries cannot be compared to other professions have largely been [invalidated](#). Teachers spend at least some of their time during summer breaks preparing for the next school year, engaging in professional development, and participating in other activities related to their role. This work is generally uncompensated and, in some cases, involves a [required cost](#). To combat challenges related to the wage gap, many teachers take on second jobs throughout the school year; teachers are about [30 percent](#) more likely to work a second job than non-teachers.

The variation in compensation across the country is explained by the different approaches to teacher compensation across states and districts.

Governance of Educator Compensation	Number of States
Set teacher salaries at the state level	17
Set a minimum teacher salary at the state level, but allow LEAs to make additional determinations around compensation	9
Leave decisions around compensation to LEAs	29

[Source 1](#), [Source 2](#)

Common criteria for determining teacher pay include qualification, years of experience, and performance. Some states and districts also offer additional financial incentives to attract teachers to schools or subject areas which are hard to staff.

Qualifications

All states with salary scales include compensation for various levels of certification or education to incentivize educators to continue professional learning and ultimately maximize their impact on students. While there is some variation in the

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amount of compensation provided for each, common qualifications for salary increase include possession of a teaching license or certificate, graduate level degrees, and certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Experience

Currently, all [17 states](#) implementing teacher salary schedules determine pay based on number of years teaching, a practice aimed at retaining teachers over the course of their career. The number of years required for maximum compensation varies from six years in Hawai'i to thirty-five years in Mississippi, North Carolina, and West Virginia.

[Five states](#) (California, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, and North Carolina) also grant extra pay for relevant prior experience from other industries to attract professionals with comparable education to the profession. These states permit administrator autonomy to determine relevant experience. Seven additional states offer pay for prior experience, but only in specified industries; for example, Hawai'i limits prior experience pay to candidates with military experience.

Performance

Pay based on performance, sometimes referred to as "merit-based pay" or a "value-add model," is required [by 11 states and allowed by an additional 13 states](#). How performance is evaluated varies between states and districts; some educators receive compensation based on student achievement on state standardized tests or AP testing, while others receive compensation based on district-level rubrics that consider student achievement, teacher observations, campus leadership, and parent or student surveys. The most [effective performance-pay](#) programs include professional development and offer competitive incentives for educators.

Texas is one of the current leaders for performance-based pay. In 2019, the Texas Legislature passed [House Bill 3](#), an education funding bill that included the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA). The TIA provides between \$3,000 and \$32,000 per year to identify teachers based on performance and other characteristics, such as high-need areas, rural district campuses, and student population characteristics. Texas districts are required to report the use of these funds and salary increases to the state education agency for accountability.

[Research](#) on performance-based pay does not support the idea that individual teachers improve based on performance incentives. However, performance pay may increase the overall quality of the teacher workforce by recruiting and retaining highly effective teachers; [studies](#) have found that while attrition increased during initial implementation of performance-based pay initiatives, [lower-performing](#) educators were the most likely to leave. [Research](#) has revealed possible disparities in the implementation of performance-based pay policies, noting that white teachers received higher ratings on average on their evaluations than their Black and Hispanic colleagues.

Differentiated Pay Incentives

One of the most popular approaches to teacher pay is strategic pay for hard-to-staff schools or subject areas, with [39 states](#) currently implementing monetary incentives to attract teachers to strategic positions. Additionally, [18](#) of those 39 states offer loan forgiveness as well. Recent research in [Washington State](#) found that bonus pay to teachers in high-poverty schools improved hiring and reduced attrition in schools eligible for the bonus. Other states offering differentiated pay incentives include:

- [Utah](#) school districts offer up to \$7,000 annually to effective teachers in high poverty schools for both general and special education teachers in K-8 classrooms. The bonus is funded equally by the state board of education and the school district.
- Special education and math teachers receive differentiated pay in [West Virginia](#) by receiving three years of additional experience on the state's salary schedule. The state also offers loan assistance to teachers who teach in critical need subjects or schools in critical need locations.
- Teachers in [Connecticut](#) who teach in districts identified as "priority" or "transitional" or who teach in subject-specific shortage areas may be eligible for mortgage assistance through below-market-rate loans or down payment assistance.

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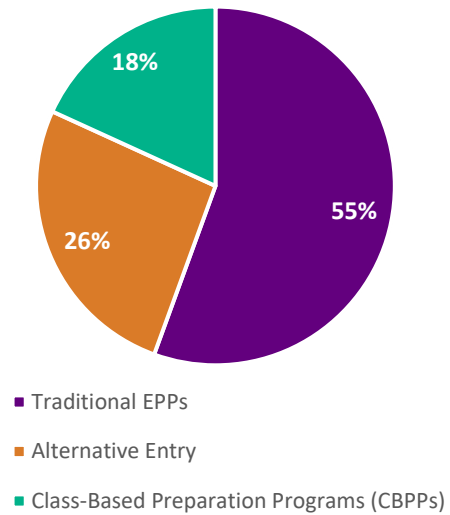
Entering the Education Workforce

EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS IN ARIZONA

As of 2022, Arizona had [283 educator preparation programs](#) (EPPs) across 30 institutions. These programs [include](#):

- **Traditional educator preparation programs** are housed in institutions of higher education (IHEs) and lead to candidates receiving their licensure at the end of their four-year degree process. The largest traditional EPPs in Arizona are run through Arizona State University, Grand Canyon University, Northern Arizona University, and University of Arizona. In 2021, traditional EPPs made up [91 percent](#) of future teachers completing preparation programs.
- **Alternative routes** allow individuals who already hold a bachelor’s degree to transition from careers in other fields to teaching through an accelerated process. The largest four alternative programs are Teachers of Tomorrow, Teach-Now, Classroom, and ABCTE. Alternative EPPs graduated [eight percent](#) of total program completers in 2021.
- **Classroom-based preparation programs** allow individuals who already hold a bachelor’s degree to enroll in a State-Board-approved EPP and complete the program requirements for certification while being employed as a full-time Arizona teacher with an Alternative Teaching Certificate. These programs accounted for the remaining one percent of total program completers in 2021.

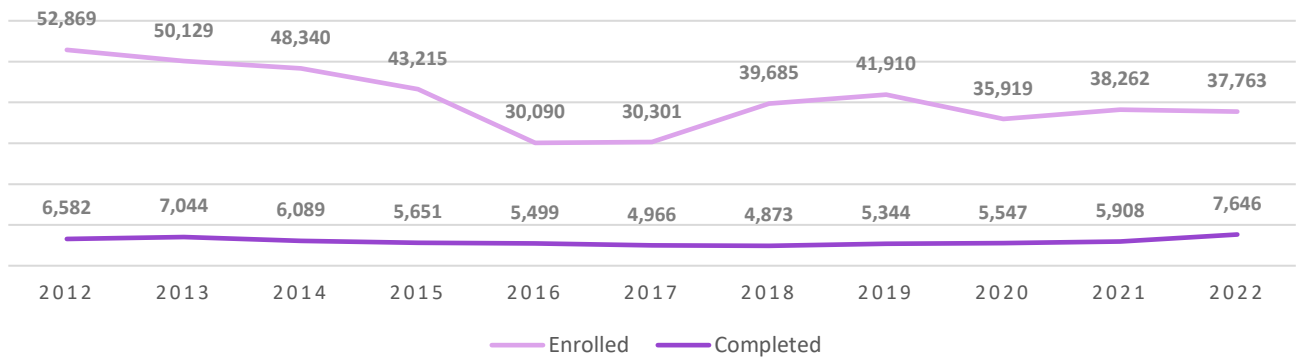
ARIZONA EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS BY TYPE | 2022



[Source](#)

Enrollment in EPPs has [declined](#) across the country, a pattern that is also seen in Arizona. However, program completion has [risen](#) at the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University. In 2022, [75 percent](#) of students who received institutional recommendations at Arizona State University entered the classroom, compared to [26 percent](#) at the next largest enroller, Grand Canyon University.

TOTAL EPP ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETION IN ARIZONA



[Source](#)

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Effectiveness of Preparation Pathways

Research shows that teachers who enter the classroom through high-quality teacher preparation programs are more likely to stay in the classroom. While most research finds little difference in teacher effectiveness based on whether a teacher completes a traditional or alternative program, alternative entry educators are more likely to transfer schools or leave the profession in their first year than traditionally prepared teachers. Evidence suggests increased organizational supports for new educators may reduce this effect. In Arizona, Teachers of Tomorrow has the largest enrollment of the current alternative entry pathways - 46 percent of program participants are people of color and 70 percent of teachers prepared through the program remain in the profession after five years.

Traditional and alternative entry educators are similar in demographic and affective characteristics, but they have different background experiences and ideas about teaching. Alternative entry educators are also more likely to teach in high need schools.

Classroom-Based Preparation Programs are run by school officials with direct connection to campus needs, which differentiates this path from other methods of alternative entry. Further research is required to determine the effectiveness of classroom-based preparation programs.

Arizona Teachers Academy

The Arizona Teachers Academy (ATA) is a program which helps students enrolled in a state university or community college that provide a post-baccalaureate EPP pay for related tuition and fees by offering scholarships in exchange for the commitment to teach for each year of funding the student receives. For many, this means a four-year commitment to teach in Arizona public schools after graduation. Requirements for the program include completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and admission to a partner program that leads to initial certification. ATA partners with the following institutions: Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University, University of Arizona, Maricopa Community College, Pima Community College, Rio Salado College, and Scottsdale Community College.

Enrollment in the ATA has steadily increased over time and participating students show a high rate of persistence:

NUMBER OF TEACHERS WHO COMPLETED AN ACADEMY PROGRAM OF STUDY

	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Arizona State University	116	406	380	491	402
Northern Arizona University	26	265	305	361	334
University of Arizona	28	91	142	132	124
Maricopa Community Colleges		44	105	115	82
Pima Community College		5	24	46	52
TOTAL	170	811	956	1,145	994

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PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO COMPLETED EACH YEAR OF THE ACADEMY AND PLAN TO CONTINUE TO THE SUBSEQUENT YEAR

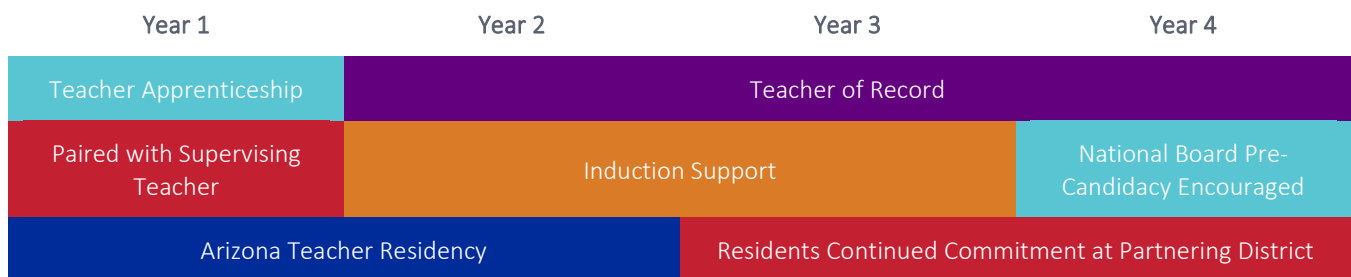
	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Arizona State University	94%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Northern Arizona University	96%	99%	90%	90%	91%
University of Arizona	N/A	100%	100%	99%	95%
Maricopa Community Colleges		90%	100%	81%	96%
Pima Community College		95%	92%	92%	99%

In 2023, the ATA utilized [\\$26.2 million](#) in funds from the General Fund appropriations and the Governor’s Office to support students enrolled in the program, educator induction support, testing and certifications, National Board Certifications, and program administration.

Arizona Teacher Residency

The [Arizona Teacher Residency program](#) (AZTR) takes a clinical apprenticeship approach to preparing educators over the course of a two-year program in order to address the common challenges faced by prospective teachers in traditional EPPs who struggle managing full-time classes, student teaching, and paid work at the same time. While working towards their master’s degree from Northern Arizona University, residents are paired with a mentor teacher before becoming the teacher of record for their second year. The program requires a commitment to teach for at least four years to ensure no debt is accrued and in their fourth year in the classroom, residents are encouraged to prepare for National Board certification.

Model of Arizona Teacher Residency Program



[Source](#)

AZTR began its first cohort of 22 residents in the summer of 2022 with plans for graduation by 2024. While the first cohort of AZTR has yet to graduate, the program partners with National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR), which has demonstrated impacts on teacher retention and diversity. Of teachers who graduated from a NCTR program, [85 percent](#) are still teaching and [58 percent](#) of residents identify as people of color. Furthermore, [93 percent](#) of principals report NCTR residents are more prepared to teach compared with other first year teachers.

Diversity of Educator Preparation Programs

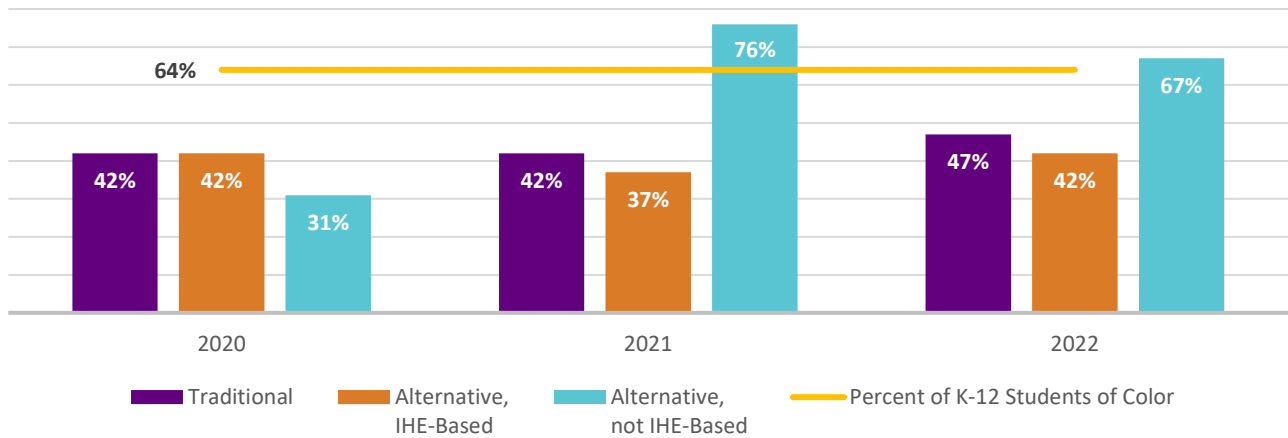
In Arizona, alternative preparation programs outside of institutions of higher education are supporting [higher rates of program completion](#) for future educators of color. This is likely due to the nature of programs like classroom-based

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preparation programs, including the Arizona Teacher Residency program, which allow prospective teachers to earn a living while gaining experience and pursuing certification.

PERCENT OF COMPLETERS OF COLOR BY EPP TYPE IN ARIZONA



[Source](#)

Certification

Arizona offers a range of options for educator certification. Becoming a certified full-time teacher of record in Arizona [requires](#) a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution.

Upon program completion, candidates are required to pass all Arizona Educator Proficiency Assessments for the desired certificate. Candidates may then receive an institutional recommendation from their preparation program and apply for certification from the Arizona Department of Education.

Arizona offers the following [certificates](#) for professionals interested in becoming classroom educators:

Certificate Type	Valid For	Specifications
Arizona Standard Professional Certificate	12 years (renewable)	Discipline areas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Education, Birth – Age 8 • Elementary Education, K – 8 • Middle Grades Education, 5 – 9 • Secondary Education, 6 – 12 • Elective Certifications: Art, Dance, Music, Theater, Physical Education, Athletic Coaching • Special Education: Mild/Moderate Disabilities, K-12; Moderate/Severe Disabilities, K-12; Visually or Hearing-Impaired Special Education, Birth-Grade 12
Career and Technical Education (CTE), K-12 Certificates	12 years (renewable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates qualify for this certification under five options which include a range of work experience, a bachelor’s degree, teacher certification in another area, or satisfactory teaching evaluations. • Discipline Areas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agriculture

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Business and Marketing ○ Education and Training ○ Family and Consumer Sciences ○ Health Careers, and ○ Industrial and Emerging Technologies
Subject Matter Expert Certification	12 years (renewable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Authorizes the holder to teach the approved area indicated on the certificate in grades 6-12. ● Educators may gain an SME Certification if they have postsecondary teaching experience, a degree in the subject area, or certifiable work experience of five years that is comparable to a degree in the subject.
Alternative Teaching (Teaching Intern/Teacher in Residence) Certificate	2 years	Holder may enter a teaching contract while completing requirements for an Arizona Standard Professional teaching certificate.
Emergency Certificate	1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The certificate must not be issued more than three times to the same individual. ● To request this certificate, a district or charter school superintendent must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Verify the teaching position has been advertised in at least three statewide career placement offices, and ○ Ensure the Teaching Intern Certificate pathway is either unavailable or insufficient to address immediate employment needs.
International Teaching (Foreign Teaching / Teacher Exchange) Certificate	Valid for the length of the visa, not to exceed 12 years	Issued to teachers from other countries who are hired through a teacher exchange program and are authorized to work in the United States under a visa.
Substitute (PreK-12) Certificate	6 years (renewable)	Permits the holder to substitute for a temporary absence of a regular contract teacher.
Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) Certificate	12 years (renewable)	Applicants must verify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● That the district or charter school has an approved Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps program of instruction, and ● That the applicant meets the work experience required by the respective military service.
Native American Language (PreK-12)	12 years (renewable)	Applicants must submit a letter (on official letterhead) verifying proficiency in a Native American Language signed by a person, persons, or entity designated by the appropriate tribe.

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Adult Education Certificate	12 years (renewable)	Discipline Areas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Basic Education • Adult Secondary Education • English Language Acquisition for Adults • Citizenship
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Arizona also [offers](#) four professional non-teaching certificates:

Certificate Type	Valid For	Specifications
School Counselor	12 years (renewable)	Candidates are required to complete one of four options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A graduate program in guidance or counseling • A graduate program in counseling, social work, or psychology • A behavioral health license, or • An academic advising program.
School Psychologist	12 years (renewable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals with this certificate are primarily responsible for student psychoeducational assessment, therapeutic consultation and intervention, and support for determining student disabilities or disorders. • Candidates are required to have a master’s degree and one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Completion of a graduate program ○ Completion of a doctoral program ○ At least five years of experience in a school setting serving K-12 students ○ National certification: Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) credential ○ American Board Diploma • Candidates are also required to complete a supervised internship of 1,200 hours or three years of experience as a certified school psychologist.
School Social Worker	12 years (renewable)	Candidates are required to have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A master’s degree, and • A practicum of at least six semester hours through an accredited institution or one year of verifiable experience.
Speech-Language Pathologist	12 years (renewable)	Candidates are required to have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Speech Pathology license from the Arizona Department of Health Services, • A master’s degree, • 250 clinical hours, and

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A passing score on a relevant exam or membership in the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).
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Retention Practices: Keeping Teachers and Creating Careers

COMPENSATING EDUCATORS

The teacher [pay penalty](#) is a significant factor for both [recruitment](#) and [retention](#) in the education field. In 2022, a [national survey](#) found that [62 percent](#) of all parent respondents would not want their children to become teachers due to poor pay and poor benefits and during the COVID-19 pandemic, the [top reason](#) cited for educators leaving the classroom was inadequate pay relative to the risk or stress of the job. Between the 2022 and 2023 legislative sessions, [Utah](#), [New Mexico](#), [Arkansas](#), [Mississippi](#), and [Alabama](#) passed legislation to increase teacher pay.

- **New Mexico**, in 2022, committed to raising teacher salaries by [20 percent](#) for the following school year, raising the starting salary from \$40,000 to \$50,000.
- **Idaho** also raised teacher salaries in 2022 by approximately [three percent](#), making the average teacher salary \$54,806 this year. The state combined this with [expanding career ladder models](#) to increase teacher potential earnings over their career as well.

Evidence shows that improving teacher pay schedules or offering increased compensation through bonuses does impact teacher retention rates:

- **Florida** found a [25 percent](#) increase in retention for middle and high school educators in specific subjects who received a \$1,200 bonus for earning satisfactory performance ratings.
- **California** implemented a starting salary increase of \$4,400 (\$7,900 adjusted for inflation) which reduced the probability of a new elementary teacher leaving public school employment by [17 percent](#) for teachers with multiple subject certifications and [9 percent](#) for teachers with single subject certifications.

It is important to note that there are mixed results across types of pay related to retention. While one-time bonuses offered no significant impact on teacher retention in [Tennessee](#) in 2018, changes to teacher pay schedules and differentiated incentives based on high-need areas demonstrate a [promising](#) investment.

MONITORING TEACHER RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

As states struggle with educator retention, many turn to data collection to identify the root causes of attrition:

- [Forty states](#) and the District of Columbia published teacher shortage data in the last five years.
- [Thirty-eight states](#) and the District of Columbia released data on the educator equity gap since originally submitting their ESSA plans.
- [Twenty-seven states](#) and the District of Columbia have conducted teacher working condition surveys in the past five years.

An additional data point to be considered for inclusion in the existing survey collection is school climate tracking. Climate data can be tracked in conjunction with working condition data to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions on educator satisfaction, efficacy, and retention.

One example of accessible data on teacher recruitment and retention is Illinois’ interactive [Educator Supply and Demand Report](#), presented as a dashboard on their board of education website. The report allows state and local leaders to examine teacher retention by school or district, experience level, race, and gender to make strategic decisions regarding recruitment and retention that are responsive to local needs and track the effectiveness of these decisions over time.

Arizona collects some data on teacher supply and demand in the state, such as reasons teachers are leaving at the school level, through the login-required Teacher Input Application. Public data around the Arizona educator workforce includes:

- Teacher shortage data

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- [The 2020 Arizona Teacher Workforce](#)
- [Arizona School Personnel Administrators Association Teacher Shortage Survey](#)
- Educator experience and qualifications
 - [Arizona School Report Cards – Teacher Qualifications](#)

MENTORING AND INDUCTION

One of the most [common](#) practices for addressing teacher retention on the state level includes the requirement of induction and mentoring support for new teachers in hopes of increasing beginning teacher retention. Educators who are poorly supported or underprepared are [more likely](#) to experience attrition in their initial years of teaching and, in fact, [between 30 and 50 percent](#) of educators leave the profession within their first five years. [Research](#) shows that induction or mentoring programs had positive impacts on teacher retention and commitment, classroom instructional practices, and student achievement. In New York and Ohio, early induction programs have demonstrated high levels of effectiveness in urban districts, reducing attrition by up to [66 percent](#).

[Thirty-one states](#) implement an induction or mentorship model; however, only three states (Connecticut, Delaware, and Iowa) meet most of [the criteria](#) for high-quality programming:

- **Time requirements:** High quality induction/mentorship programs have specified program length requirements. Most programs require one year of mentorship for new teachers. Research suggests that a comprehensive two-year program does not demonstrate a positive impact on student achievement until the educator’s [third year](#).
- **Consistency in program design and operation:** To ensure teachers across the state receive access to quality mentorship across the state, it is important for program operation to remain consistent across implementation.
- **Teaching standards:** States with high-quality mentorship programs have clear expectations for successful teachers. Often these standards are developed by state boards of education or educator licensure programs.
- **Mentor selection and training criteria:** [Criteria](#) for mentor selection may include minimum experience requirements, demonstrated classroom effectiveness, and leadership qualities. Some programs also require the mentor to teach the same content or grade level as their mentee. Training for mentors is also significant for consistent program implementation because it creates consistency across mentee evaluation and supports effective communication of feedback.

State	Mentorship/Induction Program Features	Link
Connecticut	The Teacher Education and Mentoring Program (TEAM) in Connecticut requires entering teachers to participate in a two-year mentoring program model. Mentors are trained through an approved training program to ensure quality support for beginning educators. TEAM also provides protected time for mentors and mentees to meet for an equivalent of four school days throughout the year.	Teacher Education and Mentoring Program (TEAM)
Delaware	Delaware implements Comprehensive Teacher Induction programs with four-year support requirements for beginning educators. Mentors are required to possess an advanced or continuing license, participate in training, and earn satisfactory evaluations. Delaware does not alter workloads for mentors or mentees while they participate in the induction program.	Comprehensive Teacher Induction Program
Iowa	In 2018, Iowa implemented the Mentoring and Induction Program for Beginning Teachers. The program requires a two-year commitment and offers mentors and mentees “released” time to plan. Mentor requirements include valid licensure for employed or retired teachers,	Mentoring and Induction Program for Beginning Teachers

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	four years of high performance, and employed on a non-probationary basis. Mentors are selected and trained by the district.	
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Arizona does not have a state level induction program; however, the Arizona K12 Center offers [the Arizona New Teacher Induction Network](#) as an optional program for beginning teachers. The network meets three to four times per year and offers teacher support through a Mentor Institute and Mentor Forum, as well as targeted learning opportunities.

NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION

National Board Certification is a voluntary teacher competency evaluation process, developed and administered by and for teachers. Board certification involves a one to three-year process in which candidates demonstrate evidence of [accomplished practice](#) through:

- **Content knowledge.** Candidates must display knowledge of content and pedagogical practices for teaching in their content area.
- **Differentiation in instruction.** Candidates must gather and analyze information about individual students’ strengths and needs and use that information to design and implement instruction to advance student learning and achievement.
- **Teaching practice and learning environment.** Candidates must submit video recordings displaying their interactions with students and written commentary describing those interactions.
- **Effective and reflective practitioner.** Candidates must demonstrate evidence of ability as effective in developing and applying the knowledge of their students.

Research over the past decade suggests that National Board-Certified teachers [positively impact student achievement](#) and aid in [teacher retention](#):

- Research examining [teacher turnover](#) in South Carolina found that from the 2014-15 to 2018-19 school years, turnover rates for Board-Certified Teachers were [less than half](#) of the statewide average.
- States and districts across the country have evaluated the impact of Board-Certified teachers and concluded that they do have an impact on student outcomes. Students taught by Board-Certified teachers see an increase in learning roughly equal to [one to two months](#) of additional instruction and 74 percent of students instructed by Board-Certified teachers show evidence of [deeper learning](#), compared to only 29 percent of students instructed by non-Board-Certified teachers. This impact is [even greater](#) for low-income and other historically underserved student populations.
- In California, Board-Certified teachers [outperform](#) other teachers with the same level of experience in elementary math and English/language arts. Similar findings were also [evident](#) in Washington, Georgia, and Florida. The positive effects of Board-Certified Teachers are especially [pronounced](#) for children who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch.

As of 2019, there are over [125,000 Board-certified teachers](#) across the country. Arizona currently has [1,536](#) National Board Certified Teachers and 826 candidates, some likely supported by the Arizona Teacher Academy. At least [27 states](#) offer financial incentives for National Board Certification and [22 states](#) offer financial support for Board Certification fees. States may also provide [additional](#) incentives for Board-Certified Teachers who are in high-needs schools and districts may also choose to provide [benefits](#) to Board-certified Teachers in their schools to increase retention and remain competitive with other school systems. The National Board also provides robust professional development for Board-Certified Teachers and [many states](#) count certification towards state licensure, renewal, or step increase.

STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS

[Research](#) demonstrates that programs offering loan forgiveness and service scholarships effectively attract and retain high-quality educators in high-need areas. As of the 2020-2021 school year, [47 percent](#) of school districts still offered a starting salary for educators below \$40,000. In comparison, the total average cost of a public undergraduate tuition with board and fees was [\\$104,000](#) for the same year. One 2020 study found that [85 percent](#) of educators said student loan debt prevented them from accomplishing important life objectives such as saving money, purchasing a home, or starting a family.

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Student loan forgiveness has been found to be [particularly effective](#) in recruiting teachers of color. This may be because low-income students and students of color [are more likely to be enrolled in remedial courses](#), prolonging the time to graduation and therefore increasing the cost of their education. Educators of color, particularly Black educators, are [more likely](#) to utilize student loans to pay for college, causing them to carry more debt. Therefore, students of color or low-income students who often lack generational wealth take [on additional risks](#) when attending college, likely leading them to pursue more financially lucrative careers.

Arizona currently offers teacher loan forgiveness to students at public universities through the Arizona Teacher Academy. Students attending private colleges can apply for the [Arizona Teacher Student Loan Program](#), which also offers loan funding for every year the student agrees to teach in an Arizona public school.

GROW YOUR OWN PROGRAMS

Grow Your Own (GYO) programs are a model of educator preparation that involve recruiting prospective educators from the local community, such as non-education college graduates, paraprofessionals, community activists, and other key community stakeholders, or by creating a pathway for middle and high school students to enter the education workforce. These programs focus on returning educators to their local communities and therefore look different depending on local contexts. GYO programs are often [cited](#) as a strategy to improve educator diversity. Additional research suggests GYO programs also [promote teacher retention](#) over time.

Residencies and Apprenticeships

A form of GYO, teacher residencies provide teaching candidates with the opportunity to work alongside a mentor teacher for at least one year before becoming the teacher of record, while teacher apprenticeships combine coursework and on the job experience to reduce the cost of earning a teaching degree while providing candidates with crucial time in the classroom during their preparation.

Each teacher residency program is unique; however, high quality programs often have common characteristics such as:

- Strong local partnerships with universities and EPP programs,
- One year of clinical practice teaching with an expert mentor,
- Ongoing support and mentoring for program graduates,
- Financial support for residents in exchange for a time-based teaching commitment, and
- Recruitment of high-quality candidates for targeted district needs

Teacher residency programs often attract more diverse candidates. In 2022-2023, [69 percent](#) of National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR) residents identified as people of color, compared to 21 percent of new teachers nationally. Residents are also more likely to support high-need schools or subject areas, such as mathematics, science, students with special needs, or English Language Learners. Despite teaching in schools with higher attrition rates on average, graduates of teacher residency programs demonstrate higher levels of retention, between [80 to 90 percent](#) within the first three years and [70 to 80 percent](#) after five years.

In January 2022, Tennessee launched the Teacher Occupation Apprenticeship and became the [first state](#) to establish a teacher apprenticeship program approved by the U.S. Department of Labor. Being recognized as a Registered Apprenticeship Program with the Department of Labor opens the Teacher Occupation Apprenticeship to federal funding opportunities, allowing the program to leverage both state and federal dollars to create a sustainable funding stream.

Arizona currently offers classroom-based preparation programs and the Arizona Teacher Residency as a way for communities to grow their own teachers. By partnering with higher education institutions, schools can hire a teacher full time while they complete their residency requirements and work towards certification and a master's degree. Other classroom-based preparation programs allow candidates to teach with a supervising teacher while they complete the requirements for certification as a pathway to becoming a teacher of record.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

School leaders play a [critical role](#) in ensuring the success of students, teachers, and the entire school community. Their [responsibilities](#) include setting the school's vision and goals, creating a positive school culture, and managing resources

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effectively. As such, principal leadership also [plays a significant role](#) in teacher turnover; in fact, many teachers deem the quality of administrative support as a more important factor in their decision to leave a school than salary. Particularly, teachers point to the importance of school culture and collegial relationships, time for collaboration, and decision-making input, which are all areas in which principals play a crucial role.

The presence of school leaders of color is a particularly [significant](#) factor in retaining teachers of color; by establishing cooperative and supportive relationships with teachers of color, principals of color may reduce workplace stress, improve communication channels, and motivate teachers to remain engaged in the work. This can also include an exploration of leadership pipelines within schools for teachers to become administrators.

A high-quality school leader creating a positive culture and climate is someone who:

- [Fosters](#) a welcoming and inclusive environment that supports student academic and social-emotional growth.
- Prioritizes [building relationships](#) with students, families, and staff, and prioritizes open communication and collaboration among all stakeholders.
- [Promotes](#) a culture of continuous improvement and are committed to ongoing professional development for themselves and their staff.

INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO RETENTION

Several organizations have developed models reimagining the working conditions of educators and ultimately the teaching profession. While approaches to educator innovation differ, they all aim to improve teacher effectiveness, satisfaction, and field growth in hopes of retaining and recruiting high-quality educators.

One innovative approach is the expansion of strategic staffing to build team-based staffing models. Rather than implementing a one-teacher one-classroom model, team-based staffing shares student rosters between a team of staff members to allow educators to support students with their individual areas of expertise and promote flexibility which allows for dynamic student grouping and encourages creativity and innovation amongst team members. This model promotes collaboration by design and holds all team members accountable for the shared roster of students as opposed to the traditional model which attributes student success or failure to one individual teacher. This model also offers opportunities for leadership while remaining in the classroom for more experienced educators through team leadership rather than requiring educators to exit the classroom to further their career.

Opportunity Culture

- [Opportunity Culture](#) models redesign schools to reach more students with excellent teaching. Teachers with a record of student growth lead teams with innovative teaching roles, paraprofessional support, and increased tutoring time.
- In each Opportunity Culture school:
 - The design and implementation team of teachers and administrators who determine how to use the Multi-Classroom Leader (MCL) role and other advanced roles to reach more students with teachers who have demonstrated high-growth student learning.
 - A teacher in the MCL role leads a teaching team, providing guidance and frequent on-the-job coaching while continuing to teach, often by leading small-group instruction.
 - Teachers in the MCL role are accountable for the results of all students in the team and therefore earn supplements averaging 20 percent (and up to 50 percent) of teacher pay, within the regular school budget.
 - Schedules are redesigned to provide additional school-day time for teacher planning, coaching, and collaboration.

Next Education Workforce

In order to build the [Next Education Workforce](#), ASU's Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College partners with schools and other stakeholders to:

1. Provide all students with rigorous and personalized learning through building teams of educators with differentiated experience, and
2. Empower educators by developing improved ways to enter the profession, specialize, and advance.

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The Next Education Workforce requires structured pathways to and through the profession to draw educators, improve retention, and push for better learning outcomes. The model offers three main pathways:

1. **Community Pathways** offer accessible on-ramps to reward part-time or volunteer work in schools and other learning environments.
2. **Professional Pathways** lead to teacher certification and to specializations that allow educators to improve their practice.
3. **Leadership Pathways** lead to professional advancement for instructional, organizational, and systems leaders.

As of 2022, Mesa Public Schools in Arizona was the [largest](#) Next Education Workforce district partner.

Considerations for Gen-Z and Beyond

These innovative solutions also respond to the values of Generation-Z (Gen-Z), the term for young people born between 1996 and 2012, who currently [comprise 19 percent](#) of the workforce. Gen-Z is the [most diverse generation](#) yet, with the majority identifying as [people of color](#). According to [human resource experts](#), their values include:

- **Collaboration and Decision-Making Input:** Gen-Z workers are interested in joining collaborative working environments with a focus on communication and face to face interaction. This generation faced a significant challenge with virtual learning during formative portions of their education and early workforce careers, leading to connection-seeking behavior across the cohort. Gen-Z also values the ability to contribute frequently during decision-making processes at work.
- **Customizable Careers:** Gen-Z is interested in customizable careers, rather than following a ladder or path laid out by an organization. This likely reflects their value of diversity and commitment to leveraging individual strengths to support a team.
- **Devotion to Development and Coaching:** Gen-Z professionals are interested in transformational professional development and coaching opportunities. They are characterized by their commitment to feedback but push back against more traditional workplace training. The youngest working generation also demonstrates a desire for accountability within the workplace that is aligned to meaningful work within their chosen careers.

Conclusion

The research and analysis in this report is meant to help create an understanding of the current state of educator retention in Arizona, including identifying areas of success and potential opportunities for strengthening policy and practice. From this understanding, the Task Force developed the recommendations included in *The Governor's Educator Retention Task Force Recommendations* report to guide the Governor's Office in supporting a high-quality educator workforce in Arizona that is able to effectively provide all students with an opportunity for success.

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Appendix A

MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNOR'S EDUCATOR RETENTION TASK FORCE

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS WORKING GROUP

- **A parent of a child who currently attends a public school in Arizona:** Jeremiah Gallegos | Financial Literacy Instructor, Littleton School District
- **An educator from a rural school:** Luisa Arreola | Gifted Program Coordinator, San Luis Middle School
- **An educator from a Tribal community:** Lynette Stant | 3rd Grade Teacher, Salt River Indian Reservation, 2020 Arizona Teacher of the Year
- **A representative from a nonprofit organization focused on education policy:** Marisol Garcia | President, Arizona Education Association
- **A school administrator from a school district in a Tribal community:** Quincy Natay | Superintendent, Chinle Unified School District
- **A school board member:** Ruth Ellen Elinski | Cottonwood-Oak Creek School District Governing Board

RETENTION INNOVATIONS & SOLUTIONS WORKING GROUP

- **A human resource professional:** Justin Wing | Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Mesa Public Schools
- **An expert with significant experience in educator retention:** Lloyd Hopkins | CEO/Founder, Million Dollar Teacher Project
- **A school administrator from a rural school district:** Melissa Sadorf | Superintendent, Stanfield Elementary School District
- **An educator from an urban school:** Violeta Ramos | Spanish Teacher and Governing Board Member, Osborn School District

TEACHER PREPARATION & CERTIFICATION WORKING GROUP

- **An education support professional:** Curt Bertelsen | Director of Professional Development, Pima Joint Technical Education District
- **A representative from a community college:** Dr. Jennifer Gresko | Faculty Chair of Educator Preparation Programs, Rio Salado College
- **Dean of a university college of education:** Ramona Mellot | Dean, College of Education at Northern Arizona University
- **An educator from a Title 1 school:** Zel (Zelatrice) Fowler | Gifted Education Teacher, Balsz School District
- **A school mental health professional:** Janine Menard | Tolleson Elementary School District

WORKING CONDITIONS WORKING GROUP

- **An educator from a charter school:** Jennifer Hulbert | 2nd Grade Teacher, Champion Schools-South Mountain
- **A special education teacher or director:** Jesus "Anthony" Lovio | Special Education Teacher | Flowing Wells Unified School District
- **A school administrator from an urban school district:** Jonathan Parker | Principal, Sunnyslope High School
- **An educator who recently left the profession:** Sarah Tolar | City of Mesa's Education and Workforce Administrator, City of Mesa



Established in 2001, The Hunt Institute honors the legacy of James B. Hunt, Jr., the former governor of North Carolina who distinguished himself as an ardent champion of education.

The Hunt Institute brings together people and resources to inspire and inform elected officials and policymakers about key issues in education, resulting in visionary leaders who are prepared to take strategic action for greater educational outcomes and student success.

In 2016, The Hunt Institute became an independent, nonprofit entity and joined forces with Duke University's Sanford School of Public Policy to pursue research, educational partnerships, and events related to improving education policy.

Learn more at www.hunt-institute.org.



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Governor Katie Hobbs established the Educator Retention Task Force in February 2023. She did this by executive order as part of her First 100 Days Initiative. In an effort to rebuild and reinvest in our public schools, the task force has made recommendations for improving educator retention in this report.

The task force held stakeholder meetings and conducted surveys to better understand a wide variety of issues affecting retention including pay and benefits and an analysis of the Arizona Teachers Academy and Arizona Teacher Residency program.

Learn more at www.azgovernor.gov



EDUCATOR RETENTION
TASK FORCE

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