



Excel in Action
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in Action

The issue of educator shortages has been a long-standing concern for education leaders, though the topic gained well-needed attention and publicity in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. To address shortages, it is crucial that states collect and provide timely data on teacher staffing. At the same time, they can create incentives to keep their best teachers in the classroom and reduce barriers for new talent to enter the teacher pipeline.

Rather than supporting teachers and expanding opportunities for other talented individuals to enter the profession, existing policies in many states make it more difficult for schools to recruit, retain and develop a diverse pool of talented and content-rich teachers. This is usually due to a lack of financial incentives, inflexible teacher certification policies, limited teacher preparation programs and/or ineffective professional development opportunities.

We all know that teachers have an enormous impact on the students they teach. The Equality of Educational Opportunity Study in 1966, also known as the Coleman Report, was one of the first studies to recognize the differences in outcomes of students taught by different teachers as well as the disproportionate availability of high-quality teachers between racial and socio-economic groups.ⁱ **The Coleman Report concluded that teacher quality is the most important in-school variable connected to student success.** It also asserted that there is often more difference in quality within a school than between schools. Subsequent studies over the last 58 years have reinforced this conclusion.

Not only do effective teachers have an impact on student learning in the classroom, they also can help set students up for a lifetime of success. Using school district and tax records for more than one million children, one study found “that **students assigned to high-[value-added] teachers are more likely to attend college, earn higher salaries and are less likely to have children as teenagers.** Replacing a teacher whose [value added] is in the bottom 5 percent with an average teacher would increase the present value of student's lifetime income by approximately \$250,000 per classroom.”ⁱⁱ

There is also evidence that **the addition of a high-quality teacher into a school building can have positive effects on the outcomes of students they do not teach** by influencing the teaching practices of their peers.ⁱⁱⁱ This points to a need for distribution of high-quality teachers among schools and teams and finding ways to incentivize these teachers into schools and positions where they are needed most.

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Thankfully, Pennsylvania has taken steps and can continue to innovate to create better pathways to and through the profession, so our students have great teachers to learn from for decades to come, including:

- Continued growth of teacher apprenticeship programs.
- Strong implementation of the state-level educator supply-and-demand dashboard created here in the Commonwealth last session, which will provide data related to educator shortages and retention that can inform policy and hiring decisions across the state.
- Continued investment in **student-teacher stipends**, breaking down the financial barriers that exist for some to enter the teaching profession.
- Continued focus on reciprocity policies, like the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact, which was adopted last year, and expansion of policies through statute.
- Adjunct teacher policies, which permit professionals who hold a bachelor's degree and have demonstrated subject-matter expertise in a course offered by a school to be awarded temporary certificates that allow them to provide instruction without going through the lengthy process of receiving a traditional certification.
- Chartered teacher policies, which allow teachers to work outside traditional public schools through agreements with parents. The chartered teachers provide personalized instruction to eligible students for compensation based on per-pupil funding.
- Advanced teacher incentives, which reward excellent teachers for staying in the classroom and taking on leadership and mentoring roles.

Teacher Apprenticeships

Through partnerships with approved educator preparation programs, school districts have new tools to recruit prospective teachers as early as high school via teacher apprenticeship programs. Depending on the state, they can provide prospective teachers with financial and career incentives, such as on-the-job training and mentorship, as they complete a bachelor's degree and/or a state-approved teacher licensure program.

Pennsylvania launched the Building and Supporting a Certified Teacher Registered Apprenticeship (CTRA) Program in 2023 to help attract more candidates into the teacher pipeline. Pennsylvania has made an investment to ensure that this pathway exists for future educators in the Commonwealth.

Educator Supply and Demand Dashboards

Establishing a statewide Educator Supply and Demand Data Dashboard can provide the state, school districts, educator preparation providers and other stakeholders clear and timely access to data related to educator

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shortages and retention that can inform policy, programmatic and hiring decisions. HB 1331– rolled into SB 843 and enacted as Act 35 of 2023 – codified longitudinal data collection, reporting and analysis related to educator supply and demand in our state. Those data include school, district, and subject-area teacher vacancies; enrollment in education preparation programs; and number and distribution of valid educator licenses.

A [2021 policy brief](#) from the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) evaluated states on the educator supply, demand, mobility and performance data that they collect, report, disaggregate and make publicly available. Across these metrics, NCTQ found that most states produced at least some data, but ten states had none. Educator data, ranging from vacancies by district to retention rates by subject area, is essential, because a comprehensive data set lays the groundwork for informed decision-making. At that time, Pennsylvania was sharing data related to teacher supply, but not demand.

We are holding Pennsylvania up as a model for other states to emulate as they seek to understand their own supply and demand issues in the teaching profession. In fact, our model policy, [The Educator Supply and Demand Dashboard Act](#), takes its cues from Pennsylvania, as well as Colorado and Indiana, combining longitudinal educator supply-and-demand data with real-time job postings. While the longitudinal data offer insights into long-term trends and the efficacy of educational programs, the job postings provide real-time glimpses into current shortages and hiring dynamics.

Student-Teacher Stipends

Reducing barriers to the teaching profession can help ameliorate the shortages we are facing. Cost is certainly a factor for some students, especially those who become student teachers without pay. Thankfully, Pennsylvania has taken a step in the right direction with the [PA Student Teacher Support Program](#) enacted last year. Demand for the program is significant, demonstrating that pay – or lack of it – during the critical student teacher period is important.

License Reciprocity

Pennsylvania took steps last year to pass the [Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact](#), which is an agreement that grants license reciprocity to teachers with standard licenses in compact member states. We are leading in our region, as our neighboring states have yet to take this step Ohio, New York, New Jersey, and Delaware all have legislation introduced for consideration.

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Pennsylvania could consider adopting a [Reciprocal Teacher Licensure](#) policy that allows teachers who are qualified to teach in one state to teach in another state without facing unnecessary barriers to entry, such as re-taking courses or exams. Reciprocity allows teachers to easily move from one state to another and to teach virtually, across state lines. Strong reciprocal licensure policies can strengthen teaching pipelines and retain qualified teachers in the profession. According to a 2020 state scan by Education Commission of the States, only eight states have a reciprocal policy on the books. Pennsylvania permits reciprocity in some instances, but the state exam is still required, representing a barrier for teachers who want to move to the Commonwealth. Additional reciprocity policies ensure qualified teachers from states outside the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact can also quickly enter Pennsylvania classrooms.

Adjunct Teachers

The purpose of an [Adjunct Teacher Act](#) is to support districts in addressing teacher shortages and diversifying course offerings by allowing them to hire uncertified but otherwise highly qualified subject-matter experts. Adjunct teachers are professionals who hold bachelor's degrees and have expertise in any subject area offered in a district. Adjunct teachers can also instruct elective subjects (music, art, or career and technical education) that might be better filled by professionals in those fields and currently have limited pathways to share their expertise in classrooms. To ensure quality, adjunct teachers work under an experienced supervising teacher and are subject to annual evaluations. Adjunct teachers should have the option to work toward licensure while teaching.

States like [Florida](#), [Maryland](#) and [Indiana](#) have created policies aimed at tapping the potential of content experts and leveraging them in the classroom. Additional states like New Hampshire and Virginia are considering legislation to create these pathways for teachers with valuable experience to ensure students have access to coursework and teachers that prepare them for post-graduation success.

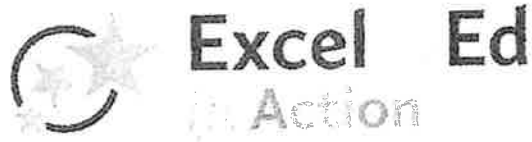
Chartered Teachers

The purpose of a [Chartered Teacher Act](#) is to provide teachers with flexibility to retain them in the profession of teaching. The Act provides teachers an opportunity to work directly with students to deliver instruction in an environment that meets the needs of both teachers and students. As defined in our model policy, a chartered teacher is an employee of the state who enters into one or multiple state-sanctioned agreements with eligible parents or guardians to teach eligible students on a full- or part-time basis. Chartered teachers' compensation derives from the per-pupil funding their students would otherwise receive if enrolled in a public school on a full- or part-time basis. Chartered teachers should be eligible to receive all benefits offered to state employees.

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Advanced Teaching Incentives

An Advanced Teaching Incentive (ATI) program creates advanced licensure designations for experienced teachers who demonstrate subject-area competence and a positive impact on student outcomes. Three levels of advanced licensure designations signal to school leaders and the state that teachers are eligible for differentiated teaching and teacher leadership roles and additional pay commensurate with those roles. Teachers earn advanced designations through a combination of local performance evaluations, qualitative and quantitative evidence of effectiveness and recommendations. Qualified low-income and rural districts (“priority districts”) receive an allotment from the state when they employ teachers with advanced licensure designations; districts must use the allotment to supplement the pay of teachers with advanced designations.

BEST NC is a non-profit, non-partisan coalition of business leaders committed to improving North Carolina’s education system through policy and advocacy that has led the charge on the state’s Advanced Teaching Roles (ATR) program. First enacted in 2016, the program seeks to retain teachers by providing advancement opportunities, increase earnings and improve professional development. The program moves away from the traditional “one teacher, one classroom” model and establishes a modern organizational structure in schools. It aims to elevate effective teachers to leadership positions in which they receive substantial, ongoing increased pay for taking on additional responsibilities and extending their reach, usually by directly teaching more students or by providing embedded professional development to teams of teachers. According to BEST NC, from 2016 to 2022, the program has evolved with the continued support of the North Carolina General Assembly and the 2023 state budget provided new recurring funding, \$10.9 million, toward salary supplements for ATR teachers. These funds will help incentivize teachers to take advantage of this innovative recruitment and retention model, building a much-needed pipeline of experienced, well-trained teachers.

North Carolina’s Advanced Teacher Roles program is already proving to be positive for both teachers and students. The Friday Institute at NC State conducted an evaluation of the ATR pilot program and concluded:

- Over the first two years of implementation, ATR schools improved student performance more than non-ATR schools with similar characteristics.
- ATR models make the teaching profession more attractive and support the retention of teachers seeking additional pay and leadership opportunities.
- Teachers selected for advanced roles are highly qualified and have a track record of positive student growth scores.

Ohio has also created a four-tiered system of licensure to provide teachers with advancement opportunities; however, the state has not yet offered additional pay for these licenses if/when educators work at hard-to-staff schools.

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In closing, it cannot be overstated that educators are a critical conduit through which future generations learn, grow, and succeed. Ensuring that Pennsylvania’s policies reduce barriers to the teaching profession, provide educators with pathways to advancement and reflect new, innovative ways to engage teachers in the profession will help transform this important profession.

ⁱ Coleman, J. S. (1966). *Equality of educational opportunity*. U.S. Department of Health, Education. [ERIC - ED012275 - EQUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY., 1966](#)

ⁱⁱ Chetty, R., Friedman, J. N., & Rockoff, J. E. (2014). Measuring the Impacts of Teachers II: Teacher Value-Added and Student Outcomes in Adulthood. *The American Economic Review*, 104(9), 2633–2679. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43495328>

ⁱⁱⁱ Sun, M., Loeb, S., & Grissom, J. (2016). Building Teacher Teams: Evidence of Positive Spillovers from More Effective Colleagues. *Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. <https://cepa.stanford.edu/content/building-teacher-teams-evidence-positive-spillovers-more-effective-colleagues>

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