



JANUARY 2019 LEGISLATIVE BRIEF: TEACHER SHORTAGE

WHAT IS IT?

A teacher shortage is defined by the inability to supply qualified and effective teachers in Oklahoma schools. Oklahoma's teacher shortage has been determined by analyzing multiple factors including emergency certification data, annual shortage areas as calculated by the U.S. Department of Education and data from Educator Supply and Demand studies, published in 2015 and 2018.

HOW DID IT COME ABOUT?

Emergency certification data over the past five years show a dramatic increase from 32 emergency certificates in 2011-2012 to the 2,153 for the 2017-2018 school year. As of December 2018, 2,852 emergency certifications had been issued for the 2018-2019 school year. Meanwhile, the number of traditional educator preparation program completers has declined over the past three years by 23%. The 2018 Supply and Demand report provides several data trend variables from 2012-13 to 2017-2018. A few of the characteristics studied are pupil-educator ratios, educator certification type, experience and highest degree earned. The report also examines educator turnover as well as future supply and demand. The report finds that the percentage of educators leaving the profession has increased over the past six years, representing more than 5,000 educators per year. Lastly, results show that teachers earn substantially less on average than workers with similar characteristics in other occupations.

According to OSDE surveys, 66% of teachers say they would have to have more than pay to go back to the classroom. Among the top reasons teachers report for leaving the field is the lack of meaningful time to pursue professional growth as well as scarcity of resources.

WHAT'S NEW?

In 2018, the Legislature successfully passed the largest teacher pay raise in state history, resulting in an average increase of \$6,100 for all teachers. Additionally, support employees received a pay increase of \$1,250. This increase has pushed Oklahoma to approximately third in the region behind Texas and Colorado with an estimated \$53,918 average teacher pay.

Additionally, the work of Superintendent Hofmeister's Teacher Shortage Task Force continues, bringing forward 13 recommendations in 2017 in addition to the 27 recommendations of 2016. All recommendations align with one or more of the task force's focus areas: Recruit, Retain and Reward. The 40 recommendations include a combination of legislative action, policy changes, business/community partnerships and educator outreach, all of which are in the process of being implemented. Recent accomplishments include four paid externships at STEM-related businesses: Terracon, Kimray, OUHSC and AAON hosting a total of 21 teachers; a series of positive messaging campaigns including 21 ED talks and the License to Educate license plate; and advanced certification opportunities created under S.B. 980 (2018). Stakeholders continue to collaborate to provide solutions to the state's teacher shortage with a new focus on quality and diversity of the talent pool.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are Oklahoma's current shortage areas as reported to the USDE?

Arts and Music; Business; Career and Technical Education; Computer Science; Early Childhood Education; Elementary Education; English Language Arts; Foreign Languages; Health Education; Physical Education; Humanities; Library Science; Mathematics; School Counselor; Science; Social Studies; and Special Education.

Is there an application for emergency certification?

Prospective teachers cannot apply for emergency certification. A district superintendent must request the exception for a specific vacancy and candidate once it has been made evident that the position has been posted and remains unfilled after a period of time. Of particular note, special education positions cannot be filled by emergency certified teachers.

What are the ten pathways to certification?

- Traditional
- Alternative Placement Program
- Teach for America
- Troops to Teachers
- ABCTE (American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence)
- Title I Paraprofessional
- Career Development Program for Paraprofessionals
- Non-traditional Special Education - Boot Camp
- Career Tech Instructor
- Four-year-olds and Younger

What is a teacher's salary and how does it rank regionally and nationally?

Oklahoma's minimum starting salary is \$36,601. The state average salary is \$53,918¹, which includes benefits such as health insurance and retirement. After the 2018 pay raises, Oklahoma is projected to rank 36 in the country, with the national average for instructional staff pay at 62,329.

Is there loan forgiveness for teachers?

Yes, Oklahoma offers the following programs: Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program, Teacher Loan Forgiveness, Perkins Loan Cancellation for Teachers, State-sponsored Student Loan Forgiveness Programs (especially in high-need areas).

On average, how long do teachers stay in Oklahoma classrooms?

An OSDE 13-year analysis shows that teachers stay in the classroom, on average, six years.

What is our reciprocity with other states?

The State Board of Education honors the out-of-state certificate without requiring a number of years of experience or additional competency examinations.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

- [2018 Educator Supply and Demand Study](https://bit.ly/2QtXZu0): bit.ly/2QtXZu0
- Teacher Shortage Task Force Reports:
 - [June 2017](https://bit.ly/2FgyVF1): bit.ly/2FgyVF1
 - [August 2018](https://bit.ly/2TxEzqo): bit.ly/2TxEzqo
- [OSDE Teacher Certification](https://sde.ok.gov/teacher-certification): sde.ok.gov/teacher-certification

INSTRUCTIONAL (CERTIFIED) STAFF

Texas: \$56,571
Colorado: \$54,820
Oklahoma: \$53,918
Arkansas: \$52,524
Kansas: \$51,559
Missouri: \$51,541
New Mexico: \$50,604

¹Oklahoma's average teacher salary is an estimate arrived at by adding the average teacher pay increase to the most recent ranking as reported by the National Education Association. Average salaries represent those for all instructional staff (defined in Oklahoma as all certified staff excluding superintendents). This number is used because these are the individuals receiving the 2018 pay raise.

[NEA 2018 Rankings and Estimates Report:](https://bit.ly/2laVLCH)
bit.ly/2laVLCH