

# TEACHER SHORTAGE TASK FORCE

12/10/15

Preliminary Report



# Teacher Shortage Task Force

## PRELIMINARY REPORT

### INTRODUCTION

In order to address an enormous and historic challenge, the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) formed a task force to identify and recommend successful strategies for curbing the statewide teacher shortage crisis. Members of the task force include legislators, OSDE staff, educators, business leaders, teacher organizations, education advocacy groups and other community-based stakeholders.

At the initial meeting of the task force in September 2015, the state's teacher shortage was discussed with the intention of identifying actionable strategies and solutions as well as discussion of how to recast teaching as an honorable and prestigious profession.

As expressed by task force members, an increase in teacher compensation was central to the short and long term challenges of Oklahoma's teacher shortage. While not included as a recommendation in this report, support in arriving at a solution to address teacher compensation was voiced, including support for Superintendent Hofmeister's #OKhigh5 plan.

*"OKLAHOMA'S CRITICAL TEACHER SHORTAGE IS WELL DOCUMENTED. IT'S TIME TO STOP TALKING ABOUT THE PROBLEM ALONE AND START OFFERING REAL SOLUTIONS. BY APPLYING THEIR OWN KNOWLEDGE, RESEARCHING SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES AND ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROPOSED SOLUTIONS IN ACTION, THE VOLUNTEERS ON THIS TASK FORCE UNDOUBTEDLY WILL HELP CREATE THE HIGH-QUALITY CLASSROOMS OUR SCHOOLCHILDREN DESERVE."*

*-STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION JOY HOFMEISTER*

## WORKING GROUPS

At the September 2015 task force meeting, three working groups were quickly assembled:

1. Legislative/Regulatory
2. Community
3. Internal SDE/State Board

OSDE acknowledges, with sincere gratitude, the task force members who volunteered in these three working groups. The below table is a list of the entire task force with the indication of working group participation.

NAME	AFFILIATION	WORKING GROUP
Phyllis Hudecki	OBEC	1
Phil Wood	Terracon Geotechnical Consultants	2
Steve Hendrickson	Boeing	1
Chris Hammes	Integris	
Pete Delaney	OGE	2
Jeff Moen	Noble Foundation	
Steve Hahn	ATT	
John Reid	Business Roundtable	
Chuck Mills	Mills Machinery	2
Angela Monson	OU Health Sciences Center	2
Steven Prescott	OMRF	
Jennifer Monies	Oklahoma Educated Workforce Initiative	

<b>David Blatt</b>	Oklahoma Policy Council	
<b>Nancy Anthony</b>	OKC Community Foundation	
<b>Phil Lakin</b>	Tulsa Community Foundation	
<b>Sara Roberts</b>	Inasmuch Foundation	1, 2
<b>Randee Charney</b>	Schusterman Foundation	1
<b>Jonathan Small</b>	OCPA	
<b>Randy Ross</b>	Mayor, Choctaw (2014 Okla. Mayor of the Year)	
<b>Gary Jones</b>	State Auditor and Inspector	1
<b>Senator John Ford</b>	State Senate	1
<b>Senator Jason Smalley</b>	State Senate	1, 3
<b>Rep. Ann Coody</b>	State House	1
<b>Rep. Michael Rogers</b>	State House	
<b>Rep. Jason Nelson</b>	State House	1
<b>Rep. Jadine Nollan</b>	State House	1
<b>Rep. Earl Sears</b>	State House	
<b>Rep. Donnie Condit</b>	State House	1
<b>Rep. Ed. Cannaday</b>	State House	1
<b>Andrea Kearney</b>	Sr. Fiscal Policy Analyst, State House	1
<b>Brian Paschal</b>	Tulsa Chamber	1, 3
<b>Drew Dugan</b>	OKC Chamber	1, 2
<b>Debra Welch</b>	Lawton Chamber	1, 2
<b>Col. Nate Slate</b>	Northrop Grumman	
<b>Goldie Thompson</b>	Regents for Higher Education	1, 2, 3
<b>Melissa Michie</b>	Regents for Higher Education	3

**Teacher Shortage Task Force**

<b>Jake Yunker</b>	Governor's office	
<b>Sherry Labyer</b>	OEQA	1, 2, 3
<b>Debbie Landry</b>	OACTE	1, 3
<b>Sheridan McCaffree</b>	RUSO	3
<b>Pam Deering</b>	CCOSA	3
<b>Ryan Owens</b>	CCOSA	1
<b>Sandra Park</b>	USSA	1
<b>Shawn Hime</b>	OSSBA	1
<b>Tom Spencer</b>	Teacher Retirement System	
<b>Susan McCalmont</b>	Creative Oklahoma	2
<b>Wade Blevins</b>	Cherokee Nation	
<b>Lynne Chatfield</b>	Chickasaw Nation	2
<b>Joan Korenblit</b>	Respect Diversity Foundation	
<b>Russell Perry</b>	Black Chronicle	
<b>Raul Font</b>	Latino Community Development Agency	
<b>Bill Hickman</b>	Hickman Law Group	2
<b>Alex Cameron</b>	Anchor/Reporter, News9	2
<b>Russ Florence</b>	President, Schnake Turnbo Frank PR	2
<b>Kym Koch Thompson</b>	Koch Communications	2
<b>Tracey Zeeck</b>	Bumbershoot PR	2
<b>Brian Winkeler</b>	Robot House Creative	2
<b>Debbie Anglin</b>	Anglin PR	2
<b>Lori Johnson</b>	Anglin PR	2
<b>Katherine Bishop</b>	OEA	1, 2, 3

Teacher Shortage Task Force

<b>Ginger Tinney</b>	POE	1, 3
<b>Julie Coshow</b>	POE	2
<b>Mary Best</b>	AFT	
<b>Phil Gover</b>	Teach For America	2, 3
<b>Derald Glover</b>	Superintendent, Fort Gibson	1
<b>Robert Romines</b>	Superintendent, Moore	1
<b>Craig McVay</b>	Superintendent, El Reno Public Schools	1, 2, 3
<b>Randy Decker</b>	Chief HR Officer, Edmond Public Schools	2
<b>April Grace</b>	Assistant Superintendent HR, Putnam City	1
<b>Bradley Eddy</b>	Director pf Certified Talent, Tulsa Public Schools	3
<b>Shannon Freeman</b>	Director of Recruitment, OKCPS	3
<b>Dana House</b>	Principal, Rattan	1
<b>Clay McDonald</b>	Principal, Piedmont	1, 2, 3
<b>Leslie Frazier</b>	Principal, Coweta	2
<b>Curtis Green</b>	Assistant Principal, Broken Arrow Public Schools	1, 2
<b>Ben Harris</b>	Founder, Epic Charter School	1, 2
<b>Scot Trower</b>	Assistant Superintendent, Epic Charter School	3
<b>Erin Barnes</b>	Director of Teacher Support, Epic Charter School	2
<b>Amber England</b>	Stand For Children	
<b>Bill Price</b>	State Board of Education	1, 2, 3

**Teacher Shortage Task Force**

<b>Cathy Franks</b>	State Board of Education	
<b>Linda Reid</b>	National Network State Teachers of the Year	1, 3
<b>Shawn Sheehan</b>	2016 Oklahoma Teacher of the Year	1, 2
<b>Teachers</b>	11 finalists of TOY	
<b>Kimberly Paxson</b>		1
<b>Ryan Walters</b>		1
<b>Sharon Morgan</b>		1
<b>Jennifer Calloway</b>		3
<b>Eugene Earsom</b>	Retired Educator	2
<b>Melanie Pealor</b>	Retired Educator	2, 3
<b>Cheryl Jackson</b>	Retired Educator	1
<b>Claudia Swisher</b>	Retired Educator	1, 3
<b>Jim Machell</b>	Dean, College of Education UCO	2
<b>Wendy Pharr</b>	Special Education Program Chair, Northeastern State University	1, 2
<b>Joanie Gieger</b>	Early Childhood Professor, Oklahoma Christian University	1, 3
<b>Nancy Hector</b>	Coordinator of Clinical Experiences, USAO	3
<b>Stephoni Case</b>	Director, Master of Arts Educational Leadership, SNU	3
<b>Eleanor Goetzinger</b>	Special Education Advocate	3
<b>Joy Hofmeister</b>	State Superintendent of Public Instruction	
<b>Robyn Miller</b>	Deputy Superintendent, Educator Effectiveness and Policy Research	1, 2, 3
<b>Cindy Koss</b>	Deputy Superintendent for	3

	Academic Affairs and Planning	
<b>Heather Griswold</b>	Deputy Chief of Staff, SDE	2
<b>Jason Perez</b>	Executive Director, TLE - SDE	1, 2, 3
<b>Jeff Smith</b>	Executive Director, Teacher Certification, SDE	1, 3
<b>David Kinney</b>	General Counsel, SDE	2
<b>Desa Dawson</b>	Director of World Languages, SDE	3
<b>Carolyn Thompson</b>	Director of Government Affairs, SDE	1, 2, 3
<b>Brad Clark</b>	General Counsel, State Board of Education	1, 2, 3
<b>Lori Murphy</b>	Assistant General Counsel, SDE	1
<b>Lynn Jones</b>	Executive Director, Accreditation, SDE	3
<b>Tricia Hansen</b>	Special Education Instructional Specialist, SDE	

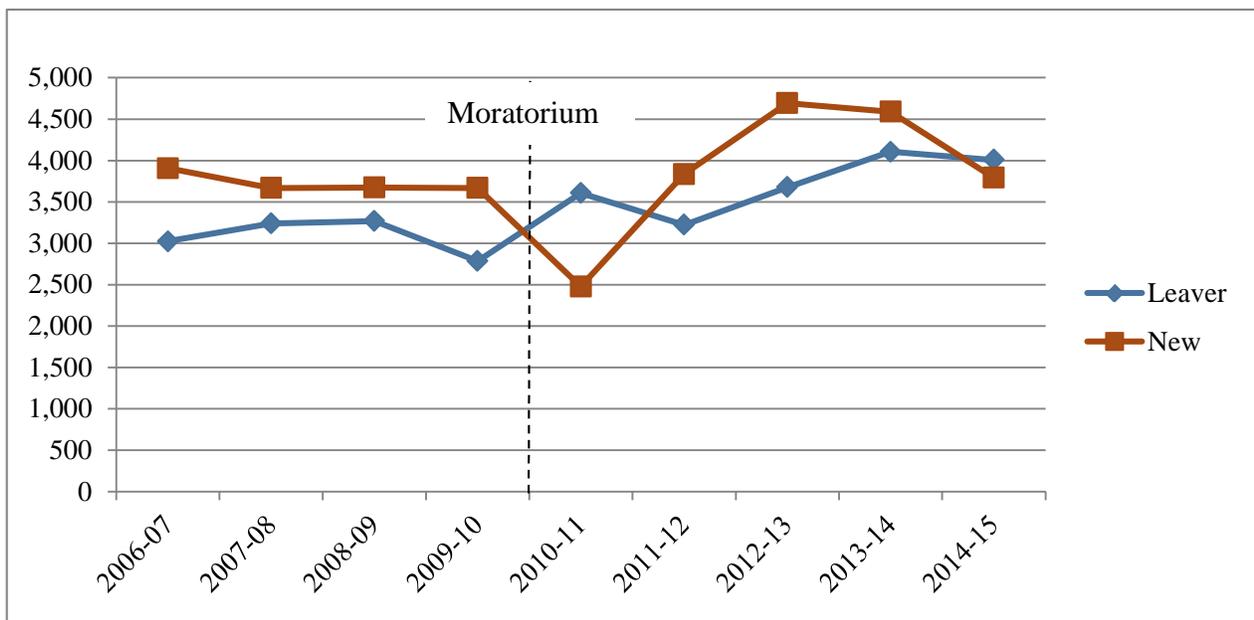
The current recommendations from each working group are included at the end of this report. For the purpose of making legislative bill requests by the December 11, 2015 deadline, the preliminary list of legislative recommendations is included below.

## SUPPORT TEACHERS

### Legislative Recommendation #1 – Retired Teachers as Mentors

In 2010, Oklahoma suspended what was a thriving teacher mentorship program that provided support and coaching to new teachers. In the 2014 legislative session, House Bill 2885 allowed for reinstatement of the program in a slightly different format as the Teacher Residency Program. From the chart below, taken from the Oklahoma Study of Educator Supply and Demand, one can see a correlation between the moratorium on this program and the increase in both those leaving the profession and those new to the profession. (Additional information on this chart may be found on pages 56-57 of the study).

**Exhibit 31. Mobility Trends Before and After the Teacher Residency Program Moratorium**

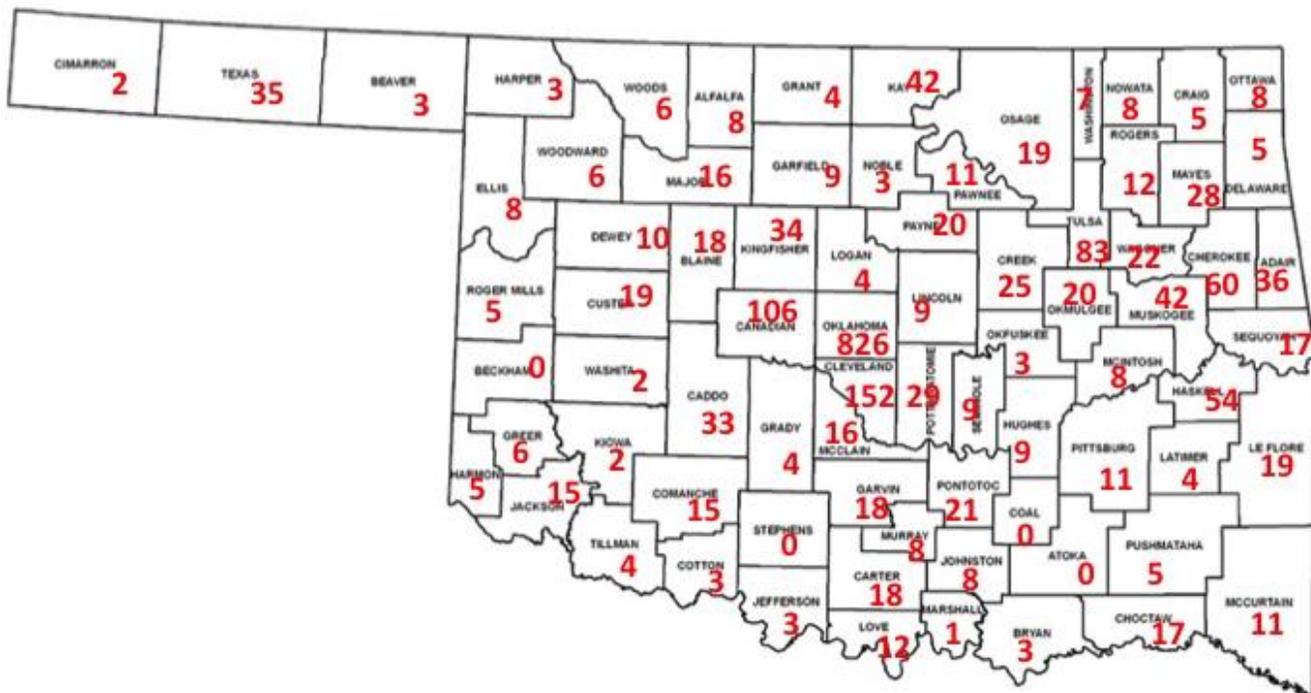


While it will be beneficial to have this program back in place, finding mentors is a struggle for many schools. In fact, under the previous program, mentors were paid a stipend for their service. For the 2015-2016 school year, funding identified within the State Department of Education will support the program, but stipends will not be able to be paid to mentors. In order to expand the capacity of the program, the State

Department of Education has requested funding of \$1,000,000 for this program in its FY 2017 budget request.

As evident in the graph below, Oklahoma has a wide distribution across the state of those who may participate in the Teacher Residency Program for the 2015-2016 school year. These numbers are based on an OSDE survey of districts; however, it should be noted that not all districts responded, including Tulsa and some smaller districts. From those that did respond, we find there are 2,156 teachers new to the profession and 1,100 new to their role/position for a total of **3,256**. This number includes those teaching for the first time under an emergency certification. These teachers must be supported and have the resources they need to be successful.

### Estimate of Teachers Participating in the Teacher Residency Program 2015-2016



As previously mentioned, finding teachers to serve as mentors is a challenge for many school districts. Current statute requires that mentors be full-time employees. The task force recommends allowing for retired teachers to serve as mentors as part of the Teacher Residency Program.

**Recommendation:** Amend the statute to allow for retired teachers to serve in the role of mentor. The retired mentor would not be employed by the district.

## REMOVE BARRIERS TO ENTRY

### Legislative Recommendation #2 – Scholarship for Certification Exams

The Teacher Shortage Task Force working groups discussed many barriers to entry into the profession. One such barrier includes the potential cost-prohibitive nature of the exams. To be certified in Oklahoma, teachers are required to take three separate exams including, the Oklahoma General Education Test (OGET), the Oklahoma Professional Teaching Exam (OPTE), and the Oklahoma Subject Area Tests (OSAT). The cost of these three tests approaches \$500.

For many students exiting educator preparation programs with a starting salary of \$31,600 and perhaps large student loans, the cost of these tests can be burdensome, especially for those who may not be successful on their first attempt.

The Teacher Shortage Task Force has recommended that a scholarship program be developed to pay for the costs of the exams, once per applicant. The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (OEQA) administers these exams, and therefore would need to administer such a program.

While state funding would be needed to support this scholarship program, even a small amount of funding could potentially have a large impact. If the program was funded even at \$100,000, that would allow for 200 teachers to receive scholarships. The State Department of Education also will pursue private matching funds.

**Recommendation:** Create a scholarship program and fund in statute to provide for a one-time scholarship for test takers. Require OEQA to promulgate rules for eligibility based on financial need.

### Legislative Recommendation #3 – Recognition of Out-of-State Certification

It has long been a challenge for Oklahoma that it does not recognize teaching certificates from other states. While it is nationally recognized that Oklahoma has one of the most stringent teacher certification programs in the country, we must recognize that this is one area that could help fill the 1,000-teacher hole that Oklahoma has faced for two consecutive years.

Oklahoma must strike the right balance between finding the teachers it needs and maintaining high standards. Part of the discussion of the Teacher Shortage Task Force has centered on the barrier to enter the teaching profession from those entering

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Oklahoma from another state. Before 2015, a certified teacher from another state could not teach in Oklahoma without taking, and paying for, all three of the certification tests referenced in recommendation #2.

Imagine a family moving to Oklahoma because of a job change of a spouse and the teacher in the family realizing he cannot teach without clearing this hurdle. Perhaps he moves forward, but perhaps he pursues another profession.

Senate Bill 20 passed in 2015 provided much needed relief in this area. It allowed for out-of-state teachers with more than five years teaching experience to enter Oklahoma and be certified without taking the Oklahoma certification tests. However, if a teacher does not have five years of teaching experience, he must still take the three certification tests. Recent certification numbers from the State Department of Education show that approximately 170 applicants from out-of-state will be saved the cost of the certification tests as a result of this change in 2015-2016. With the current shortage of teachers, we must consider reducing this five-year requirement to allow additional teachers from out-of-state to teach in Oklahoma.

**Recommendation:** Remove the requirement for five years of experience, allowing a certified teacher from another state to be certified in Oklahoma regardless of teaching experience.

#### **Legislative Recommendation #4 – Pathway to Certification Through Approved Work Experience**

Alternative certification is another area that the Teacher Shortage Task Force felt needed to be addressed. Again, many barriers exist that could prevent a teacher candidate from being placed on a path to alternative certification. Some of these barriers can be addressed in agency administrative rules; however, one in particular cannot.

Current law requires a candidate for alternative certification to have a college GPA of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale. While this certainly does not seem like an overly high threshold, during this time of crisis, we must look at all options. With this specific recommendation, the task force is seeking to create a more efficient pathway for an individual who has had a career in another occupation and has decided he wants to pursue a new career in teaching. It seems logical that the individual's work experience would align with a particular subject area and that experience be sufficient to allow pursuit of the

alternative certification, keeping in mind that at the end of the alternative certification process, such an individual would still have to pass all three certification tests.

This recommendation would allow the State Department of Education to create a matrix or rubric by which an alternative certification candidate's work experience can be evaluated and aligned with a specific certification area.

**Recommendation:** Allow certain work experience to substitute for the GPA requirement as determined by the State Department of Education, who will develop a matrix to determine what work experience would qualify.

### **Legislative Recommendation #5 – Expanding Opportunities for Adjunct Teachers**

The Teacher Shortage Task Force has discussed the possible use of adjunct teachers to help fill the current shortage. Allowing for those in private business to help in this time of need could be beneficial in a variety of ways. However, current law limits an adjunct teacher to 90 hours of teaching per semester, which averages out to about one hour per day for an entire semester. While this may be suitable for a business person who wants to commit to a school and teach one class, it would not allow for anything more.

Perhaps new cooperation can be found between education and business by increasing this limit. Oklahoma has obvious needs for teachers, and Oklahoma also has a large number of business people who have been laid off from the oil and gas industry. Allowing school districts to have greater flexibility for hiring adjunct teachers could be a win-win for both industries.

**Recommendation:** Increase 90-hour limit to 270 hours.

### **Legislative Recommendation #6 – Cost and Comparability of Certification Exams**

As stated in recommendations #2 and #3, current certification examination requirements are costly, and comparability to other states is lacking, which creates a barrier for out-of-state teachers to enter Oklahoma.

Recognizing that other states test their teacher candidates with a focus on subject area knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, the pursuit of a less expensive testing regiment while maintaining high quality assessment measures has the potential of securing more teachers into our classrooms.

Current costs for Oklahoma certification exams are shown below. These costs show the expense of those who pass the exams the first time. Also, these costs do not account for those who take add-on tests.

OGET (Oklahoma General Education Test) **\$65**

OSAT (Oklahoma Subject Area Test) **\$80**

OPTE (Oklahoma Professional Teaching Examination) **\$140**

Computer-based testing fee - **\$25** per test

Registration fee **\$30** (in a program year – ex. September 1, 2015 to August 31, 2016)

It is worthwhile to recognize that some states do not require what would be the equivalent to Oklahoma's OGET. Additionally, Oklahoma requires a fourth test, Oklahoma Reading Test, for those pursuing Early Childhood and Elementary certification. Though this test has no fee attached, it is yet another test added to a list of exams that may be more efficiently captured in another testing program.

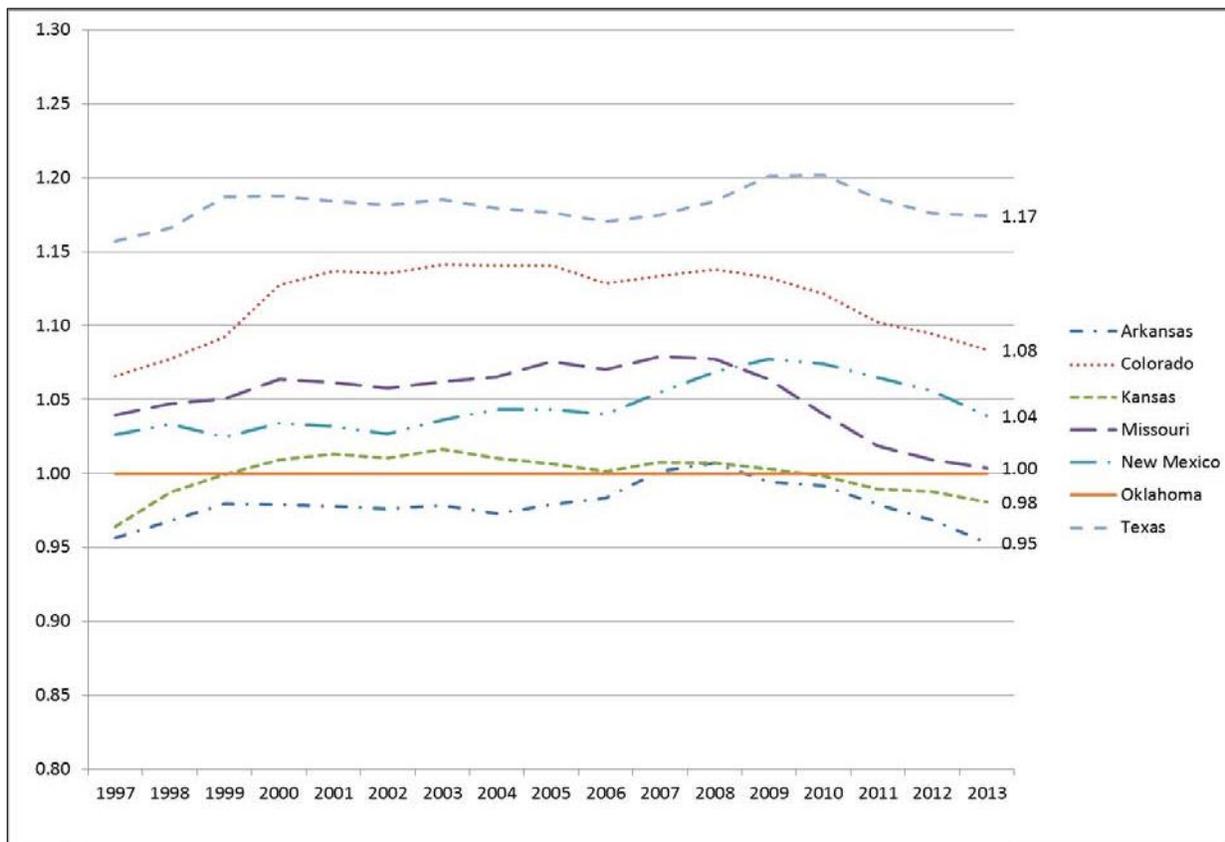
**Recommendation:** Explore legislative solutions supporting a more cost-effective certification program as well as consideration of a certification tool used broadly by other states.

## RECRUIT AND INCENTIVIZE

### Legislative Recommendation #7 – Teacher Recruitment Program

It is well known, both anecdotally and through research, that Oklahoma loses many teachers to the state of Texas for a variety of reasons. Again, using the Oklahoma Study of Educator Supply and Demand, we find that the cost to hire and retain educators in the states surrounding Oklahoma is much higher, specifically in Texas, presenting competition for educators in Oklahoma. (Additional information on this chart can be found on pages 75-77 of the study.)

**Exhibit 50. Average Cost of Hiring and Retaining Educators in Oklahoma and Surrounding States Using Comparable Wage Index (CWI) Values from 1997 to 2013**



Source: The Texas School Finance Project, Bush School of Government and Public Service, Texas A&M University.

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In thinking about solutions, the Teacher Shortage Task Force looked to the success of Texas. One of those solutions is a robust teacher recruitment program. Texas launched such a program in the late 1990s. Oklahoma should consider a teacher recruitment program to include the following policy areas:

- Targeted recruitment of high school students, undergraduate students, mid-career professionals, and military personnel to enter the teaching profession;
- Greater awareness of current assistance programs available to teachers and teacher candidates, including loan forgiveness programs, scholarship opportunities and community discounts;
- Partnership with the business community to provide opportunities for teacher externships and summer jobs; and
- A long-term plan to promote the teaching profession as a sought after and appreciated career path.

**Recommendation:** Adopt and fund a Teacher Recruitment program, with matching funds from the business and education community.

### **Legislative Recommendation #8 – Pay and Multi-Year Commitment for Student Teachers**

Oklahoma’s need for increased teacher compensation is well known. Certainly a conversation about the teacher shortage without discussion of compensation would be neglectful. While Superintendent Hofmeister has presented a five-year plan to raise teacher compensation for all teachers, Oklahoma must also pursue avenues to close the equity and opportunity gaps for students in high minority and high poverty areas.

Research shows that teachers seeking their first jobs overwhelmingly choose to teach in school districts near where they grew up, so special emphasis should be placed on those educator preparation students coming from high minority and high poverty areas. (*source: <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/surprising-reason-urban-schools-attract-less-qualified-teachers>*)

One possible way to draw teachers to these areas is to allow educator preparation students, while in their last semester of college, to contract as regular teachers with school districts having certain demographic qualities. This approach would place

teachers into classrooms earlier in their careers — a benefit to districts — and allow student-teachers to receive a paycheck.

Additionally, the Legislature should consider other incentive opportunities including pay, loan forgiveness, etc., to keep these students in these high-need areas.

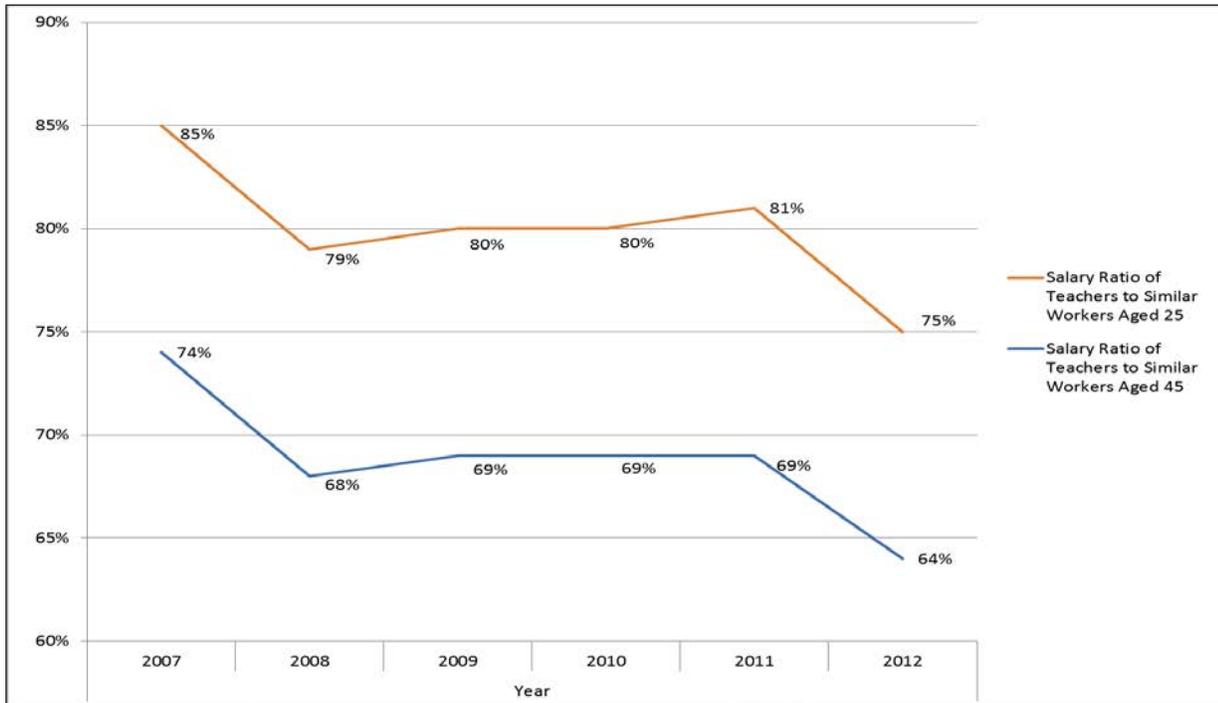
**Recommendation:** Incentivize soon-to-be graduates of educator preparation programs to teach in schools with specific demographics (high poverty, high minority, etc.) by allowing them to be under regular contract (instead of temporary) and work as a teacher in their last semester of educator preparation, and allow for the potential of a multi-year contract at the end of their student teaching. Consider additional incentives such as additional pay or loan forgiveness.

### **Legislative Recommendation #9 – Teacher-Leader Program with Extended Contract and Stipend**

Based on anecdotal evidence, we know that many teachers leave their positions to become school administrators because of increased pay. This presents a lose-lose situation for Oklahoma education. Oklahoma is losing good classroom teachers to administration, while gaining administrators who wish they were still in the classroom.

Again referencing the Oklahoma Study of Educator Supply and Demand, we see that mid-career teachers (age 45) make only 64% of similarly situated non-teachers, while early-career teachers (age 25) are slightly less disadvantaged making 75% of similarly situated non-teachers. This scenario presents a significant challenge to retaining mid-career teachers in Oklahoma. (Additional information on this chart can be found on pages 78-79 of the study.)

### Exhibit 52. Salary Ratios of Teachers to Similar Workers in Oklahoma for Early- and Mid-Career Individuals Using the Wage Competitiveness Index (WCI) From 2007 to 2012



Source: *Is School Funding Fair? A National Report Card*. Education Law Center, Newark, N.J.

Oklahoma must create better career ladders that provide for increased advancement and leadership among teachers. The State Department of Education has studied the Iowa Teacher Leadership and Compensation System as a possible model for Oklahoma. (source:<https://www.educateiowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/2013-07-15GuidanceOnTheTLCSystem.pdf>)

A system like that of Iowa has the potential to not only provide increased compensation for select teachers, but also will provide much needed instructional capacity while facilitating the spread of best practices among Oklahoma teachers.

**Recommendation:** Create a pilot program directing the State Department of Education to work with districts on different teacher/leader models. Allow for a limited number of teachers to be recommended by their districts to be either, model, mentor or lead teachers, or instructional coaches. Teachers in these roles would receive an additional contract and a stipend for their leadership role.

## WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

### Legislative/Regulatory

1. Amend language to include retired teachers as mentors as used in the Teacher Residency Program
2. Pursue legislation to provide tiered teacher leader similar to the Iowa model
3. Pursue legislation for certification test scholarships
4. Exempt OGET, OSAT, and OPTE for certified experience as it relates to reciprocity
5. Conduct cost analysis on high quality an affordable health insurance
  - A. Allow married couples to hold individual insurance benefits
  - B. Create a uniform calendar for mobility of teachers to prevent lost coverage and overlapping coverage
6. Increase the 90-hour limit to 270 hours for adjunct teachers
7. Consider multi-year contracts for teachers in high needs areas – teacher evaluation attached to contract
8. Work with Red Tape Task Force to pursue cost savings
  - A. OCAS (Oklahoma Cost Accounting System) coding to address administrative costs
  - B. Group purchasing models for districts
9. Partner with State Regents for Higher Education to bring awareness to Teach Oklahoma and Loan Forgiveness programs
10. Support existing legislation to amend the retired teacher pay cap
11. Pursue incentive pay models including district level development of their own strategies
12. Consider addressing certification overlapping (PreK-6<sup>th</sup> certification and 7<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> certification)

## Community

1. Incentivize municipalities to recognize teachers – service, discount
2. Scale up programs such as Northwest Classen Academy
3. Pursue legislation similar to Texas Recruitment Program that promotes the teaching profession through business community collaboration
4. High-light superintendents who teach a class – challenge superintendents to teach
5. Toolkit for businesses to host externships
6. Honoring teachers video campaign – utilize EngageOK video footage, Shawn Sheehan’s effort to promote the profession, TOY finalist short clips
7. Develop a business portal on the OSDE website to connect adjunct teachers and alternatively certified teachers to district openings

## Internal SDE/State Board

1. Move alternative certification to OSDE authority
2. Develop matrix to exempt minimum GPA for alternative certification by showing credible work experience
3. Allow OPSAC (Oklahoma Private School Accreditation Commission) private school experience to count for para-professional experience
4. Hire student teachers as Teacher’s Assistants
5. Teacher Apprentice Program (Kentucky model) allowing gradual avenue to certification
6. Establish a process, beyond guest teacher program, for teachers from other countries to become Oklahoma teachers.
7. Develop a job posting page on the OSDE website
8. Address the cost of three certification exams and reciprocity with other states.