



## Research Report

# Teacher Recruitment & Retention

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**Prepared for**

**THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
AND THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**



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## INTRODUCTION

As part of the 2016 adequacy study, the Bureau of Legislative Research (BLR) is taking a closer look at teacher recruitment and retention issues in Arkansas, in addition to the court-mandated analysis of teacher salaries. This report includes analysis of data from the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) and Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) on the supply, distribution, and attrition of public school teachers in all Arkansas public school districts and public charter schools. It also provides a summary of relevant findings from BLR's survey of all school superintendents, as well as site visits with school principals and teacher surveys in a sample of schools randomly selected to participate in this year's adequacy study. The final section of the report summarizes the state's Equitable Access to Educators Plan and state policies and programs designed to improve teacher recruitment and retention in Arkansas.

## TEACHER SUPPLY

According to ADE, there are 57,940 people in Arkansas with a current teaching license of any type as of 2015-16. In 2014-15, 33,104 individuals were employed as certified teachers in Arkansas's schools (this figure does not include 29,837 classified and 9,010 certified staff).<sup>1</sup> The total number of certified teachers employed in Arkansas's schools grew by 3.4 percent from 2004-05 to 2014-15, while the total number of students grew by 4.5 percent during this same period.

### TOTAL CERTIFIED TEACHERS AND STUDENT ENROLLMENT (2005-06 & 2014-15)

Year	Total # Certified Teachers	Total # Students
2004-05	32,006	455,515
2014-15	33,104	476,083

Pursuant to A.C.A. § 6-81-601 et seq., and § 6-85-109, ADE designated the following areas as critical licensure and endorsement shortage areas for 2015-16 and 2016-17, which the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) approved.<sup>2</sup> Teachers who choose to teach in these critical shortage areas may qualify for grants or student loan forgiveness programs administered by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE), as described later in this report.

### CRITICAL TEACHER SHORTAGE AREAS (2015-16 & 2016-17)

2015-16	2016-17
Art	Art
Family & Consumer Sciences	Family & Consumer Sciences
Foreign Language	French, Spanish
Library Media	Library Media
Mathematics	Mathematics
Special Education	Special Education
Drama / Speech	Agriculture Science & Technology
Gifted & Talented	Computer Science
	Physical Science (Chemistry, Physics)

<sup>1</sup> ADE Data Center: <https://adedata.arkansas.gov/statewide>. Note: These figures include teachers and students at the Arkansas School for the Blind, the Arkansas School for the Deaf, and schools operated by the Arkansas Department of Human Services' Division of Youth Services (DYS).

<sup>2</sup> See ADE's website at <http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/human-resources-educator-effectiveness-and-licensure/office-of-educator-effectiveness/recruitment-and-retention>

ADE identified these shortage areas based on 2014-15 data on the numbers of teachers preparing for Arkansas educator licenses, the number of teachers receiving Arkansas licenses for the first time, the numbers of vacancies or long-term substitutes in public school classrooms, the numbers of waivers granted to teachers teaching out of their area of licensure, and potential losses in the teacher workforce due to attrition and retirement. ADE may grant waivers to both public and private schools that demonstrate that they are not able to hire licensed teachers to teach classes in these shortage areas.

In 2014-15, ADE granted a total of 1,527 licensure waivers statewide, out of 1,613 waivers that were requested (94.6%), in the following subject areas. Special education, middle school core areas (e.g., English, math), gifted and talented, career orientation, guidance and counseling, and library media specialists made up 66.59% of all licensure waivers requested in 2014-15. The following chart lists the total licensure waivers requested in 2014-15.

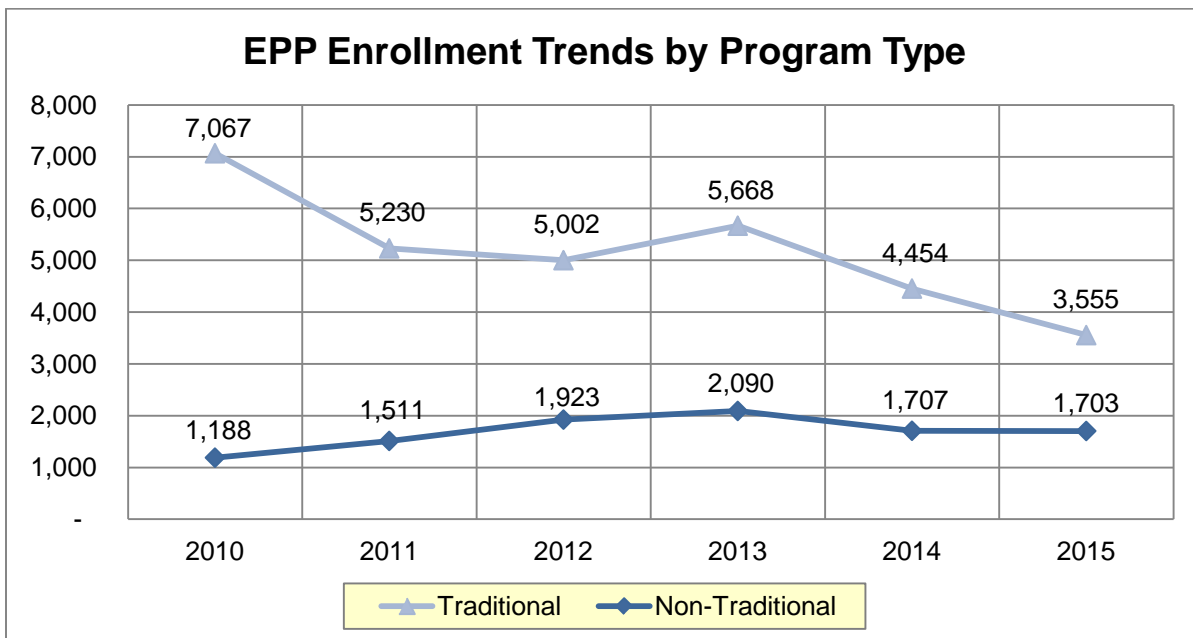
### TOTAL LICENSURE WAIVERS REQUESTED (2014-15)

Out of Area	Total	%
Special Education Instructional Specialist	440	27.3%
Middle Childhood Core Areas	163	10.1%
Gifted & Talented	140	8.7%
Career Orientation Areas	127	7.9%
Guidance & Counseling	104	6.5%
Library Media Specialists	100	6.2%
Elementary Education K-6	66	4.1%
Sciences (Physical, Earth, Life)	56	3.5%
Building Level Administrator	51	3.2%
PE/Wellness/Leisure-PE/Health	50	3.1%
Social Studies	50	3.1%
Mathematics 7-12	41	2.5%
Drama/Speech & Endorsements	37	2.3%
Journalism	30	1.9%
Music	28	1.7%
Business Technology	21	1.3%

Out of Area	Total	%
Curriculum Program Administrators	20	1.2%
Art	16	1.0%
District Administrator	13	0.8%
English/Language Arts 7-12	12	0.7%
Family & Consumer Science	10	0.6%
Grades 5th/6th Endorsements	10	0.6%
Adult Education	8	0.5%
English as a Second Language (ESL)	8	0.5%
Foreign Languages	7	0.4%
Survey of Fine Arts	2	0.1%
Early Childhood Education P-4	1	0.1%
Industrial Technology	1	0.1%
Vocational Areas	1	0.1%
<b>TOTAL REQUESTED</b>	<b>1,613</b>	
<b>TOTAL GRANTED</b>	<b>1,527</b>	<b>94.6%</b>

**TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS**

ADE, ADHE, and Arkansas’s higher education institutions have been working together to report data on the number of enrollees and graduates and the demographics of teachers produced in educator preparation programs (EPP) each year. According to the most recent Educator Preparation Performance Report and new data from ADE for 2015, the total number of students enrolled in teacher preparation programs (both traditional and non-traditional) declined from 8,255 in 2010 to 5,258 in 2015, resulting in 36.3 percent fewer teachers in the teaching pipeline. This decline is largely attributed to a 50 percent drop in the number of students enrolled in traditional teacher preparation programs during this period. Meanwhile, student enrollment in non-traditional teacher preparation programs rose by 43.3 percent, from 1,188 in 2010 to 1,703 in 2015.



Perhaps more concerning is the fact that the number of students preparing for licenses in critical shortage subject areas is equivalent to only 63% of the number of those positions available statewide, due to classes being taught by teachers on waivers, substitute teachers, or teachers preparing for retirement.

	Critical Shortage Areas	Non-Shortage Areas
# Enrolled in educator preparation programs	1,115	5,015
Teaching positions available	1,747	4,194
% of educators to positions available	63%	120%

## TEACHER DISTRIBUTION

ADE has been tracking the equitable distribution of teachers throughout the state, as required by the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. In 2015, all 50 states submitted plans to the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) to address inequitable access to high-quality teachers across school districts. In September 2015, DOE approved the first round of teacher equity plans for 17 states, including Arkansas.

According to ADE's 2015 "Equitable Access to Excellent Educators Plan", there are some significant differences among high-poverty and low-poverty schools, as well as high-minority and low-minority schools, in terms of teachers' levels of educational attainment and experience. ADE defines high-poverty and high-minority schools as those in the highest 25 percent of all schools ranked by the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch (FRL) or non-white students, respectively; likewise, low-poverty and low-minority schools are those in the lowest 25 percent based on the percentages of FRL and non-white students, respectively. It also defines "teacher turnover" as the average number of inexperienced teachers (in their first year of teaching) employed per school, per year, over the last five years; so it is important to note that these findings do not apply to the state's public school teaching workforce as a whole.

In summary, students in high-poverty schools and low-poverty schools have similar levels of teacher turnover and teachers teaching out-of-field. However, students in high-poverty and high-minority schools are more likely to have inexperienced teachers than are students in low-poverty and low-minority schools, and the rate of teacher turnover is 2.4 times greater in high-minority schools than in low-minority schools. Other gaps are very small or insignificant, such as the difference in the percentages of "unqualified teachers" (those with long-term substitute waivers) between high-poverty (0.25%) and low-poverty schools (0.01%) and only represent a few teachers.

### TEACHER DISTRIBUTION IN ARKANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS (2013-14)<sup>3</sup>

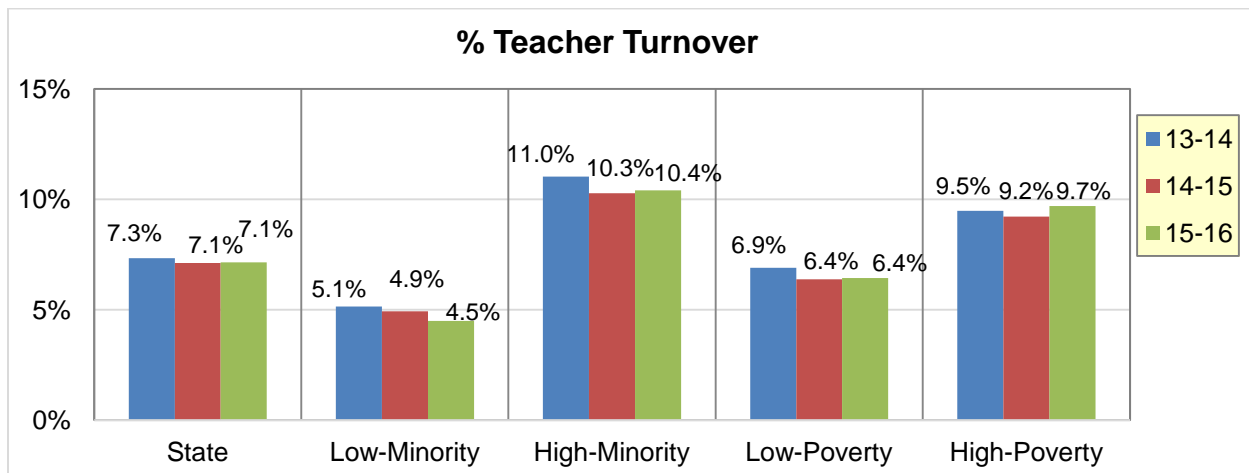
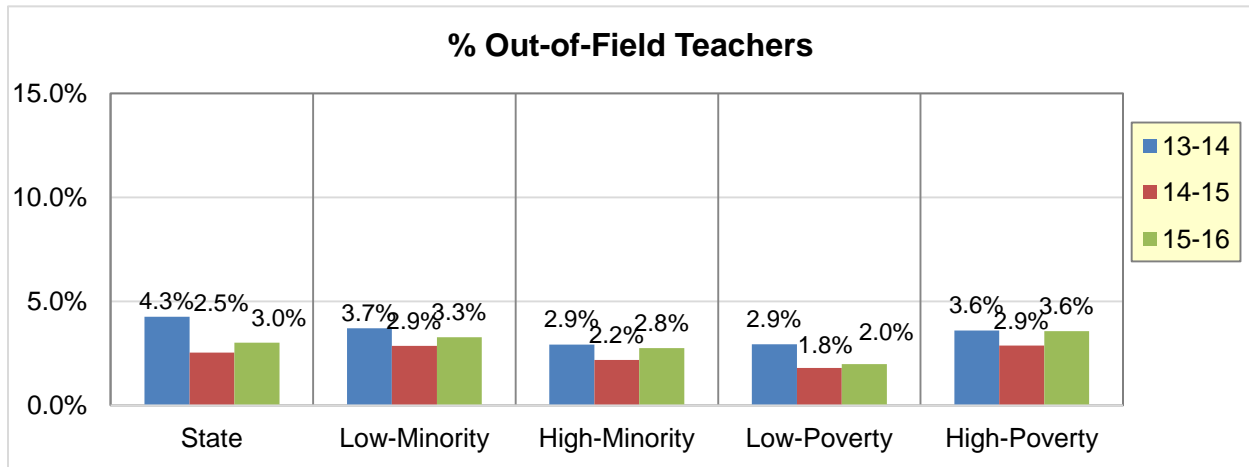
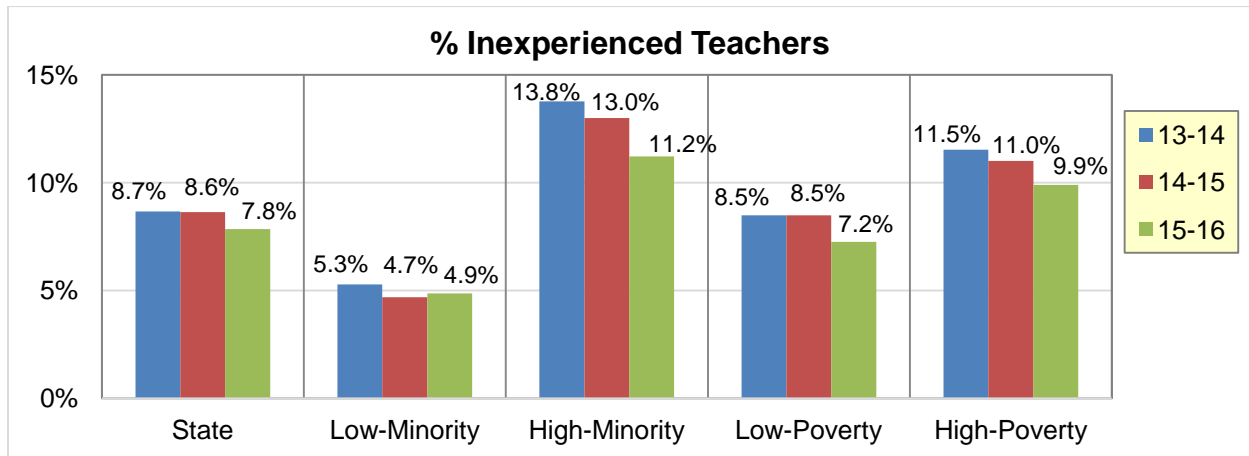
	ALL SCHOOLS	High-Poverty	Low-Poverty	High-Minority	Low-Minority
<b>Total # Students</b>	<b>474,995</b>	<b>100,404</b>	<b>157,062</b>	<b>127,151</b>	<b>89,735</b>
<b>Total # Teachers</b>	<b>39,099</b>	<b>8,163</b>	<b>12,111</b>	<b>9,903</b>	<b>8,872</b>
Average Years of Experience	10.4	10.3	10.4	10.2	10.4
% Inexperienced Teachers	8.7%	11.5%	8.5%	13.8%	5.3%
% with 0-3 Years Experience	27.2%	28.8%	26.2%	30.1%	28.2%
% with Master's Degree	37.6%	34.4%	41.0%	37.6%	35.3%
% Out-of-Field Teachers	4.3%	3.6%	2.9%	2.9%	3.7%
Teacher Turnover*	2.7	2.9	3.1	4.1	1.7
Unqualified Teachers (Long-Term Substitute Waivers)	0.8%	0.3%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
% National Board Certified (NBCT)	5.5%	5.2%	6.6%	4.8%	5.4%

\*Number of new teachers per school per year, for the last five years

<sup>3</sup> ADE. (2015). "Equitable Access to Excellent Educators Plan." Data sources: Statewide Information System (SIS), Arkansas Educator Licensure System (AELS).



Since ADE submitted its 2015 Equitable Access report last year, new data for 2014-15 and 2015-16 is now available, which allows us to examine trends in these areas over the past three school years:



## TEACHER ATTRITION

Arkansas employs between 2,000-3,000 new teachers in public schools each year. The following chart summarizes ADE's data on trends in attrition among new teachers (those who have taught for five or fewer years). Since 2006-07, an average of approximately 15 percent of new teachers do not return to the classroom after their first year of teaching; 31 percent do not return after three years, and 36 percent do not return after five years.

### TEACHER ATTRITION IN ARKANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS (2007-2016)<sup>4</sup>

School Year	# New Teachers	Attrition After 1 Year	%	Attrition After 3 Years	%	Attrition After 5 Years	%
2006-07	2,504	173	6.91%	613	24.48%	798	31.87%
2007-08	2,507	342	13.64%	672	26.80%	861	34.34%
2008-09	2,284	326	14.27%	641	28.06%	798	34.94%
2009-10	2,413	326	13.51%	728	30.17%	961	39.83%
2010-11	2,266	343	15.14%	709	31.29%	916	40.42%
2011-12	2,432	403	16.57%	849	34.91%		
2012-13	2,959	697	23.56%	1,096	37.04%		
2013-14	2,937	469	15.97%				
2014-15	3,524	565	16.03%				
2015-16	3,387						
1-Year Attrition (2006-2015)	23,826	3,644	<b>Avg. = 15.29%</b>				
3-Year Attrition (2006-2013)	17,365			5,308	<b>Avg. = 30.57%</b>		
5-Year Attrition (2006-2011)	11,974					4,334	<b>Avg. = 36.19%</b>

ADE is currently implementing a new data system that will allow the state to collect more detailed information about attrition among all teachers in Arkansas public schools (not just beginning teachers). This data will also allow for a closer look at the characteristics of teachers who leave the classroom versus those who stay, which schools or districts teachers are transferring to, and other factors.

<sup>4</sup> ADE. (2015). "Educator Preparation Performance Report."

## BLR ANALYSIS OF DISTRICT-LEVEL TEACHER RETENTION

BLR conducted its own analysis of 2014-15 district-level data from Cognos, the state's online reporting system for all districts and schools. We calculated the total number of teachers (not just beginning teachers) who were assigned to a class in a public school district or charter school in Arkansas the previous year (2013-14), then calculated the percentage of those teachers who remained employed as a classroom teacher in that same district or charter school in 2014-15. Although this is the best data currently available from ADE or BLR, it is limited in what conclusions can be drawn from it. For example, district-level retention data does not factor in which teachers may have transferred to another school within their district, much less, why. In addition, data reported by many charter schools did not appear reliable; therefore, BLR excluded charter schools from this analysis. The following chart provides a snapshot of the differences in average teacher retention and years of teaching experience among traditional school districts by size and poverty levels.

### TEACHER RETENTION AND EXPERIENCE, BY DISTRICT SIZE AND POVERTY LEVEL (2014-15)

	DISTRICTS	DISTRICT AVERAGE
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS</b>		
Total Student Enrollment	464,754	
<b>TEACHER RETENTION</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>77.0%</b>
<b>By % FRL</b>		
High = > 90%	9	55.4%
Medium = 70-90%	88	75.5%
Low = < 70%	139	79.4%
<b>By District Size</b>		
Large = > 5,000	15	83.1%
Medium = 751-5,000	139	79.1%
Small = < 750	82	72.3%
<b>AVERAGE YEARS TEACHER EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>12.5</b>
<b>By % FRL</b>		
High = > 90%	9	10.3
Medium = 70-90%	88	12.0
Low = < 70%	139	12.9
<b>By District Size</b>		
Large = > 5,000	15	12.3
Medium = 751-5,000	139	12.8
Small = < 750	82	12.0

## BLR SURVEY OF SUPERINTENDENT, PRINCIPAL, & TEACHER PERCEPTIONS

As part of the 2016 adequacy study, BLR surveyed teachers and interviewed principals in a random sample of schools across the state in fall 2015. BLR also distributed surveys to all 234 superintendents and 22 directors of all open-enrollment charter schools. To elicit the most candid responses, district and school staff and teachers were assured their responses would not be individually identified; therefore, responses in the adequacy report are provided only in aggregate. The questions and responses described below are related to teacher recruitment, retention, and working conditions. Responses to other survey questions are presented in other adequacy reports. It is important to note that BLR's survey relied on self-reported data and measured respondents' *perceptions* of these issues.

### DISTRICT SURVEY

The data below show the responses for questions related to teacher recruitment and retention for 249 out of 256 districts and charter schools (96.8%) that responded to BLR's survey. The numbers for each column below represent the number of districts that ranked each barrier as indicated. The numbers bolded below show where the highest number of districts ranked each given barrier.

**District Survey Question:** Rank the teacher **RECRUITMENT** issues facing your district, where 1 is the most significant issue and 9 is the least significant. Please mark any barriers that do not apply to your district as N/A:

ISSUES	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	N/A
<b>Difficulty in offering competitive salaries</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>35</b>	24	20	18	9	7	13	13	3
<b>Scarcity of appropriately licensed teachers</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>49</b>	33	23	13	18	23	8	12	5
<b>Cost of health insurance</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>43</b>	38	34	19	15	16	16	19	9
Location of district or individual school	<b>27</b>	<b>34</b>	28	29	32	14	19	25	32	8
School/district reputation or school improvement label	8	8	9	15	24	21	28	41	65	29
Student population	8	12	17	21	23	27	36	39	39	26
Retirement benefits	7	3	10	21	23	20	27	45	66	26
School or district-level leadership	5	1	5	7	15	15	36	55	76	33
Inadequate community or parent support	3	4	11	17	31	29	23	39	64	27

**District Survey Question:** Rank the teacher **RETENTION** issues facing your district, where 1 is the most significant issue and 12 is the least significant issue. Please mark any barriers that do not apply to your district as N/A:

ISSUES	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12	N/A
<b>Difficulty in offering competitive salaries</b>	104	27	22	18	15	10	7	6	12	6	8	9	4
<b>Teachers leaving for bigger districts</b>	40	36	23	19	16	12	16	12	10	12	15	19	18
<b>High demand for teachers with certain credentials</b>	39	38	35	26	19	14	18	12	10	13	8	6	10
Cost of health insurance	30	22	34	32	15	21	14	13	20	12	12	11	12
Location of district or individual school	24	12	26	21	22	18	16	17	20	18	17	24	13
Teachers leaving the profession	10	19	19	22	<b>30</b>	21	20	14	10	28	26	15	14
Teachers leaving for opportunities in the private sector	8	10	16	21	12	24	17	17	12	20	26	42	23
Student population	7	6	6	11	12	25	14	24	30	26	28	30	29
School/district reputation or school improvement label	6	5	5	7	10	21	8	18	27	25	24	65	27
School or district-level leadership	5	1	5	7	8	8	9	13	30	29	46	60	27
Retirement benefits	4	4	3	20	12	16	10	23	18	26	26	62	24
Inadequate community or parent support	4	3	4	9	18	19	13	24	23	26	30	44	31

In summary, the top factor cited by superintendents as barriers to both teacher recruitment and retention was difficulty in offering competitive salaries. Other significant barriers to recruitment were scarcity of appropriately licensed teachers, the cost of health insurance, and the location of the district or individual school. Barriers to retention also included teachers leaving for bigger districts and high demand for teachers with certain credentials.

The top three barriers to recruitment and retention cited most often by superintendents in BLR's survey were generally the same as those cited in BLR's previous survey for the 2014 adequacy study: competitive salaries, location, and scarcity of licensed personnel. Significantly, the number of districts citing the cost of health insurance as a barrier to recruitment and retention was much higher than that of a similar survey conducted for the 2014 adequacy report. In the 2014 study, 10 districts ranked the cost of health insurance as the #1 barrier to teacher recruitment, compared to 39 districts in the 2016 study; likewise, 11 districts ranked the cost of health insurance as the #1 barrier to retention in the 2014 study, compared to 30 districts in this year's study.

## SCHOOL SURVEY

The following chart summarizes 73 school principals' responses to open-ended questions about teacher recruitment and retention. Interviewees were not provided answers from which to choose. Principals' responses to this question were coded into the following types of answers. Principals could give more than one answer to this question.

### **School Principal Survey Questions:**

**What are the most significant teacher recruitment issues facing your school?**

**What are the most significant teacher retention issues facing your school?**

ISSUES	RECRUITMENT		RETENTION	
	# Schools	% Surveyed	# Schools	% Surveyed
Difficulty in offering competitive salaries	26	35.6%	17	23.3%
Location of district or individual school	22	30.1%	15	20.5%
High demand for teachers with certain credentials	21	28.8%	1	1.4%
No significant issues	19	26.0%	32	43.8%
School/district reputation or school improvement label	3	4.1%	1	1.4%
Teachers leaving for bigger districts	2	2.7%	2	2.7%
Student population	2	2.7%	4	5.5%
Inadequate community or parent support	1	1.4%	0	0.0%
School or district-level leadership	1	1.4%	1	1.4%
Cost of health insurance	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Retirement benefits	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Teachers leaving the profession	0	0.0%	12	16.4%
Teachers leaving for opportunities in the private sector	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

As found in the superintendent survey, the top issue cited by school principals as barriers to teacher recruitment and retention were difficulty in offering competitive salaries, followed by the school's geographic location. Most principals who cited location as a significant problem were located in rural areas, which had higher levels of poverty, limited opportunities for young teachers in the community, fewer jobs for spouses, and other factors. Many principals also cited difficulty recruiting applicants with certain credentials, particularly in special education, math, and science. Some principals cited a limited supply of new teacher graduates in their region. However, unlike superintendents in the district survey, no principal cited the cost of health insurance as a barrier to teacher recruitment or retention.

Nineteen principals (26.0%) said that they had no significant problems with recruitment, and 32 principals (43.8%) claimed to have no significant problems retaining teachers once they were hired. However, even among those schools that had little difficulty recruiting teachers overall, at least 10 principals found it very difficult to recruit minority teachers. Under ADE rules, districts that have more than five percent minority students (African-American and other minorities) are required to develop 10-year plans for minority teacher and administrator recruitment.<sup>5</sup>

Most principals who mentioned problems with teachers leaving the profession said that this attrition was largely due to retirement (not career changes).

## TEACHER SURVEY

A total of 1,071 out of 2,464 eligible teachers in BLR's sample of schools participated in the online survey (a response rate of 43.4 percent). The following charts summarize these teachers' responses about questions related to teacher recruitment, retention, and working conditions.

**Teacher Survey Question: What were the primary reasons you chose to teach at your current school? Select as many as apply.**

Responses	# Teachers	%
Location	773	72.2%
Proximity to family	457	42.7%
School's rating or reputation	269	25.1%
Salary	239	22.3%
School leadership	202	18.9%
Other	194	18.1%
Student population	146	13.6%
Spouse's occupation	136	12.7%
Benefits	93	8.7%
Workload	24	2.2%

The vast majority of teachers (72.2%) responding to the survey cited location as the number one reason they chose to teach at their current school, followed by proximity to family (42.7%). Roughly a quarter of teachers said that their school's rating or reputation (25.1%) or salaries (22.3%) also played a role in their decision.

**Teacher Survey Question: Under what conditions, if any, would you be willing to relocate to teach at a school in a high-poverty or remote rural community? Select as many as apply.**

Responses	# Teachers	%
Higher salary	567	52.9%
None	340	31.7%
Better benefits	324	30.3%
Moving to a community nearer family or friends	278	26.0%
School leadership	257	24.0%
Other	83	7.7%

Over half of teachers surveyed (52.9%) said that they would be willing to relocate to a high-poverty or rural community if offered a higher salary, and nearly one-third (30.3%) would agree to relocate to these areas if offered better benefits. Almost all teachers who answered "other" for

<sup>5</sup> ADE. "Rules and Regulations for Minority Teacher and Administrator Recruitment": [http://www.arkansased.gov/public/userfiles/Legal/Legal-Current%20Rules/op\\_23\\_p.pdf](http://www.arkansased.gov/public/userfiles/Legal/Legal-Current%20Rules/op_23_p.pdf)

this question explained that they either already teach in a high-poverty or remote rural community, or they would not be able to relocate, due to their spouses' jobs. This reasoning may have been true for many teachers who selected "none" as well.

Under § 6-17-114, public school districts in Arkansas must provide all classroom teachers with at least 200 minutes each week to schedule time for conferences, instructional planning, and preparation. This time shall be in increments of no less than 40 minutes during the school day, unless a teacher submits a written request to be allowed to have his or her planning time scheduled at some time other than during the student instructional day. BLR's teacher survey included two questions related to the requirements of this statute.

**Teacher Survey Question: Do you receive at least 200 minutes per week to schedule conferences and instructional planning?**

Response	# Teachers	%
Yes	838	78.2%
Sometimes	112	10.5%
No	56	5.2%
Not applicable to my position	43	4.0%
Blank	22	2.1%
<b>TOTAL RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>1,071</b>	

**Teacher Survey Question: Are the 200 minutes provided in increments of at least 40 minutes during the instructional day?**

Overall, most teachers responded that their schools were providing the minimum planning time required under statute. However, approximately 10.5 percent of teachers responded that they did not receive the mandatory 200 minutes per week for the above duties on a regular basis, and 5.2 percent of teachers did not receive this time at all. A similar percentage (5.3%) said that they never received at least 40 minutes per day for the above duties, and approximately 7.2 percent of teachers said that they did not receive this 40-minute daily minimum on a regular basis.

Response	# Teachers	%
Yes	874	81.6%
Sometimes	77	7.2%
No	57	5.3%
N/A	48	4.5%
Blank	15	1.4%
<b>TOTAL RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>1,071</b>	

**Teacher Survey Question: Please indicate your satisfaction with your amount of planning time.**

For the question about how satisfied teachers were with the amount of planning time provided at their schools, 59.5 percent of teachers were satisfied or very satisfied, while 28.5 percent were dissatisfied, and 6.6 percent were very dissatisfied.

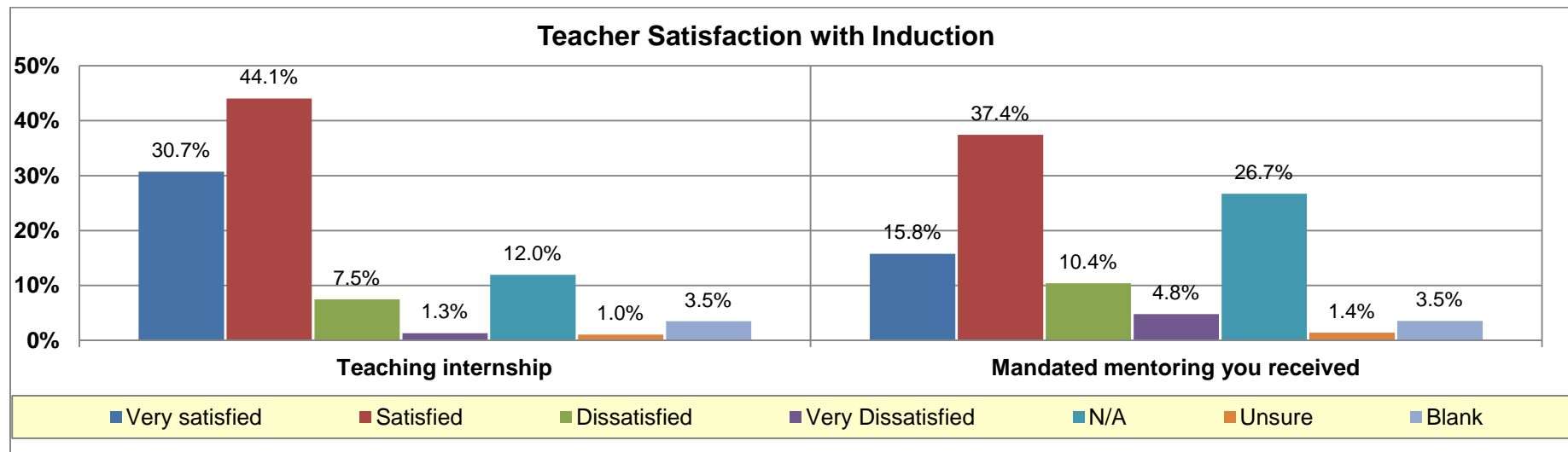
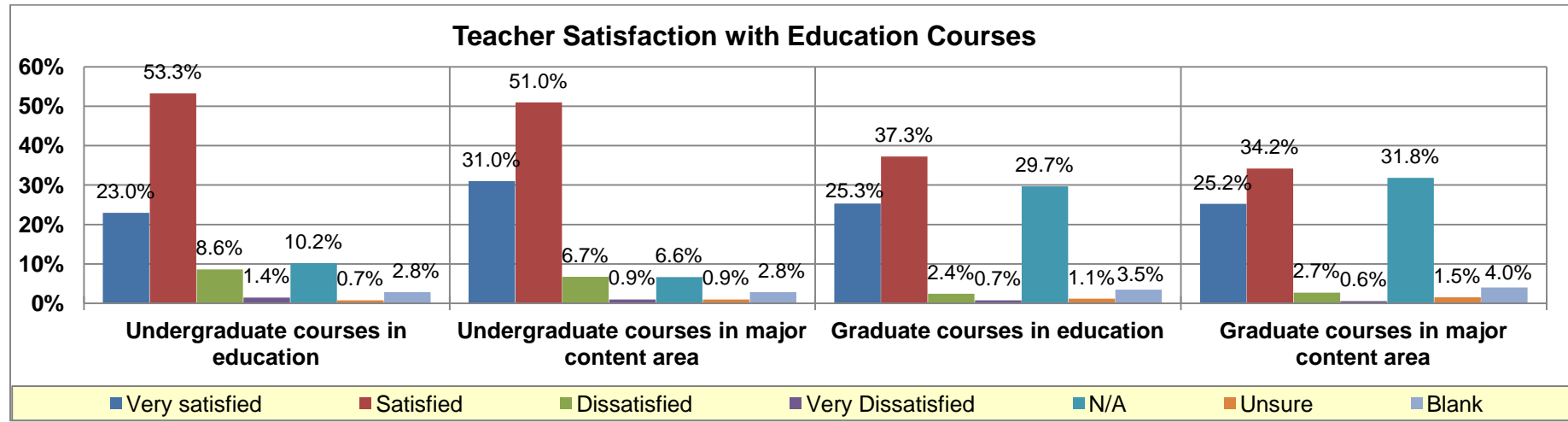
Response	# Teachers	%
Very satisfied	150	14.0%
Satisfied	487	<b>45.5%</b>
Dissatisfied	305	<b>28.5%</b>
Very Dissatisfied	71	6.6%
N/A	17	1.6%
Unsure	7	0.7%
Blank	34	3.2%
<b>TOTAL RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>1,071</b>	

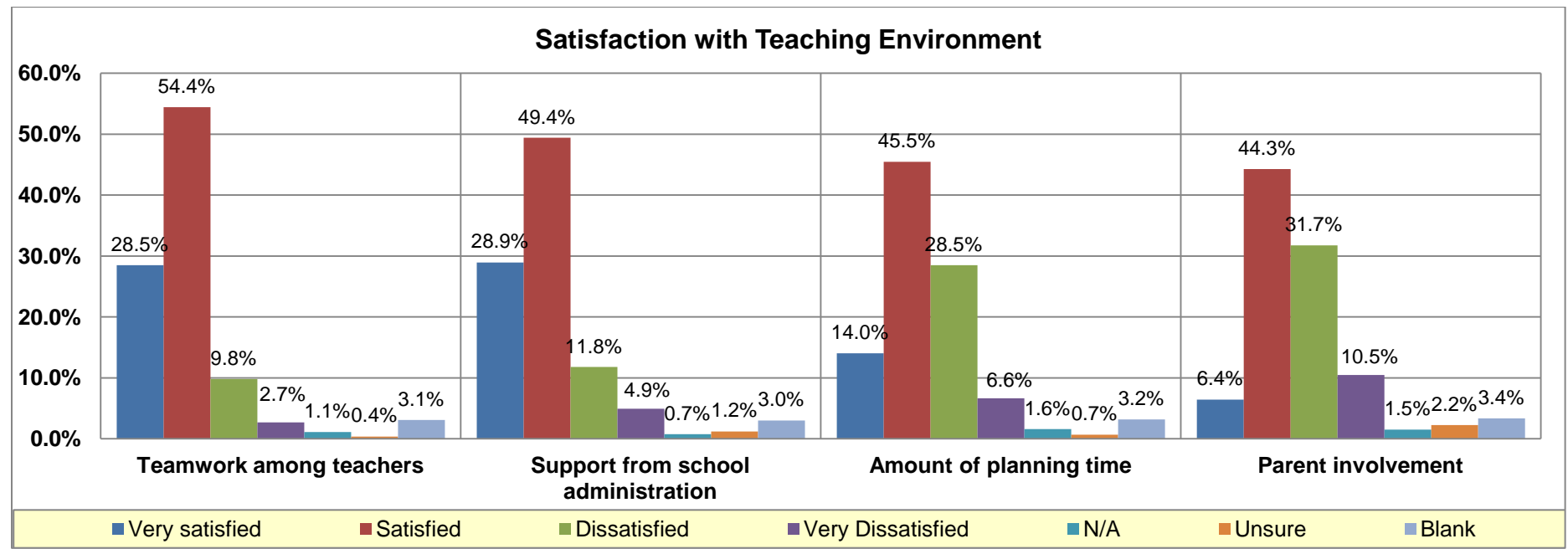
The charts on the following pages summarize teachers' levels of satisfaction with their educator preparation programs, induction process, and working conditions.





**Teacher Survey Question:** Please take this opportunity to candidly share your opinions regarding your teacher preparation and current position. This is very valuable information for the legislature. Remember, your name and position will NOT be identified, nor will your responses be shared, except in aggregated data. Please indicate your satisfaction with your preparation and current position:





Most teachers were satisfied or very satisfied with their undergraduate courses in education (76.3%), their undergraduate courses in their major content area (82.0%). Most were also satisfied or very satisfied with their graduate coursework in education (62.6%) and graduate courses in their major content area (59.4%); these two questions about graduate courses did not apply to most of the other respondents (29.7% and 31.8%, respectively). Three-quarters of teachers (74.8%) were satisfied or very satisfied with their teaching internship experience, and 53.2 percent felt the same about the mandated mentoring they received as new teachers. The vast majority were satisfied or very satisfied with teamwork among teachers at their schools (82.9%) and support from school administration (78.3%).

**Teacher Survey Question: Are you currently considering transferring to another school? If you answered "Yes", why?**

Responses	# Teachers	%
Yes	184	17.1%
No	866	80.8%
No answer (blank)	21	1.9%
<b>TOTAL RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>1,071</b>	

Of the 1,071 teachers who responded to BLR's survey, 184 teachers (17.1%) claimed to be currently considering transferring to another school. Of these respondents, 181 teachers (98.3%) answered the open-ended follow-up question, "If you answered 'Yes', why?" All open-ended responses were coded into the categories listed in the following table. Teachers cited location and salary as the top two reasons that they were considering transferring to another school. The third top response, categorized as "Other", included factors ranging from school curriculum to inadequate resources and opportunities for students.

Responses	# Teachers	%
Location	57	30.6%
Pay	48	25.8%
Other	46	24.7%
Leadership	43	23.1%
Different position	25	13.4%
Stress / workload	20	10.8%
Student / parent accountability	17	9.1%
Health insurance / benefits	4	2.2%

**Teacher Survey Question: Are you currently considering quitting the teaching profession? If you answered "Yes", why?**

Responses	# Teachers	%
Yes	275	25.6%
No	780	72.8%
No answer (blank)	16	1.4%
<b>TOTAL RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>1,071</b>	

Of the 1,071 teachers who responded to BLR's survey, 275 teachers (25.6%) claimed to be currently considering quitting the teaching profession. Of these respondents, 281 teachers answered the open-ended follow-up question, "If you answered 'Yes', why?" (Some teachers stated that although they were not currently considering quitting, they had considered it in the past and therefore chose to answer the open-ended response anyway.) All open-ended responses were coded into the categories listed in the following table. Teachers cited stress/workload, salary, retirement, and "Other" as the top reasons they were considering leaving the teaching profession. Responses categorized as "Other" included frustration with curriculum, lack of resources and opportunities for students, and ineffective professional development, among other factors.

Responses	# Teachers	%
<b>Stress / workload</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>58.7%</b>
<b>Salary</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>22.8%</b>
<b>Retirement</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>16.7%</b>
Other	45	16.0%
Lack of student / parent accountability	37	13.2%
Student discipline / behavior	33	11.7%
Respect	30	10.7%
Leadership	30	10.7%
Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS)	25	8.9%
Standardized testing	25	8.9%
Health insurance / benefits	24	8.5%

**Teacher Survey Question: What could the state or your school do to make you want to stay [in the teaching profession]?**

The following chart summarizes 479 teachers' responses to this open-ended question about what the state or their school could do to keep them from quitting the teaching profession. The top two measures cited by teachers were increased salaries and/or benefits (53.4%) and less paperwork and administrative burdens teachers are expected to complete, on top of their regular teaching duties (38.0%). In fact, some variation of the phrase, "Let me teach!", was used by at least 28 respondents. The appendix to this report includes a table of teachers' full responses to this open-ended question.

<b>Responses</b>	<b># Teachers</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Increased salary / benefits</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>53.4%</b>
<b>Less paperwork / administrative burdens</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>38.0%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>30.1%</b>
Respect	43	9.0%
Nothing	38	7.9%
Leadership	34	7.1%
Better student discipline	28	5.8%
More parent/student accountability	22	4.6%
Smaller class sizes	17	3.5%
Less stress	13	2.7%

## POLICIES AND PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

In response to teacher shortages in certain subjects or geographic regions of the state, Arkansas policymakers have enacted a number of teacher recruitment and retention initiatives over the years. The following chart summarizes state expenditures for the major programs in state statute in FY 2015, as well as two programs that are federally funded. While some funding goes directly to individual teachers, other funding is distributed to programs that support them.

### EXPENDITURES ON TEACHER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION PROGRAMS, FY 2015

	Districts	Charters	Education Co-ops	Higher Ed institutions	Other Orgs	Individuals	TOTAL	# Teachers Benefiting
<b>STATE EXPENDITURES</b>								
High-Priority District Teacher Recruitment and Retention	\$2,097,325	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$2,097,325</b>	<b>650</b>
National Board of Professional Teaching Standards	\$73,582	\$0	\$13,379	\$42,948	\$456,000	\$12,365,000	<b>\$12,950,909</b>	<b>2,935</b>
Non-Traditional Licensure Grants	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>85</b>
Alternative Certification Program*	\$69,464	\$0	\$536,831	\$52,839	\$0	\$500	<b>\$659,634</b>	<b>297</b>
Arkansas Teacher Housing Development Act							<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Teacher Opportunity Program (TOP)						\$1,211,922	<b>\$1,211,922</b>	<b>710</b>
University Assisted Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grant Program							<b>\$0</b>	<b>0</b>
AR Geographical Critical Needs Minority Teacher Scholarship Program						\$67,500	<b>\$67,500</b>	<b>35</b>
State Teacher Education Program (STEP)						\$1,522,552	<b>\$1,522,552</b>	<b>475</b>
Lottery Scholarship Priority for Teaching Commitment							<b>\$0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>FEDERAL GRANTS</b>								
Improving Teacher Quality State Grants*	\$21,020,249	\$393,323	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$21,463,572</b>	<b>N/A</b>
State Personnel Development Grants (SPDG) - Special Ed	\$0	\$0	\$500,000	\$0	\$0	\$39,362	<b>\$539,362</b>	<b>25</b>



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## **SALARY AND OTHER FINANCIAL INCENTIVES**

### **Moving expenses in particular regions (§ 6-17-308)**

This statute allows districts to pay moving expenses for new employees in particular regions.

### **High-priority district incentive bonus (§ 6-17-811)**

Originally enacted in 2003, the high-priority district incentive program provides grants for teacher bonuses in districts that have at least 80% of students qualifying for FRL and a total of 1,000 or fewer students. This program provides a one-time signing bonus of \$5,000 to newly hired teachers for the first full year of teaching, a bonus of \$4,000 in the teacher's second and third years of teaching, and a \$3,000 retention bonus for a teacher in the high-priority district who is teaching a fourth or subsequent year in the same high-priority district; taught in one high-priority district but begins employment in another high-priority district; or teaches in a high-priority district but does not meet the previous requirements.

### **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Fund (§ 6-17-2701 et seq. and § 19-5-1235)**

The Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Fund is established for the purpose of retaining, recruiting, and attracting competent science, technology, engineering, and math teachers by providing industry-competitive income to licensed, qualified teachers who teach science, technology, engineering, and math subjects. The statute gives the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) the authority to promulgate rules for the program, in collaboration with ADE.

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## **LOAN FORGIVENESS OR SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS**

### **National Board of Professional Teaching Standards Certification (§ 6-17-413)**

Enacted by Act 1225 of 1997, ADE provides grants to allow payments of costs associated with obtaining the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards certification and a \$5,000 bonus each year for up to ten years.

### **Teacher Opportunity Program (TOP) (§ 6-81-601 et seq.)**

ADHE's Teacher Opportunity Program (TOP) was created in 2005 to provide tuition reimbursement grants to teachers and administrators for up to \$3,000 in expenses for up to six credit hours completed for each academic year. The first priority for the award of funds under the Teacher Opportunity Program is the award of reimbursements under the Dual Licensure Incentive Program, §§ 6-81-608 and 6-81-609, described below.

### **Dual Licensure Incentive Program (§ 6-81-608 – 6-81-609)**

A teacher employed by an Arkansas school district may receive a reimbursement from the Dual Licensure Incentive Program if the teacher takes coursework to obtain licensure in an additional subject area declared to be a critical shortage area; a subject that the teacher is currently teaching but for which he or she does not have a licensure; and a grade level in which the school district has requested a waiver under § 6-17-309. Teachers could receive a maximum of \$3,000 for tuition, books, and fees each year under this law. However, according to ADE, the program has not been funded.

### **University Assisted Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grant Program (§ 6-81-1301)**

A.C.A. § 6-81-1301 established this grant program within ADHE in 2001, in order to attract qualified teachers to the Delta and geographical areas with critical teacher shortages by giving scholarships of \$2,000 per year to students working toward a Master of Education degree at a program approved by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board. This program has not been funded since it was enacted in 2001.

**State Teacher Education Program (STEP) (§ 6-81-1601 et seq.)**

Administered by ADHE, STEP began in 2009 and provides yearly federal student loan repayment grants of up to \$3,000 to teachers who are currently teaching in a subject or geographic shortage area in an Arkansas public school (as defined by ADHE, in consultation with ADE). Teachers must reapply each year and are eligible for up to three years. Minority teachers who teach in these areas are eligible for an additional loan repayment for federal student loans in the amount of \$1,000 per year.<sup>6</sup>

**Arkansas Geographical Critical Needs Minority Teacher Scholarship Program (§ 6-82-1501 et seq.)**

Began in 2001, ADHE's Arkansas Geographical Critical Needs Minority Teacher Scholarship Program provides scholarships to attract qualified minority teachers to the Delta and critical teacher shortage areas.

**Lottery Scholarship Priority for Teaching Commitment (§ 6-85-109 and 6-85-110)**

Under § 6-85-109 and 6-85-110, eligible students who agree to teach in a critical shortage subject or geographical area in Arkansas shall receive priority for receiving forgivable loans under the Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship, "during times of funding shortages." So far, ADHE says it has not needed to prioritize funding in this manner, so there have been no students committed to teaching who have received this priority status for receiving forgivable loans.

**State Personnel Development Grants (SPDG)**

The U.S. DOE's Office of Special Education Programs has given ADE five-year, \$5 million State Personnel Development Grants from 2003-07 and 2009-14. This grant was renewed in August 2015, for the period of 2015-19.<sup>7</sup> Under this grant, ADE provides up to \$3,500 in tuition reimbursement to 20 eligible teachers who pursue a licensure endorsement in special education.

**DISCONTINUED PROGRAMS****Arkansas Teacher Housing Development Act (§ 6-26-101 — 6-26-305)**

The Teacher Housing Development Act provided an operating grant to the Arkansas Teacher Housing Development Foundation to provide low-interest loans and rental housing programs to encourage teachers to relocate to high-priority districts. Although the program is still in statute, it has not been funded in recent years.

**State Teacher Assistance Resource (STAR) Program**

ADHE's STAR program was created by the General Assembly by Act 1804 of 2003. Its purpose was to provide loans for new teachers willing to work in geographical shortage areas or teach certain subjects with shortages, such as math and science. The statute creating the STAR program (§ 6-81-1501 - 6-81-1507) was repealed, and STAR was replaced by the STEP program in 2009.

<sup>6</sup> ADHE. "Financial Aid for Teachers": <http://scholarships.adhe.edu/financial-aid-for-teachers>

<sup>7</sup> ADE. (2015, August 18). "ADE Receives \$5 Million Grant to Create Resources to Assist Students." [http://www.arkansased.gov/public/userfiles/news/2015/Press\\_Release\\_ADE\\_Receives\\_5\\_Million\\_Grant.pdf](http://www.arkansased.gov/public/userfiles/news/2015/Press_Release_ADE_Receives_5_Million_Grant.pdf)



## ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS TO THE CLASSROOM

Act 1745 of 2003 established the Office for the Purpose of Teacher Recruitment within the ADE's Office of Teacher Quality, now known as the Office of Educator Effectiveness. A.C.A. § 6-17-310 outlines the Office's duties and responsibilities in helping districts recruit and retain teachers. The statute originally required ADE to provide an annual report to the House and Senate Education Committees and the Governor's Office about its progress toward fulfilling its mission; however, this requirement was repealed by Acts 2007, No. 1573, § 57.

A few of the programs that the Office of Educator Effectiveness currently oversees or helps facilitate include the following:

- Arkansas Professional Pathway to Educator Licensure (APPEL)
- Non-traditional Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT), Master of Education (M.Ed.), and Master of Education in Teaching, Learning, & Leadership (MTLL) degree programs
- Provisional Professional Teaching License (PPLT)
- Arkansas Teacher Cadets Program
- Arkansas Teacher Corps (ATC) @ University of Arkansas
- American Board for the Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE)
- U-Teach Institute
- Troops to Teachers (TTT)
- Teach For America (TFA)

Each program is described in the Recruitment and Retention section of ADE's website.<sup>8</sup>

ADE and the Arkansas Department of Career Education (ACE) have also collaborated on a new initiative to create a career pathway to teaching for high school students. Upon completion of high school career coursework and passing the ETS (Educational Testing Service) ParaPro Assessment, students would become eligible to receive a Certified Teacher Assistant (CTA) industry certification, allowing them to begin working in public schools as a para-professional while also earning their two- or four-year degree.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> ADE: <http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/human-resources-educator-effectiveness-and-licensure/office-of-educator-effectiveness/recruitment-and-retention>

<sup>9</sup> ADE, ACE, & ADHE. (2015). "Career Pathway to the Educator Workforce."