



Key Education Issues in Review: Improving the Teacher Pipeline

Introduction

Teachers in the U.S. comprise the largest organizational group in the nation. While there has been a dramatic increase in the number of teachers who are beginners, more than 41 percent of new teachers are estimated to leave the profession within five years. The loss of new teachers plays a significant role in the inability to adequately staff schools with highly qualified teachers, as novice teachers are quitting before they have fully developed their skills. One result is a large contingent of “permanent” substitute teachers. And the number of candidates entering the teacher preparation pipeline nationwide has dropped 10 percent between 2004 and 2012. The economic downturn in 2008 led to lay-offs and dismissals of teachers, which had a ripple effect on career choices that continues to deter potential candidates from entering the profession despite current teacher shortages.

Nevada’s Facts and Statistics

- There are approximately 22,000 public school teachers in Nevada across 17 districts serving 450,000 students.
- More than half of the schools in Nevada are Title 1 schools.
- In 2014-2015, CCSD had a deficit of 670 teacher vacancies, and estimates for 2015-2016 are 650.
- 76% of these vacancies are in high poverty schools.
- CCSD has 60-80 retirements each month.
- Of the 2,200 teachers hired by the Clark County School District for the 2013-2014 school year, only 900 of these teachers came from preparation programs in Nevada.

- If CCSD alone were to hire all available Nevada teacher program completers (approximately 1,364), it would not be close to filling the district’s current needs. And this does not take into account the hiring needs of Washoe County and rural districts in Nevada.

U.S. Facts and Statistics

- There are approximately 4 million teachers in the U.S. serving nearly 58 million students.
- The U.S. does not have a systematic approach to recruiting, preparing, and retaining teachers, as many other countries do.
- Some states actually produce a surplus of teachers, but nationally there is distribution mismatch and a shortage of teachers who are willing to work in districts where the wages are poor and the working conditions are not conducive to success.
- There is a severe mismatch between the percentage nationally of minority teachers (17%) and the percentage of minority students in U.S. classrooms (40%).
- Two-thirds of U.S. teachers do not feel their profession is respected (Darling-Hammond, 2014-2015), making recruitment more difficult.

Nevada’s Recent Actions to Date

- The UNLV College of Education has committed to increase recruitment efforts to produce 1,000 new teachers each year.
- Teach for America has pledged to produce 175 new candidates per year.
- Alternative Routes to Licensure (ARL) and Troops to Teachers programs are fast-tracking new candidates.

Nevada's Recent Actions to Date (continued)

- Nevada colleges and universities (both public and private) as well as statewide agencies and organizations are working together to create effective and creative solutions for teacher recruitment and retention.

Considerations for Future Directions

The challenges of providing an adequate supply of highly competent, diverse, and well-trained teachers for Nevada's schools are complex. The solutions must also be multi-faceted.

Suggested steps include:

- Developing a statewide plan for recruitment and retention of teachers.
- Establishing a central data collection site.
- Securing grants and fellowships for highly qualified candidates from Nevada.
- Creating statewide mentoring and induction programs.
- Examining successful initiatives used in other states.
- Ensuring that solutions in Nevada are prioritized, targeted, and evaluated.

Statewide Benefits of Future Action

- Ensures that all children have equal access to a high quality education and equal chances for academic success.
- Creates a cadres of well-trained and diverse teachers throughout Nevada.
- Reduces the need for long-term substitute teachers.
- Addresses the reoccurring mismatch of supply and demand for new teachers.
- By uniting the efforts of all the stakeholders in the state, creative and potentially effective solutions can be identified, piloted, and evaluated both for immediate increases in the teacher pipeline and for long-term societal goals.

Implications of Status Quo

- Nevada's students will not have equitable access to highly qualified teachers.
- Academic achievement will remain one of the lowest in the nation.
- Students will not be well prepared for work or college.

Selected Resources

- Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). Recruiting and retaining teachers: What matters most and what can government do? *The Forum for Education and Democracy*. Retrieved from: <http://www.forumforeducation.org/news/recruitingandretainingteachers>
- Lankford, H., Loeb, S., McEachin, A., Miller, L. C., & Wyckoff, J. (2014.) Who enters teaching? Encouraging evidence that the status of teaching is changing. *Educational Researcher*. Vol. 43, no.9. December, 2014.
- NEA. Strengthening and diversifying the teacher recruitment pipeline: Current efforts. (2014). Washington, DC: NEA Department of Teaching Quality. Center for Great Public Schools.

This paper represents a portion of work and research from faculty members in the UNLV College of Education. For more information or to receive a copy of a comprehensive paper on this topic, please contact:

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