

Teacher Vacancy Task Force
Developing a Thriving Teacher Workforce in Texas:
Teacher Vacancy Task Force Final Report

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Teacher Vacancy Task Force Membership

The Teacher Vacancy Task Force (TVTF) has worked to find teacher-shaped solutions to these teacher workforce challenges - blending a variety of perspectives and experiences from current classroom teachers and school administrators - into thoughtful policy recommendations and an innovative way forward that firmly supports the needs of our teachers.

The Task Force met every other month for the past year, with Commissioner Morath and agency leadership regularly facilitating discussions with Task Force members, while including insights gathered from experts and additional education stakeholders throughout the State of Texas.

The Task Force was comprised of teachers and school system leaders in public education hailing from a variety of districts and geographies, and serving student populations that are representative of the diversity of Texas.

Teacher Members	School System Administrator Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linda Galvan, Los Fresnos CISD • Melina Recio, McAllen ISD • Cynthia Hopkins, Corpus Christi ISD • Kimberly Davis, Goliad ISD • Vania Amado, Fort Bend ISD • Sadie Atha, East Chambers ISD • Cody Knott, Caldwell ISD • Brian Kruk, Pineywoods Community Academy • Joshua Sciara, Dekalb ISD • Alexandra Fain, Wichita Falls ISD • Josue Tamarez Torres, Dallas ISD • Eric Hale, Dallas ISD • Jean Streepey, Highland Park ISD • Tiffany Kilcoyne, Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD • Pam Fischer, Waco ISD • Valerie Haywood, Bastrop ISD • Jennifer Kuehne, Round Rock ISD • Faye Urich, Haskell CISD • Tiffany Klaerner, Mason ISD • Kisaundra Harris, Amarillo ISD • Natasha Garcia, Hale Center ISD • Suzanne Kirkland, Forsan ISD • Sergio Estrada, Ysleta ISD • Janie Coheen, Judson ISD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greg Rodriguez, Edcouch Elsa ISD • Narciso Garcia, Vanguard Academy • Roland Hernandez, Corpus Christi ISD • Brandon Chandler, Gregory-Portland ISD • LaTonya Goffney, Aldine ISD • Jay Killgo, Vidor ISD • Jason Hewitt, Shepherd ISD • Brandon Enos, Cushing ISD • Judd Marshall, Mount Pleasant ISD • Leah Tunnell, Burkburnett ISD • Justin Terry, Forney ISD • Sherry Taylor, Aledo ISD • Chane Rascoe, Lampasas ISD • Dave Lewis, Rochelle ISD • Christie Volmer, Hereford ISD • Chris Tatum, Amarillo ISD • Rick Rodriguez, Lubbock ISD • Ashley Osborne, Ector County ISD • Roland Roscano, East Central ISD • Rosie Vega-Barrio, Tornillo ISD • Casey Morgan, ResponsiveED Solutions

Executive Summary

The Teacher Vacancy Task Force (TVTF) was established in March 2022 by Governor Abbott to examine teacher retention and recruitment challenges across Texas. The TVTF met every other month during the past year with the primary objectives of understanding challenges school systems are facing related to teacher vacancies and developing recommendations for regulatory or other policy changes for the Texas Education Agency and the legislature. The TVTF was comprised of teachers and school system leaders in public education hailing from a variety of school systems and geographies and serving student populations that are representative of the diversity of Texas as well as a wide range of grade-levels and content areas.

Through examining research and evidence, considering the perspectives of educators across the state, and continuous stakeholder input, the TVTF developed recommendations focused on support for teachers in the key areas of teacher compensation, training and support, and working conditions. In order for these recommendations to be implemented and expanded, the TVTF recommends that they not only be offered as options for districts, but that additional funding be allocated at the level necessary for successful implementation.

Compensation

Theme 1: Increase Overall Compensation and Support Strategic Compensation Strategies

- A. Fund a significant increase in overall teacher salaries by increasing the basic allotment and other state funding mechanisms, while increasing the requirement that school systems invest new funding in teacher salaries
- B. Update the minimum salary schedule to reflect the value of Texas teachers and promote differentiated compensation
- C. Provide technical assistance for school systems to engage in strategic compensation through the Teacher Incentive Allotment, established by the 86th Texas Legislature, and staffing considerations to further increase and differentiate salaries

Theme 2: Enhance Teachers' Total Compensation Package

- A. Reduce the cost of healthcare insurance for teachers
- B. Prioritize teacher wellbeing through mental health supports, expanding access to childcare, and other benefits
- C. Temporarily subsidize the retire/rehire surcharge

Theme 3: Provide Incentives and Support for Hard-to-Staff Areas

- A. Subsidize certification and hiring incentives for Special Education and Bilingual Education Teachers
- B. Create targeted marketing campaigns and incentives to recruit teachers back into the profession

- C. Collect and report real-time data about teacher vacancies in tandem with the development of a statewide teacher employment web application

Training and Support

Theme 4: Improve the Pipeline and Pre-service Preparation of Novice Teachers

- A. Expand high-quality Grow Your Own (GYO) pathways for high school students and paraprofessionals seeking to become certified teachers
- B. Establish and fund a Teacher Residency pathway and expand Educator Preparation Program (EPP) capacity to produce teacher residents through technical assistance support

Theme 5: Expand Training and Support for Teacher Mentorship and Teacher Leadership Opportunities

- A. Develop cooperating teacher and mentor teacher trainings that leverage job-embedded and research-based best practices
- B. Increase funding for and scale of the Mentor Program Allotment (MPA) established by the 86th Texas Legislature
- C. Provide opportunities and technical assistance to create and expand teacher leadership roles

Theme 6: Provide Access to and Support for High-Quality Instructional Materials

- A. Expand awareness of and access to High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) to reduce time teachers spend searching for and creating materials
- B. Require Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) to integrate instruction on understanding HQIM into coursework and provide training for EPP faculty/staff on curriculum and assessment literacy best practices

Working Conditions

Theme 7: Demonstrate Respect and Value for Teacher Time

- A. Develop and conduct teacher time studies with school systems to inform staffing and scheduling policies and decisions
- B. Provide technical assistance to school administrators to redesign master schedules that increase teacher time for planning and development
- C. Expand training and technical assistance supports for school systems to design and implement strategic staffing models

Theme 8: Ensure Schoolwide Culture and Discipline Supports

- A. Expand access to additional counseling staff, services, and partnerships that support both students and teachers
- B. Provide preparation, training, and ongoing coaching for school administrators on best practices related to school discipline and fostering a supportive learning environment

Note from the TVTF Chair

“After a pandemic that resulted in an alarming decrease in academic achievement, Texas cannot afford to keep losing the most important factor in a child’s academic success: our classroom teachers. A few years ago, a group of my fifth-grade students outperformed their peers at one of the wealthiest school districts in Texas. This was despite the fact that I was teaching at a campus that had been on the 'Improvement Required' list for five consecutive years and with over 90 percent of its students living in poverty. This feat illuminated the potential that many students living in impoverished communities have when given a fair chance, and the role effective teachers play in our students’ academic success; that is why I am proud of the great work this Task Force has done on behalf of Texas students and educators.

I am confident that state leadership will act upon these recommendations which are the result of nearly a year’s worth of collaboration and hard work among district leaders, teachers, educational organizations, and other stakeholders. However, compensation, working conditions, and teacher training must be addressed in tandem to see real results. If we do, there will be meaningful progress to ensure that no child in Texas attends a classroom without an effective teacher of record in front of them and that high-quality candidates will view teaching as a career-long profession that enables them to not only support the dreams of their students but live out their own as well.” – Josue Tamarez Torres (TVTF Chair)

Introduction

Teachers are the single most important in-school factor impacting student outcomes (Hattie, 2011). Unfortunately, not all students have access to high-quality teachers.

Texas is employing more teachers than ever before, a total of 370,431 teachers and hiring 42,973 new teachers in the 2021-22 school year. The number of Texas teachers has continued to increase even as student enrollment has declined due to COVID. Average teacher pay in Texas is also the highest it has ever been. But the challenges associated with the profession remain significant, with 20% of teachers entering the profession without certification (TEA, 2022), a steep increase in teacher attrition rates, and salary increases that are not keeping up with high inflation rates. Research and data connect attrition rates to challenges related to compensation, working conditions, and training (Board, 2022) (McKinsey & Company, 2010), which has been reinforced by the experiences shared by Texas teachers and school systems.

Texas has the largest teacher labor market and educator preparation system in the U.S. (U.S. Department of Education, 2019), positioning the state to lead the nation in improvements in the health of the teacher workforce, better staffing models, and ultimately more effective teachers who are more likely to stay in the profession long-term. State leadership must prioritize efforts to recruit, prepare, and retain effective educators to ensure all students receive a quality education.

The Teacher Vacancy Task Force (TVTF) was established in March 2022 by Governor Abbott to examine teacher retention and recruitment challenges across Texas. The TVTF met every other month during the past year with the primary objectives of understanding challenges school systems are facing related to teacher vacancies and developing recommendations for regulatory or other policy changes for the Texas Education Agency and the legislature. The TVTF was comprised of teachers and school system leaders in public education hailing from a variety of school systems and geographies and serving student populations that are representative of the diversity of Texas as well as a wide range of grade-levels and content areas.

The TVTF has determined the highest-leverage opportunities to reduce teacher vacancies include increasing compensation, providing quality training and support, and improving working conditions for teachers.¹ In order for these recommendations to be implemented and expanded, the TVTF recommends that they not only be offered as options for districts, but that additional funding be allocated at the level necessary for successful implementation.

¹ The TVTF met for nearly a year and discussed many potential solutions. After generating solutions, the TVTF went through a series of prioritization exercises, weighing feasibility and impact. The ideas in this report reflect the collective priorities of the four working groups of the TVTF: Compensation, Improving Educator Preparation, Talent Pipelines, and Understanding the Teacher Experience. These ideas do not necessarily reflect the individual viewpoints and ideas of TVTF members.

Compensation

Increasing compensation for all educators is foundational to recruitment and retention efforts. Recognizing that factors such as healthcare premiums, childcare, and housing all impact teacher take-home pay, the TVTF also recommends improved benefits in addition to salary increases. Finally, within compensation are recommendations for financial incentives for hard-to-staff certification areas, particularly Special Education and Bilingual Education.

"Nothing stunts economic growth like an undereducated local workforce. Aggressive teacher compensation recruits and retains quality educators that will provide excellent education for all Texas students. Quality Texas Educators create global thinkers and 21st century leaders that will change the world." – Elementary Teacher (TVTF)²

² Quotes used throughout the report include survey responses from TVTF members, responses on stakeholder input surveys, and emails sent to the TVTF email address.

Theme 1: Increase Overall Compensation and Support Strategic Compensation Strategies

The TVTF recognizes the Texas Legislature’s recent efforts to increase teacher compensation with the passage of House Bill 3 (HB 3) in the 86th Texas Legislature. While HB 3 led to substantial increases in teacher compensation across the state, salary increases have not kept up with recent inflation rates, and according to one report, Texas ranks 28th in the nation for average teacher salary (NEA, 2022).

Research and polls show that current and prospective teachers believe salaries need to be further increased. For example, when individuals who considered the teaching profession but chose a different field were surveyed, factors around salary were the number one deterrent (McKinsey & Company, 2010) and according to one report, teachers earn on average 23.5 percent less than comparable college graduates (Allegretto, 2022).

To attract teachers to the field and retain current teachers, overall compensation must be the top priority.

“I believe the most impactful change school systems could adopt to retain talent, diversify staff, and encourage new people to enter the profession is to adopt merit-based pay grades. The next generation of teachers will not wait twenty years for an appropriate salary.” – Special Education Teacher (TVTF Input Survey)

“Pay raises need to happen at state and local levels. Inflation, rising gas prices, rising insurance premiums and we never get a decent raise.” – Elementary Teacher (TVTF Input Survey)

Overall Compensation Recommendation A: Fund a significant increase in overall teacher salaries by increasing the basic allotment and other state funding mechanisms, while increasing the requirement that school systems invest new funding in teacher salaries

As a result of HB 3, school systems across Texas increased teacher compensation leading to salary gains of approximately \$1.172 billion, with rural schools seeing substantial raises. However, salaries have not kept up with recent inflation, and pay disparities continue to exist across the state. For example, there is an \$8,998 pay gap between median beginner teacher salaries in suburban areas versus median beginner teacher salaries in rural areas.

Currently, school systems are required to use 30 percent of any increases in the basic allotment on compensation increases to full-time district employees other than administrators, with 75 percent of that amount going to teachers, librarians, guidance counselors, and nurses (TEC 48.051(c)).

To address pay disparities and support a significant overall increase in all teacher salaries, the basic allotment should be increased with a requirement that school systems increase the percentage that goes towards teacher compensation.

“Additional compensation is foundational.” - Superintendent (TVTF)

Overall Compensation Recommendation B: Update the minimum salary schedule to reflect the value of Texas teachers and promote differentiated compensation

The current minimum salary schedule for Texas teachers starts at \$33,660 and takes 20 years to reach a salary of \$54,540. While many school systems pay above the minimum salary schedule, small and rural districts are frequently at or slightly above the minimum state salary. The minimum salary schedule should be raised to reflect the impact of teachers and should be differentiated by factors that positively impact student outcomes such as tenure and certification pathways. Additionally, the new salary schedule should encourage school systems to reward and retain effective teachers.

Overall Compensation Recommendation C: Provide technical assistance for school systems to engage in strategic compensation through the Teacher Incentive Allotment, established by the 86th Texas Legislature, and staffing considerations to further increase and differentiate salaries

The Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA), established by HB 3, has provided significant state funding to support school systems' strategic compensation models, which pave the way for teachers to earn higher salaries faster based on performance and other factors such as campus needs and subject area. Through investment in strategic compensation, the number of teachers in Texas earning a six-figure salary has doubled since 2019 (TEA, 2022).

The TVTF recommends technical assistance for school systems to develop and sustain innovative compensation and staffing models that reward great teachers. School systems have shared a need for additional technical assistance and financial support to build robust strategic compensation systems. This assistance could help improve teacher salaries by supporting school systems to start or expand strategic compensation systems. Additionally, technical assistance could support school systems in the design and implementation of strategic staffing models that allow for resource reallocation towards teacher compensation increases.

What is technical assistance?

Technical assistance is the process of providing targeted support to school systems, campuses, or preparation programs that are trying to address a particular need. The goal of technical assistance is to build capacity by applying proven strategies and solutions. Technical assistance can be provided by entities such as TEA, regional service centers, and third-party providers. In order for technical assistance to be successfully implemented, additional funding must be allocated for both the providers and the districts.

Theme 3 Connection: Financial incentives should be provided for hard-to-staff areas.

Theme 7 Connection: Technical assistance can support staffing and scheduling.

Theme 2: Enhance Teachers' Total Compensation Package

Healthcare costs have risen on average 5 percent over the past 20 years, yet the state and district contribution of \$225 to teachers' healthcare packages has remained the same (Teacher Retirement System, 2022). Furthermore, a recent analysis found that teacher's expressions on their intentions to leave the profession are an indicator of job dissatisfaction and were significantly linked to burnout, symptoms of depression, and other negative indicators of wellbeing (RAND, 2022).

In addition to overall compensation for teachers, the TVTF recommends strategies to address indirect compensation, recognizing that costs such as healthcare and childcare should also be prioritized as critical areas that impact overall teacher pay.

"In my school district leadership role, I am searching constantly for teachers that will make a difference in students' lives. I genuinely believe that the very best educators come to us because they have a passion to make a difference. However, we are faced with the economic struggles that many staff face and the new challenges to their health that can make a teacher prospect reconsider their decision. We hope that strong consideration will be given to the overall benefit packages offered to Texas teachers. Healthcare, childcare, and affordable housing are all possible areas that will enhance our chances of attracting bright individuals to our field. Many simply hope to be able to put aside these basic needs as they concentrate on the important job of education." – Superintendent (TVTF)

Total Compensation Recommendation A: Reduce the cost of healthcare insurance for teachers

In 2021, the average school system contribution to healthcare was approximately \$330, which is significantly lower than the calculated monthly average employer contribution of \$827 across Texas (Teacher Retirement System, August 2022). With rising costs of healthcare and stagnant contributions, the burden of healthcare costs falls on the teacher. Teachers covering dependents on their plan face an even larger burden.

The TVTF recommends that the legislature increase the state contribution to healthcare premiums to lower the cost of premiums teachers' pay and allow school systems to select multiple healthcare plans to meet their teachers' needs.

Additionally, the state should explore coverage differences between the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) and Employee Retirement System (ERS) including healthcare without cost for retired teachers.

Total Compensation Recommendation B: Prioritize teacher wellbeing through mental health supports, expanding access to childcare, and other benefits

Research over decades has shown the significance of job satisfaction as it relates to a person's physical and mental health and wellness (Cooper, 2013), and pre-pandemic studies found that teachers experience a great deal of stress that can impact their job satisfaction (NASP, 2013). Furthermore, in a national survey of teachers, 72 percent believe that schools are not doing enough to support teacher wellbeing (Teach Plus, FuelEd, 2021), and in the aftermath of the pandemic nearly a third of teachers nationwide reported symptoms related to depression and anxiety (CDC Foundation, 2021).

The TVTF recommends that school systems and TRS provide or expand access to teacher wellbeing support as part of their healthcare insurance to promote teacher wellbeing. This should include ensuring that clinical mental health services, including access to tele-mental health services, are available to teachers through Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) for no cost and included in healthcare insurance plans. Additionally, school systems could partner with community organizations and businesses to host a variety of physical wellness and emotional wellness events for teachers and provide job-embedded opportunities to consult with counselors and mental health colleagues for non-clinical emotional support, to practice stress reduction activities, and to process stressful experiences.

The additional cost of childcare and housing can also add significant stress and be a deterrent to teachers. According to one report, infant care in Texas costs approximately \$9,324 annually and childcare for a 4-year-old is approximately \$7,062 annually (EPI, 2020). To support teacher wellbeing, in addition to expanding mental health supports, the TVTF recommends providing other benefits such as subsidized housing and childcare options for teachers.

“I would really like to see a focus on providing mental health support for teachers moving forward. Two years ago, I started therapy through [an app]. I was drawn to the app because I was unable to make in-person appointments because of my elementary teacher work schedule. With the app, I can make appointments much easier and at a wider variety of times...Providing mental health support for teachers is incredibly important. I have spent over \$3000 per year out of pocket to see a therapist...” - Elementary Teacher (TVTF Input Survey)

Theme 8 Connection: Additional funding for counselors and partnerships could be provided to school systems to support student and teacher wellness at the campus level.

Total Compensation Recommendation C: Temporarily subsidize the retire/rehire surcharge

With school systems struggling to recruit teachers, many have reported a need to hire retired teachers but express that the financial burden to do so can be challenging. Senate Bill (SB) 202, passed by the 87th Texas Legislature, amended Texas Government Code 825.4092, requiring school systems to take on the pension and healthcare surcharges and bear this cost.

The TVTF recommends that the legislature temporarily subsidize the retire/rehire surcharge until attrition rates are at a manageable level and provide flexibility about who pays the surcharge, allowing school systems the ability to negotiate the amount the retiree would pay. This would help ensure that school systems' unique needs are considered in the negotiations.

How much does it cost to hire a retired teacher?

A school systems' pay scale may establish a salary of \$68,000 for a teacher with 29 years of experience. The district is obligated to pay the teacher \$68,000, contribute 16 percent of the salary or \$10,880, and pay an additional \$6,420 if the individual is on TRS Care health insurance, for a total of \$17,300 in TRS surcharges. This results in a cost of \$85,300 to employ the retiree (TASB, 2021).

Theme 3 Connection: Removing barriers for retire/rehire surcharges could further enable teachers to return, particularly in hard-to-staff areas

What is a surcharge?

Surcharges are additional contributions that TRS-covered employers must pay to TRS for employing TRS retirees who retired after Sept. 1, 2005, and who work more than one-half of the time during a month. There are two types of surcharges: pension surcharges and health care surcharges. The amount of the pension surcharge is equal to the amount of both member and state contributions on the compensation paid. The health care surcharge only applies for employed retirees who are TRS-Care participants. The amount of the health care surcharge is determined by TRS and is the responsibility of the employer.

Theme 3: Provide Incentives and Support for Hard-to-Staff Areas

Teacher vacancies in hard-to-staff areas were a challenge even before the pandemic and have only been exacerbated since. Specifically, Bilingual Education and Special Education fields present challenges for teacher recruitment and retention. Roughly 36 percent of middle school Bilingual Education, 44 percent of high school Bilingual Education and 52 percent of all Special Education teachers serve out-of-field (TEA, 2022).

Within this theme, there are recommendations to support and incentivize the recruitment and hiring of hard-to-staff areas. The lack of real time data around hard-to-staff areas makes it challenging to provide targeted incentives. Therefore, the TVTF also recommends ways to acquire vacancy data to support those strategies.

“Providing established special education professionals and those entering the profession with the time and compensation that more effectively reflects the position will attract and retain experienced professionals ensuring the best achievement of our special education students throughout the state.”
- Teacher (TVTF)

Hard-to-Staff Areas Recommendation A: Subsidize certification and hiring incentives for Special Education and Bilingual Education Teachers

The TVTF recommends that funding be provided to incentivize Special Education and Bilingual Education teachers to enter and remain in their role. Incentives could include requiring Special Education and Bilingual Education teachers to begin on the second step of the minimum salary schedule, subsidizing teachers’ Special Education and Bilingual Education certification exam fees, and providing additional funding to teacher candidates who pursue a teacher residency in a hard-to-staff area.

In addition to subsidizing exam fees, certification exams for Special Education and Bilingual Education certification could be streamlined to make certification more accessible.

Required Exams and Costs (TEA)	
The standard TExES exam cost is \$116 for most exams, with the Science of Teaching Reading (STR) exam costing \$136.	
<p>Bilingual Education Exams</p> <p>Bilingual Education teachers are required to take at least four exams, including supplemental exams in addition to the required content and pedagogy exams for a base certificate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 164 Bilingual Education Supplemental TExES • 1-2 Language Proficiency Tests, based on language of certification 	<p>Special Education Exams</p> <p>Special Education teachers are required to take at least two exams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 161 Special Education EC-12 TExES • 160 PPR EC-12 TExES <p>Depending on their placement, many Special Education teachers are also required to take:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core content exams such as 391 Core Subjects EC-6 TExES or 211 Core Subjects 4-8 TExES • 154 ESL Supplemental TExES • 293 Science of Teaching Reading TExES

Theme 7 Connection: Time requirements of Special Education teachers should be examined in the teacher time studies.

Hard-to-Staff Areas Recommendation B: Create targeted marketing campaigns and incentives to recruit teachers back into the profession

School systems have not traditionally had “returners” on their radar as a specialized group to recruit and support, particularly for hard-to-staff areas. However, when looking at data from the 2021-2022 school year, 31% of new hires were teachers returning to the profession after being out of the profession for at least one academic year. To strategically recruit teachers back into the profession, the TVTF recommends the legislature provide funding to support the development of marketing materials, resources, and tools to identify and intentionally recruit teachers who left the profession back into teaching roles.

Theme 1 Connection: School systems could provide additional strategic compensation incentives or support to returning teachers.

Theme 2 Connection: Removing barriers for retire/rehire surcharges could further enable teachers to return, particularly in hard-to-staff areas

Hard-to-Staff Areas Recommendation C: Collect and report real-time data about teacher vacancies in tandem with the development of a statewide teacher employment web application.

The lack of statewide data on teacher vacancies means state and local decision-makers do not have the full picture, making it more challenging to implement targeted recruitment efforts. The TVTF recommends the legislature fund the development of a statewide teacher employment web application as a strategy to make finding and applying for jobs easier for potential teacher candidates, to address district hiring challenges for hard-to-staff areas, and to provide real-time data on teacher vacancies and availability across the state. The web application could allow school systems to take advantage of centralized and streamlined recruitment of teachers from across the state, from other states, and from preparation programs. Additionally, it could allow teachers to easily identify employment opportunities and apply for positions with a common application.

For the job board to support school systems and reduce duplicative efforts, the application must be compatible with school systems’ hiring platforms.

The lack of statewide data on teacher vacancies means state and local decision-makers do not have the full picture, making it more challenging to implement targeted recruitment efforts.

Training and Support

In addition to compensation, there is a need for specialized training and support at each stage of a teacher's professional career trajectory: pre-service training, early career induction, in-service coaching, and teacher leadership training and development to support teacher retention and effectiveness. Scaling high-retention pathways designed for strong educator support, such as Grow Your Own (GYO) and paid teacher residencies, in addition to ensuring climates of support and development through mentorship and teacher leadership opportunities are ways to ensure teacher efficacy and student achievement and increase teacher retention (Kini, 2022).

The TVTF has prioritized recommendations to improve the pipeline and pre-service preparation of novice teachers, provide leadership opportunities to teachers within their roles, and provide high-quality instructional materials to teachers. The following recommendations aim to balance the need for high-quality training and leadership opportunities, while also providing the necessary time and compensation for teachers to engage in these opportunities.

"A new teacher who is well prepared brings enthusiasm and fresh ideas into a district, energizing his or her classroom, grade level and school. We are lucky to have many of these superstars entering our schools each year. However, teacher preparation is inconsistent across our state, and not all teacher candidates receive training in the skills they need...We must expect more consistency in our preparation programs, and we need to support and fund the mentors who are filling the gaps. In addition, programs like year-long residencies and Grow Your Own will improve preparation by allowing novice teachers to learn alongside master teachers." – Middle School Teacher (TVTF)

Theme 4: Improve the Pipeline and Pre-Service Preparation of Novice Teachers

First-year teachers serve at least half a million Texas students annually, which is roughly equivalent to the overall student population in states like Connecticut and Nevada (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). The students in these classrooms are more likely to be economically disadvantaged and students of color. Furthermore, these novice teachers achieve less academic growth with students than more experienced teachers (TEA, 2022).

In the 2021-2022 school year, approximately 40 percent of newly hired teachers came from alternative certification programs or were not certified, and data shows that these less prepared teachers are more likely to leave the profession. In fact, based on TEA analysis of teacher retention data, if teachers prepared in alternative certification programs were retained at the same rate as teachers prepared in traditional programs, over 3,700 fewer new teachers would have been needed last year (TEA, 2022).

Due to the impact preparation has on teacher efficacy, the TVTF has prioritized recommendations for quality preparation.

“Experience is a hard, but effective teacher. Learning by doing is an excellent model, allowing real world experience with an experienced teacher guiding. I love that we are looking at alternative and more effective ways to train our future teachers.” - Elementary Teacher (TVTF)

Talent Pipeline Recommendation A: Expand high-quality Grow Your Own (GYO) pathways for high school students and paraprofessionals seeking to become certified teachers

There is an untapped pipeline of new teachers within local communities, including those who have served for many years as paraprofessionals in the school system. Additionally, there are opportunities to build interest in teaching among high school students through improved access to Education and Training Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses that promote teaching as a profession. Currently, these Education and Training courses are not equally available across the state, and the translation of credits from these courses to higher education is not consistent.

The TVTF recommends that the legislature consider increasing funding to scale high-quality GYO pathways for secondary students and paraprofessionals to become certified teachers. This could reinforce the training and ongoing support of school systems, with community colleges, higher education, and educator preparation program partners, in the design and implementation of pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs. The pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs could include pathways for high school students engaged in Education and Training courses and the upskilling of district employees and community members. These apprenticeship programs could also gain access to federal and local workforce funds through formal registration with the Department of Labor.

Theme 7 Connection: Strategic staffing technical assistance could help school systems design staffing models that allow paraprofessionals to remain in their role while they complete their certification requirements with an educator preparation program.

Talent Pipeline Recommendation B: Establish and fund a Teacher Residency pathway and expand Educator Preparation Program (EPP) capacity to produce teacher residents through technical assistance support

What is a Teacher Residency?

- A paid, year-long clinical training/co-teaching experience in a public K-12 classroom
- Residents are paired with an experienced, highly effective mentor teacher
- EPPs and school systems exercise shared ownership over the preparation, support, and success of the teacher resident
- Can take place in traditional, alternative, or post-baccalaureate certification routes

Research shows that teacher residency models increase teacher retention, effectively place teachers in hard-to-staff areas, and positively impact student outcomes (Rosenberg & Hawley Miles, 2018). In a Texas Tech University study that compared the students of those who were prepared through a residency between 2016–2019 to the students of teachers prepared through other pathways, the study found that residencies improve overall teacher efficacy, as well as the rate at which teachers improve (Texas Tech University, 2022). Nationally, studies of teacher residency programs consistently point to high retention rates of their graduates, ranging from 80-90 percent in the same district after three years and 70-80 percent after five years (Guha, Hyler, & Darling-Hammond, 2016).

The TVTF recommends establishing and funding a paid Teacher Residency pathway. Limited income and debt are significant barriers to aspiring teachers becoming teacher residents, and paid residencies provide access (Dennis & DeMoss, 2021). The Teacher Residency pathway could incentivize school systems and EPPs to partner and offer high-quality residency preparation through funding for teacher resident salaries, tuition assistance for teacher residents, stipends for cooperating teachers, and funding to the school system and EPP to support residency implementation. With strong teacher preparation via a teacher residency model, a system could be built in which there were no more first-year teachers.

Additionally, the TVTF recommends expanding technical assistance support for EPPs to navigate both the technical components of teacher residency program design and strategies to identify and develop strong school system partners. Technical assistance could support more EPPs in developing strong residency programs that include a yearlong clinical teaching experience, performance gates to demonstrate candidate readiness, a PK-12 partnership that prioritizes data driven decision-making, an EPP curriculum that reflects integration of high-quality instructional materials, and evidence of strong coaching and development of teacher candidates and cooperating teachers.

Theme 1 Connection: Teachers certified via Teacher Residency could receive compensation based on prior experience.

Theme 4 Connection: Technical assistance provided to EPPs could support them in implementing and scaling residency models.

Theme 5 Connection: Training and support for strong cooperating teacher and mentoring practices would better enable these systems.

Theme 5: Expand Training and Support for Teacher Mentorship and Teacher Leadership Opportunities

Research shows that mentor teachers are one of the most influential factors in a teacher candidate's development during their clinical experience (Goldhaber, Krieg, & Theobald, 2020). Additionally, research shows that outcomes of first year teachers paired with a quality mentor teacher were comparable to those of a third-year teacher previously paired with an average mentor (Goldhaber, Krieg, Theobald, 2018). Ensuring instructionally driven, job-embedded, and research-based mentorship is a top priority of the TVTF as well as providing training and support for cooperating teachers.

In addition to mentorship, The TVTF also recommends support for the expansion of teacher leadership opportunities, recognizing the impact teacher leadership has on both retention and student outcomes.

Teacher Leadership Recommendation A: Develop cooperating teacher and mentor teacher training that is job-embedded and leverages research-based best practices

The TVTF recommends the development of a statewide training for cooperating teachers (teachers who host student teachers in their classrooms) and mentor teachers (teachers who support and coach first and second year classroom teachers) to ensure quality mentorship. The statewide training would support consistent development of research-based best practices in cooperating teacher support and mentorship along with providing ongoing job-embedded supports, while allowing for district-specific customization to meet local needs.

Theme 4 Connection: High-quality training for cooperating teachers could support strong implementation of the Teacher Residency pathway.

Theme 5 Connection: The statewide training could be a required component of the Mentor Program Allotment.

Teacher Leadership Recommendation B: Increase funding for and scale of the Mentor Program Allotment, established by the 86th Texas Legislature

The Mentor Program Allotment (MPA) was established by HB 3 in the 86th Texas Legislature to provide high-quality mentor programs for beginning teachers. Through the MPA, beginning teachers are assigned a mentor who is a highly effective teacher and, to the extent practicable, teaches in the same subject and school. All mentors assigned to a beginning teacher through the MPA must complete a commissioner-approved and research-based mentor training program based on mentorship best practices.

The current allotment is limited to \$1.65 million per year. Over its first three years, the MPA has supported about 3,300 beginning teachers. In the current cycle, roughly 1,000 beginning teachers are supported. Texas has approximately 30,000 first- and second-year teachers statewide annually.

The TVTF recommends that funding be increased to scale the MPA and increase the number of beginning teachers receiving quality mentorship each year.

Theme 7 Connection: Technical assistance with staffing and scheduling could support with time release for mentors and sustainable funding of mentor roles.

Mentorship and Teacher Leadership Recommendation C: Provide opportunities and technical assistance to school systems to create and expand teacher leadership roles

Teacher leadership is tied to increased teacher retention, and many teachers have an interest in formal leadership roles that allow them to lead from the classroom (National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, 2018) However, teachers also express the importance of release models and intentional scheduling for these leadership opportunities to ensure that they can reasonably be completed within a 40-hour work week.

The TVTF recommends technical assistance to create and expand opportunities for teachers to further impact student outcomes through formal leadership roles. The technical assistance could support the creation and scheduling of teacher leadership roles along with training and support for teacher leaders.

In addition to district-level teacher leadership roles, state-level fellowships, such as the Teacher Leadership Fellowship, allow teachers the opportunity to provide feedback to TEA. While there are opportunities for teacher voice across the state, teachers may not always be aware of these opportunities. To increase awareness, TEA should create a landing page on the website dedicated to sharing statewide opportunities for teachers to have input in decisions.

Theme 7 Connection: Funding for strategic staffing technical assistance could support the design and implementation of staffing models and financial support to compensate and provide time for teacher leadership roles.

Theme 6: Provide Access to and Support for High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM)

What are High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM)?

- HQIM are designed to cover 100 percent of the standards in a particular grade and subject for the full year and include: a comprehensive set of rigorous course-level materials, teacher-facing unit materials, teacher-facing lesson materials, and student-facing materials.
- HQIM include:
 - Full coverage of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)
 - Evidence-based practices in relevant content area
 - Supports for all learners, including students with disabilities, emergent bilingual, and students identified as gifted and talented
 - Frequent progress monitoring through embedded and aligned assessments
 - Implementation supports for teachers

Increased access to HQIM is a critical support for both teachers and students. Teachers report spending 7-12 hours per week searching for instructional materials (Chan, 2022) and another 5 hours per week creating instructional materials from scratch. Teachers also report being given only 3 hours and 45 minutes per week on average to plan (NCTQ, 2016). Across the state, not all teachers have access to HQIM.

Additionally, novice teachers are not consistently provided with pre-service instruction on how to implement HQIM. In connection with pre-service preparation, only 8 percent of teachers on a 2022 RAND survey indicate that their preparation program prepared them to use and modify provided curriculum, with 43 percent of teachers stating that their preparation programs only focused on how to develop lesson and unit plans (RAND, 2022).

The TVTF recommends the following related to awareness, access, training, and support for HQIM implementation.

HQIM Recommendation A: Expand awareness of and access to HQIM to reduce time teachers spend searching for and creating materials.

HQIM access reduces the amount of time teachers spend searching for and curating materials, and with support for implementation, HQIM leads to improved outcomes for students by ensuring consistent access to aligned grade-level content (TNTP, 2018). Furthermore, 25 percent of the market share of elementary Reading/Language Arts instructional materials are not approved by the State Board of Education (SBOE) and are not aligned with the science of teaching reading. Additionally, 10 percent of school systems report that they do not have instructional materials to cover all the TEKS (TEA, 2022).

The TVTF recommends that HQIM be made readily available to all teachers in all content areas.

Theme 7 Connection: Scheduling support for school systems could help ensure time for HQIM lesson internalization is built into the master schedule.

HQIM Recommendations B: Require Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) to integrate instruction on understanding HQIM into coursework and provide training for EPP faculty/staff on curriculum and assessment literacy best practices

Strong partnerships between EPPs and school systems that include alignment of practices are critical to ensuring the success of novice teachers (Luczak, Vaishnav, & Horwath, 2016). In support of stronger partnerships, EPPs should include coursework and training on understanding HQIM, curriculum literacy, and assessment literacy. Curriculum literacy and assessment literacy best practices include instruction for teachers on how to identify the elements of strong curriculum and assessments and remedy weaknesses in materials when they exist, as well as best practices for internalizing and implementing curriculum and assessments as a mechanism for increasing teacher content knowledge and ensuring consistently rigorous instruction for students (Learning First, 2018). To support EPPs with this, training could be made available to EPPs related to instructional materials, and technical assistance support could be provided to support the incorporation of HQIM into EPP program design.

“I went to school to become a teacher. All my coursework and training taught me how to write lesson plans. Now, as a first-year teacher I am having to relearn. I wish my school would have prepared me to internalize and implement high-quality instructional material.” - Elementary Teacher (TVTF Input Survey)

Working Conditions

Research shows a strong connection between working conditions and teacher attrition (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018).

Based on the TVTF survey of teachers, unsustainable workloads are negatively impacting teachers and are the number one issue cited by those who recently left the profession. In addition to increasing workloads, teachers cited campus morale, discipline, and lack of adequate mental health support as contributing factors to workplace stress (TEA, 2022).

Within working conditions, recommendations are focused on valuing teacher time and ensuring discipline support.

“As an educator motivated to do the best possible job for my students, I often find myself working twelve-hour days and most weekends...Today, in too many schools to count, teachers are not given sufficient time to do what they were hired to do: teach. Conducting a teacher time study to better understand the magnitude of both instructional and non-instructional tasks teachers are called to complete will better empower decision-makers to create and protect the time provided to teachers to do the important work proven to contribute to student success: collaborating with peers, lesson planning, and providing meaningful feedback to students. Incorporating strategic staffing models and establishing scheduling assistance will empower all districts, no matter the size, to create meaningful changes to their school day that will maximize the time teachers have to do their work *at work*. - High School Teacher (TVTF)

Theme 7: Demonstrate Respect and Value for Teacher Time

In addition to teaching students, teachers are responsible for other tasks such as finding instructional materials, meeting with parents, completing paperwork, analyzing data, making copies, and attending meetings and professional development. These are just some of the expectations teachers report as contributing to a work week that is well above a standard 40-hour work week.

To make teaching more sustainable with manageable workloads, the TVTF recommends the following.

“Teachers are expected to do an extreme amount of things in a short amount of time. We are not only planning and teaching kids, we are filling out endless paperwork, completing classes to better our teaching, several meetings a week during our “planning time,” and many more things. All that leaves us very little time to actually plan and prep activities for the kids. Admin wants memorable lessons, which I agree, but we are never given the time to plan those.” - Elementary Teacher (TVTF Input Survey)

“I work at least one day every weekend. I grade papers at night. One 45-minute planning period is not enough time to prep for three different classes (one of which is college-level with no additional pay), grade papers, call parents...I love teaching, but if things do not change, I will be looking for another job. I have been teaching for 15 years, but this lifestyle is not sustainable for me or my family.” - High School Teacher (TVTF Input Survey)

Teacher Time Recommendation A: Develop and conduct teacher time studies with school systems to inform staffing and scheduling policies and decisions

To fully understand all that is required of teachers, the legislature should fund a time study to examine all duties of a teacher with the intended outcome to better streamline teacher tasks. The TVTF recommends that technical assistance be provided to school systems to ensure time studies are conducted in a way that do not add to the already overburdened teacher and are helpful for school administrators to understand and use the results to make immediate and longer-term changes at the local level.

Ensuring that the time study results are utilized to adjust schedules and duties to ensure the job requirements imposed on teachers can be reasonably accomplished in a normal 40-hour work week is essential. Additionally, the TEA should make findings and best practices from the time studies publicly available to inform statewide policies and programs.

The TVTF recommends that other positions in schools, such as counselors and administrators, also be included within the time study, recognizing that school administrators also report unsustainable workloads (Steiner, et al., 2022).

“Teaching is like 2 full time jobs. At school you teach and support students. At home you answer emails, grade, plan, and analyze data. Each year districts add more and more to the plates of teachers with minimal pay increase. There is no such thing as balance...This is a crisis. What will we do with the children, the future, when there are not enough teachers to teach?” - Recently Resigned Teacher (TVTF Input Survey)

Theme 3 Connection: Teachers in hard-to-staff areas should be included in the teacher time studies.

Teacher Time Recommendation B: Provide technical assistance to school administrators to redesign master schedules that increase teacher time for planning and development

In most higher performing countries, teachers are in front of students between 3-4 hours per day, compared to an average of 6 hours in the U.S. (OECD, 2014). For example, teachers in South Korea, Japan and Singapore only spend 35 percent of their working time teaching students which allows for additional planning time and collaboration (Darling-Hammond, Wei, & Andree, 2010). Examples of innovative master schedules, both nationally and in Texas, increase time for collaborative planning (Benner & Partelow, 2017).

The legislature should consider funding the development of a technical assistance network to provide support to school administrators on designing strategic schedules that focus on reducing non-instructional tasks and maximize time on high-leverage instructional tasks such as peer-to-peer collaboration, lesson internalization, and data analysis. Additionally, reimagined master schedules could allow for required training, such as Reading Academies, to be incorporated into the school day.

Theme 6 Connection: Support with scheduling could better enable school systems to establish daily schedules that allow for additional teacher time to work with and internalize HQIM.

“This is another KEY in teacher retention. School district scheduling has been in a time warp, frozen solid for too long. They should build master schedules with imagination...” - Elementary Teacher (TVTF)

“Currently, I am on an ELA team with phenomenal colleagues who each bring something different to the table. Within the next month alone, our little team will be involved in sponsoring Student Council meetings, organizing a school-wide dance, coaching cheer, planning a pep rally, dancing in that pep rally, planning cheer tryouts, preparing students for a district-wide test, writing curriculum, and brainstorming new and creative ways to engage our families and communities. These are just the activities that have already found a space on the calendar! So, when do we plan? The short answer is that we don't. Essentially, without common planning periods, there really is no time to plan within our contracted work hours. Without dedicated planning times, there is limited collaboration. We must have common planning time built into the schedule in order to be effective.” - Middle School Teacher (TVTF)

Teacher Time Recommendation C: Expand training and technical assistance supports for school systems to design and implement strategic staffing models

Strategic staffing focuses on school systems making staffing decisions driven by their immediate and long-term instructional needs. Strategic staffing models are often designed to address teacher pipeline and retention challenges as well as address issues of teacher workload and time. For example, with many schools struggling to find substitutes, experienced teachers have been left to take on additional

workloads, with the potential negative impact on student outcomes and school culture. A case study of the partnership between Socorro ISD and the University of Texas El Paso (UTEP), in which teacher residents served as substitutes once per week, demonstrates how strategic staffing can effectively meet local staffing needs (US Prep, n.d.).

To support school systems with developing strategic staffing models, TEA could support the expansion of strategic staffing assistance and fund additional district and EPP partners to receive design and implementation training and support. School systems should consider incorporating strategic staffing models into their overall strategic talent planning.

Theme 1 Connection: Strategic staffing models can support the reallocation of underutilized, existing school system dollars that can also support strategic compensation efforts.

Theme 4 Connection: Strategic staffing technical assistance would support school systems in providing additional sources of funds to pay teacher resident salaries.

Theme 5 Connection: Strategic staffing technical assistance supports school systems in establishing staffing models that would allow for effective implementation of teacher leadership and mentorship practices, including release time, and provide funding for stipends.

Theme 8: Ensure Schoolwide Culture and Discipline Supports

When asked about workplace challenges, teachers have cited student behavior, lack of resources, and ineffective discipline support from administrators as factors contributing to workplace stress, and nearly 50 percent of teachers cite discipline as a top concern (TEA, 2022). To address working condition concerns related to discipline, the TVTF proposes proactive supports such as increased access to additional counseling staff, services, and partnerships for both students and teachers as well as training and support for school administrators in developing a positive learning environment as well as additional ongoing discipline supports.

Discipline Supports Recommendation A: Expand access to additional counseling staff, services, and partnerships that support both students and teachers

National professional associations recommend a student-to-school counselor ratio of 250:1 (ASCA, 2022), and Texas is currently at 390:1 (PEIMS, 22). Without adequate support for students, teachers lose instructional time to provide students support with non-academic needs.

The TVTF recommends expanded access to additional counseling staff, services, and partnerships to ensure that student needs are addressed proactively so that teachers can focus on teaching.

Theme 2 Connection: Counseling services could be provided to teachers within overall benefits packages.

“I teach 2nd grade. I have kids cry every single day. Many. Often. I’ve taught 2nd grade for a decade. I have the number of students crying in a week that used to cry in a year. My kids have never had a normal school year. They are experiencing severe emotional and social repercussions from the pandemic, and that affects behavior, which is not good at all. It’s immature, it’s often, and it’s impeding learning. I feel like a correctional officer most days. Or a therapist. And I cannot do it anymore.” - Elementary Teacher (TVTF Input Survey)

Discipline Supports Recommendation B: Provide preparation, training, and ongoing coaching for school administrators on best practices related to school discipline and fostering a supportive learning environment

Research shows a connection between poor discipline practices at the school level and overall teacher attrition rates (Guarina, Santibanez, Daley, & Brewer, 2004). Additionally, research also connects strong leadership and positive school culture to teacher retention (Urlick, 2016).

The TVTF recommends preparation, training, and ongoing support for school administrators on best practices related to school discipline and fostering a supportive learning environment. This could be done through leveraging and expanding research-based initiatives such as Texas Instructional Leadership (TIL) which explicitly trains school teams, comprised of school system administrators, campus administrators and teacher leaders, on how to develop and implement schoolwide culture routines through intentional planning and ongoing coaching. Furthermore, this support equips principal

managers to coach and develop school leaders in both instructional leadership and school culture, including discipline support.

Additionally, high-quality principal preparation models, such as principal residencies, which provide aspiring principals with the opportunity to lead alongside an exemplary principal and provides training and support related to school culture could be expanded to ensure the effectiveness of novice principals, specifically regarding discipline supports and the learning environment.

Theme 1 Connection: School systems could be more strategic in retaining effective principals through considering strategic compensation.

Theme 4 Connection: Novice teachers need quality preparation and training for fostering a supportive learning environment within the classroom. This training is explicitly embedded within the residency model.

Theme 5 Connection: Existing programs such as TIL leverage formal teacher leadership roles and include teachers in meaningful decision-making at the campus level.

Conclusion

Strong student outcomes and a qualified future Texas workforce are not possible without effective teachers. During the past year, the TVTF engaged teachers, district representatives, and other key stakeholders to determine the highest leverage opportunities to reduce teacher vacancies in the state. The group determined that increasing compensation, strengthening training and support, and improving working conditions would significantly improve the recruitment and retention of Texas teachers. The Texas legislature, the TEA, and school systems should prioritize enacting and fully funding these recommendations to ensure that every Texas school is staffed with effective, supportive, and committed teachers. By increasing the quantity and effectiveness of the largest teacher labor market in the country, Texas takes a necessary step toward providing every student a high-quality education, while simultaneously providing a blueprint for other states to address teacher vacancies.

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Appendix A: Best Practice Recommendations for School Systems

Compensation Best Practice Recommendations for School Systems

- Prioritize teacher compensation with any state funding increases.
- Consider ways to shift from traditional experience-based salary schedule to strategic compensation pay based on teacher effectiveness, roles, and responsibilities.
- Ensure the total compensation package is competitive, addresses school system priorities and incentivizes impactful teachers to work in high-needs areas.
- Provide clear communication around salaries and include salary calculations for teachers with over 20 years of experience.
- Include other roles, such as school leaders, in overall strategic compensation planning.
- Survey teachers to determine healthcare needs and priorities for total compensation packages.
- Consider how much above the state minimum district contribution can be spent to reduce teacher premiums.
- Work with other school systems to obtain the best healthcare plans with lower premium amounts.
- Offer teacher wellbeing and mental health assistance in the form of counseling, access to mental health professionals, and additional leave options.
- Partner with childcare providers to provide options for children of teachers.
- Implement exit surveys and evaluate the results to inform retention and re-recruitment strategies.
- Conduct an analysis of employee certifications to identify teachers with Bilingual or Special Education certifications not serving in those settings and provide incentives, as appropriate, for teachers to move into those positions.
- Streamline applications for returning teachers.
- Provide specialized induction training and support for teachers returning to the profession.

Training and Support Best Practice Recommendations for School Systems

- Assess options for residency preparation programs that serve their regions and evaluate their capacity for establishing or growing partnerships.
- Engage in strategic staffing efforts to support implementation of sustainable residency models.
- Consider ways to increase access to High School Education and Training courses, including local opportunities for incentives and stipends for course instructors and students.
- Consider hiring high school graduates as educational aides or paraprofessionals while they complete their bachelor's degree and teacher certification and then hiring them as teachers of record.
- Ensure opportunities for formal teacher leadership roles and teacher representation on district-level committees.
- Develop an overall talent strategy that includes development of readiness competencies for mentor teachers, cooperating teachers, and teacher leader roles.

- Implement transparent and consistent processes for the recruitment and selection of teachers for mentor teacher and other teacher leader roles, including consideration of teacher’s impact on student outcomes and their disposition towards coaching and support of others.
- Utilize teachers with a local designation as preferred candidates for teacher leadership roles in school systems engaged in TIA.
- Consider the commitment of personnel and local funds to support the planning and implementation of teacher leader initiatives.
- Create opportunities for teacher input through creating district-level advisory committees and ensuring frequent and regular opportunities for teacher input.

Working Conditions Best Practice Recommendations for School Systems

- Ensure teachers have access to HQIM and support for implementation, including time built-into the schedule for lesson internalization
- Create opportunities for teacher voice in the creation of district calendars and school schedules
- Protect and expand the required 450 minutes of planning time guaranteed to teachers in statute
- Examine the number of preps teachers have and develop innovative staffing solutions to reduce that number
- Ensure teachers have time built in the schedule for collaborative planning time with peers teaching the same grade-level and content
- Remove “other duties as assigned” language from teacher job descriptions Leverage community partners to assist with reducing non-instructional tasks such as making copies, duties (arrival, dismissal, lunch), coordinating community events, etc.

Appendix B: Teacher Vacancy Task Force Member Biographies

All Teacher Vacancy Task Force member biographies can be found at tea.texas.gov/tvtf.

Appendix C: Teacher Vacancy Task Force Website

All Teacher Vacancy Task Force information can be found at tea.texas.gov/tvtf. All meeting materials from the six TVTF meetings are posted to the website, including pre-work, meeting notes, and presentations. Additionally, the research, reports, surveys, and case studies that the TVTF used to create the recommendations can be found on the website.