

February 19th, 2018

Dr. Katy Anthes, Ph.D.
Commissioner

Colorado Department of Education
201 East Colfax Ave.
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Commissioner Anthes:

We are reaching out to share our initial findings from a recent Teach Plus survey in response to the *Colorado Teacher Shortages: Attracting and Retaining Excellent Educators*. The report, written by the Colorado Department of Higher Education and the Colorado Department of Education, includes a "Strategic Action Plan" that lists strategies to recruit and retain excellent educators in Colorado. Each strategy is tagged with an estimated or relative cost.

In our survey, we asked teachers to identify their level of support for each strategy and to indicate the top strategy under each cost category (see attached list) they believed would be most effective. More than 300 teachers from across the state participated in the survey. The following survey results are listed in the order of cost and of the top options chosen by teachers from the list laid out in the report.

High Cost Options (\$\$\$\$) out of 11 options

1. Offer student loan forgiveness (23%)
2. Consider state salary equalization aid to incentivize districts to voluntarily raise minimum teacher and early child care provider salaries and wages. (22%)

Moderate/High Cost Options (\$\$\$) out of 11 options

1. Provide districts funding to increase paraprofessional support for teachers and students (17%)
2. Support teacher national board certification to encourage remaining in the classroom, professional recognition, career and leadership advancement, and increased salary and compensation. (13%)
3. Produce reduced teaching loads for novice teachers. (13%)

Moderate Cost Options (\$\$) out of 3 options

1. Provide improved educational leadership preparation and professional development to assist in creating school and district cultures that support educators. (54%)
2. Provide financial support to prospective education majors through licensure exam fee waivers. (32%)

Non Cost Options (\$0) out of 8 options

1. Align educator preparation program content and endorsements with the needs and expectations of school districts. (25%)
2. Prepare teacher candidates for teaching and living in geographically and socioeconomically diverse areas, e.g., remote rural, urban, and suburban. (19%)

We are currently in the process of further analyzing the survey results. Once the analysis is complete, we will provide detailed policy recommendations on the recruitment and retention of excellent teachers in Colorado.

We look forward to working with you on this important issue, and to answering any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Armstrong 4th Grade Teacher, Adams 12 School District

Mary Hulac 8th Grade Teacher, Greeley Public Schools

Nathan Pearsall High School Teacher, Falcon School District 49

Jennifer Wiggins 5th Grade Teacher, Denver Public Schools

Mark Sass, Colorado State Policy Director

720-345-9670

msass@teachplus.org

High Cost (\$\$\$\$)

1. Offer student loan forgiveness. (23%)
2. Consider state salary equalization aid to incentivize districts to voluntarily raise minimum teacher and early child care provider salaries and wages. (22%)
3. Consider implementing a differentiated pay scale for teachers in low-income districts and schools teaching in shortage areas. (9%)
4. Provide supplemental compensation for teachers working in hard-to-staff schools (particularly remote rural schools). (10%)
5. Increase the number of teachers trained through traditional and alternative educator preparation programs that include teacher residencies and grow your own programs. (8%)
6. Explore the possibility of minimum teacher and early child care provider salaries. (7%)
7. Offer scholarships that attract teachers of color to complete licensure requirements and enter teaching. (6%)
8. Offer housing incentives. (6%)
9. Institute tax credits for early child care providers and education professionals. (4%)
10. Offer scholarships for content teacher shortage areas to complete licensure requirements and enter teaching. (3%)
11. Establish subsidies for early child care and education businesses to increase the salaries and wages of early child care providers. (2%)

Moderate/High Cost (\$\$\$)

1. Provide districts funding to increase paraprofessional support for teachers and students (17%)
2. Support teacher national board certification to encourage remaining in the classroom, professional recognition, career and leadership advancement, and increased salary and compensation (13%)
3. Provide reduced teaching loads for novice teachers (13%)
4. Provide financial support to teacher candidates through student teaching stipends. (10%)
5. Provide reduced teaching loads for mentor teachers to work more strategically with novice teachers (9%)
6. Support peer review and mentorship as an advancement opportunity for distinguished teachers (9%)
7. Allow retired teachers to re-enter the profession in rural, suburban, and urban districts. (8%)
8. Provide improved educational leadership preparation and professional development to assist principals in creating positive school climate and culture (7%)
9. Provide transportation and technology stipends for rural teachers and student teachers placed in rural schools (5%)
10. Create and provide funding for districts to provide teacher induction programs for initial licensed teachers. (4%)
11. Develop and fund statewide competitive grant programs to support professional development and recognition for educators. (3%)

Moderate Cost (\$\$)

1. Provide improved educational leadership preparation and professional development to assist in creating school and district cultures that support educators. (54%)
2. Provide financial support to prospective education majors through licensure exam fee waivers. (32%)
3. Provide incentives for early notification of retirement to facilitate accurate projections. (14%)

Non Cost (\$0)

1. Align educator preparation program content and endorsements with the needs and expectations of school districts. (25%)
2. Prepare teacher candidates for teaching and living in geographically and socio-economically diverse areas, e.g., rural, remote rural, urban, and suburban. (19%)
3. Waive student teaching practicum employment restrictions for teacher candidates in good academic and dispositional standing. (16%)
4. Align student teaching practicums with anticipated district teacher position openings. (12)
5. Cultivate partnerships with in-state and out-of-state educator preparation programs based on hiring projections. (8%)
6. Forge public and private partnerships to develop a marketing campaign. (7%)
7. Create educator preparation program policies that require teaching methodology course practicums in geographically diverse districts over the course of the program. (6%)
8. Expedite approval of targeted programs for traditional and alternative educator preparation programs in content shortage areas. (6%)