

State Action on Teacher Recruitment and Retention: Missouri Takes the Lead

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The Community Training and Assistance Center is a national not-for-profit organization with a demonstrated record of success in the fields of education and community development. CTAC builds district, state, and community capacity by providing technical assistance, conducting research and evaluation, and informing public policy. It focuses on developing leadership, planning and managerial expertise within school systems, community-based organizations, collaborative partnerships, state and municipal governments, and health and human service agencies. Since 1979, CTAC has provided assistance to hundreds of public institutions, community-based organizations, and coalitions in the United States and several other countries.

CTAC's staff is comprised of nationally recognized executives, educators, policy makers, researchers and organizers who have extensive experience working with city, county and state agencies, educational institutions, federal legislative bodies, not-for-profit organizations, philanthropic institutions and the private sector.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary 1

Chapter One: Introduction and Context 5

Chapter Two: Methodology 12

Chapter Three: LEA Teacher Recruitment (Grow Your Own) Grants 16

Chapter Four: LEA Teacher Retention Grants 33

Chapter Five: EPP/CC Teacher Recruitment Grants 50

Chapter Six: A State System for Teacher Recruitment and Retention 63

Chapter Seven: Teacher Recruitment and Retention Playbook 72

References 80

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) designated more than \$50 million in state reserve funds from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund to support the recruitment and retention of effective and diverse teachers. These Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grants were expended over the period of August 2021 through September 2024. The recipients of these Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grants included local education agencies (LEAs), educator preparation programs (EPPs), and community colleges (CCs). In collaboration with these key stakeholder groups, DESE's long-term goal is to build an exemplary state system for teacher recruitment and retention and ensure high-quality teachers for all students.

The Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC) was selected to conduct an independent evaluation of the implementation of the grants from April 2022 to August 2024. The Phase I evaluation (Liang & Slotnik, 2022a) built an initial understanding of the strategies selected by the grantees. The Phase II evaluation (Liang & Slotnik, 2022b) examined the early implementation of the grants. The Phase III evaluation (Liang & Slotnik, 2023) probed the impact of the grants. This Phase IV evaluation focuses on identifying successful strategies that can be used to inform the creation of a state system which continually addresses supply and demand issues in the Missouri teacher workforce.

The following research questions (RQs) guided the Phase IV evaluation:

- RQ1: To what extent did the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grants support grantees to recruit and retain teachers?
- RQ2: Which strategies are most effective in improving grantees' teacher recruitment and retention efforts? Which strategies are less effective?
- RQ3: What are the perspectives of LEA and EPP/CC lead contacts regarding a state system for teacher recruitment and retention?

Findings

LEA Teacher Recruitment (Grow Your Own) Grants

- In both 2023 and 2024, two out of three LEA lead contacts believe their Grow Your Own (GYO) grants contribute to improvement in their teacher recruitment efforts.
- Higher percentages of LEA lead contacts in 2024 than in 2022 indicate seeing indicators of success of their teacher recruitment grants.
- Compared to 2022, all quantitative measures on the effectiveness of the LEA GYO grants are higher in 2024.
- In both 2023 and 2024, nearly all LEA lead contacts believe their teacher recruitment strategies are very effective or somewhat effective.

- LEA lead contacts highlight the effectiveness of such teacher recruitment strategies as providing scholarships and dual credit/dual enrollment opportunities for students; and offering stipends to teachers for coordinating the recruitment activities.
- They also believe strong collaborations, financial resources, and support from the school community all contribute to the effectiveness of their strategies.
- Innovative teacher recruitment strategies include engaging current teachers in recruiting new teachers by offering referral bonuses; and providing teacher candidates with earlier/guaranteed interviews and new hires with extra steps on their salary schedule.

LEA Teacher Retention Grants

- In both 2023 and 2024, two out of three LEA lead contacts indicate their grants contribute to improvement in their teacher retention efforts.
- Higher percentages of lead contacts in 2024 than in 2023 or 2022 indicate seeing indicators of success of their teacher retention grants.
- While more LEA lead contacts indicate it is getting easier to retain teachers than those who believe it is getting more difficult, the majority of LEA lead contacts (67% in 2023 and 61% in 2024) indicate the level of difficulty has been about the same across the years.
- Quantitative data suggest the teacher retention grants are helping many LEAs retain teachers and reduce the number of vacant teaching positions.
- In both 2023 and 2024, most LEA lead contacts believe their teacher retention strategies are very effective or somewhat effective.
- LEA lead contacts highlight the effectiveness of providing or increasing stipends when teachers perform extra duties, and hiring additional substitute teachers, aides, or paraprofessionals.
- They also believe strong collaborations and financial resources, targeted to teacher-identified needs, contribute to the effectiveness of their strategies.
- Innovative teacher retention strategies include increasing teacher pay with enhanced salary schedules or rewarding teachers for staying with the district (e.g., longevity awards). Many LEAs provide non-financial support to teachers (e.g., childcare, four-day weeks).

EPP/CC Teacher Recruitment Grants

- In 2023, 62% of EPP lead contacts believed their grants contribute to improvement in their teacher recruitment efforts. In 2024, that percentage increased to 85%.
- In 2024, EPP lead contacts indicate they see success in collaborating with LEAs (90%), increasing interest in the teaching profession (85%), and building a larger teacher candidate pool (75%).
- Compared to 2022, higher percentages of EPP lead contacts in 2024 indicate observing success in recruiting male teacher candidates (35% vs. 70%).

- In both 2023 and 2024, many EPP/CC lead contacts believe their teacher recruitment strategies are very effective or somewhat effective.
- EPP lead contacts indicate providing students with scholarships for tuition or room and board is effective in teacher recruitment.
- EPP lead contacts believe strong collaborations, institutional support, funding for scholarships, and support from DESE/MTDS, all contribute to the effectiveness of their teacher recruitment strategies.
- EPP/CC lead contacts share their innovative teacher recruitment strategies, including engaging their current students in teacher recruitment and launching local campaigns to recruit teachers.

A State System for Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Lead contacts from LEAs, EPPs, and CCs share their perspectives regarding a state system for teacher recruitment and retention.

- Lead contacts underscore the need for a state system to elevate the status of the teaching profession.
- A state system for teacher recruitment and retention should place emphasis on collaboration among all stakeholders.
- There needs to be sustained funding for teacher recruitment and retention.
- There needs to be ongoing support, in response to teacher-identified needs, throughout a teacher’s career continuum.
- Principals’ participation in the Missouri Leadership Development System (MLDS) contributes to the recruitment and retention of teachers.
- A state system should, while maintaining high standards, provide more alternative routes to teacher certification.
- It is important to promote the sharing of innovative strategies and effective practices for teacher recruitment and retention.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention Playbook

Through the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grants, the DESE supported LEAs, EPPs, and CCs across the state to strengthen their existing strategies and experiment with innovative approaches for recruiting and retaining teachers.

Eight cornerstones of a playbook for a successful state system for teacher recruitment and retention emerge from this unprecedented financial investment in Missouri, extensive collaboration among the LEAs, EPPs, and CCs, and learnings from four phases of a comprehensive evaluation.

- Cornerstone #1: Effective teacher recruitment and retention requires the support of a state system.

- Cornerstone #2: Statewide campaigns are needed to elevate the teaching profession.
- Cornerstone #3: Effective teacher recruitment and retention requires collaboration and constituency building.
- Cornerstone #4: Funding is essential and must be targeted.
- Cornerstone #5: The tools of public policy need to be used strategically.
- Cornerstone #6: Funding and policy choices trigger decisions related to teacher development.
- Cornerstone #7: A state system needs to recognize the critical importance of teacher voice.
- Cornerstone #8: Teacher retention requires the alignment of three factors: recruitment, development, and compensation.

Summary

Missouri is growing in its ability to take on teacher recruitment and retention as a state system. Leaders are owning the responsibility to be hands-on in addressing recruitment and retention needs. With the SEA as the catalyst, the state's educational and governmental sectors are demonstrating their leadership commitment by aligning their expectations, investing both short-term federal resources and long-term state resources, and synchronizing their efforts to strengthen teacher recruitment and retention.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) designated more than \$50 million in state reserve funds from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund to support the recruitment and retention of effective and diverse teachers. These Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grants were expended over the period of August 2021 through September 2024. The recipients of these Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grants included local education agencies (LEAs), educator preparation programs (EPPs), and community colleges (CCs). In collaboration with these key stakeholder groups, DESE's long-term goal is to build an exemplary state system for teacher recruitment and retention and ensure high-quality teachers for all students.

The Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC) was selected to conduct an independent evaluation of the implementation of the grants from April 2022 to August 2024. The Phase I evaluation (Liang & Slotnik, 2022a) built an initial understanding of the strategies selected by the grantees. The Phase II evaluation (Liang & Slotnik, 2022b) examined the early implementation of the grants. The Phase III evaluation (Liang & Slotnik, 2023) probed the impact of the grants. This Phase IV evaluation focuses on identifying successful strategies that can be used to inform the creation of a state system which continually addresses supply and demand issues in the Missouri teacher workforce.

The Context

Teacher Shortage in the United States

There is a shortage of classroom teachers in the United States. There are an estimated 55,000 vacant full-time teaching positions across the nation (Loehrke, 2024). This crisis is particularly salient for districts serving large numbers of high-needs students (Jones, 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the teacher shortage problem. As an example, the teacher retention rate in Arkansas decreased by 5.3 percentage points from 79.7% in 2019–20 to 74.4% in 2022–23 (Camp et al., 2023). More effective teachers were also more likely to leave the profession post-pandemic compared to pre-pandemic (Camp et al., 2023).

The current state of the teaching profession is at or near its lowest level in 50 years (Kraft & Lyon, 2024). Teachers feel more negative than positive about their profession and are more dissatisfied with their job (Harwin & Baker, 2024; Redding & Nguyen, 2023). In addition, teachers reported worsening working conditions along many dimensions, including the level of classroom disruptions, student responsibility, and safety; and declines in trust among teachers and between teachers, principals, and parents (Baker & Kodel, 2024).

A steady decline in enrollment in colleges of education makes addressing the teacher shortage crisis more challenging. Between 2012–13 and 2019–20, the number of people enrolled in traditional teacher preparation programs decreased by 30%, and the number of people completing such programs decreased by 28% (St. George, 2023). A 2022 survey of freshmen and sophomores at a large public university (Christian et al., 2024) found that there is only a 6%

chance for an average student to become a teacher, and that earnings and job prestige are important influences in students' career choices.

According to a RAND report (Diliberti & Schwartz, 2023), by the end of 2021–22, teacher turnover increased four percentage points above pre-pandemic levels, reaching 10% nationally. The attrition rates were highest in urban districts, high-poverty districts, and districts serving predominately students of color.

Teacher Shortages in Missouri

Teacher shortages are a salient issue in the state of Missouri. From 2019–20 to 2022–23, according to the latest state teacher workforce data (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [DESE], 2024d), the overall in-profession¹ retention rate of all teachers decreased consecutively from 91.3% in 2019–20 to 88.2% in 2022–23 (a 3.1 percentage points decrease). Similarly, the overall in-district² retention rate of all teachers reduced from 88.3% to 82.8% (a 5.5 percentage points decrease).

In addition, while the percentage of male teachers has been stable over the years (21.5% from 2019–20 to 2022–23), the race/ethnicity data show Missouri's teacher workforce is getting somewhat more diverse. From 2019–20 to 2022–23, the percentage of White teachers decreased from 93.1% to 92.0%, and the percentage of Black teachers increased from 5.0% to 5.5%.

From 2019–20 to 2022–23, the state issued an increasing number of provisional/temporary teacher certificates (1,352, 1,395, 1,605, and 1,619, respectively). Also, large numbers of vacancies were filled with inappropriately certified teachers (DESE, 2024d).

State Investments in Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Missouri is supporting the efforts of LEAs and Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) to recruit and retain teachers. DESE invested more than \$50 million in state reserve funds from ESSER and established the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grant Program (DESE, 2021a). The state is also taking a multi-pronged approach to address challenges related to teacher shortages. This approach includes such initiatives as:

The Blue Ribbon Commission

The Teacher Recruitment and Retention Blue Ribbon Commission, formed by the Missouri State Board of Education, was charged with providing clear action steps and recommended policy changes to address teacher workforce challenges in Missouri. The Commission included business leaders, legislators, State Board of Education members, staff from the governor's office, a DESE representative, educators, and a school leader (DESE, n.d.-b).

In its Phase 1 recommendations related to teacher pay, the Commission identified a number of immediate, short-term, and long-term priorities (DESE, 2023c). As examples, the priorities

¹ In-profession teacher retention refers to a teacher that remains a teacher in a Missouri public/charter school from one year to the next regardless of which district (DESE, 2024).

² In-district teacher retention refers to a teacher that remains a teacher in the same district from one year to the next (DESE, 2024).

included raising the minimum starting teacher salary to \$38,000, prioritizing annual funding for the Career Ladder Program, establishing sustainable funding for district GYO programs, increasing support for teacher mental health, amending the state Constitution and the Teacher Tenure Act to allow teachers to receive salary supplements for working in subject shortage areas and high-needs schools, and providing additional pay for teachers with National Board Certification.

The Commission's Phase II recommendations, related to Climate and Culture for Teachers, fall into four categories: immediate support for classroom management, innovative models for reorganizing schools, master teaching certificate, and Missouri Leadership Development System expansion (DESE, 2023d).

Missouri Career Ladder Program

The Missouri Career Development and Teacher Excellence Plan (Career Ladder Program) was established by the Excellence in Education Act of 1985. Subject to annual appropriation, it is a voluntary performance pay matching program (DESE, 2024a).

In response to increased challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, including teacher shortage and severe staffing issues, Missouri reestablished in June 2022 the funding for the Career Ladder Program discontinued in 2010. The state appropriated \$37 million for 2022–23 and a total of 139 school districts participated. In 2023–24, 206 school districts participated in the program with \$32.3 million of state allocation and \$21.5 million of local contribution.

All public school districts are eligible to apply for the program. They can request up to 60% of the total supplemental salary amount consistent with the professional responsibilities and/or voluntary efforts required of each teacher at each step or stage of career advancement. The school district may establish a salary supplement up to \$1,500 for Career Stage I teachers, \$3,000 for Career Stage II teachers, and \$5,000 for Career Stage III teachers.

All full-time certified educators who have at least two years of public school teaching experience are eligible for the program. As examples, eligible teachers may be compensated for their responsibilities and volunteer efforts by providing students opportunities for enhanced learning experiences, remedial assistance, and various extended day/year activities; or participating in professional growth activities, including college classes, workshops, professional organization events, and mentoring.

The Career Ladder Program contributed to an increase in average teacher pay. It also helped to improve teacher morale and teacher retention. Teachers who participated in the Career Ladder Program in the 2023–24 school year had a 5.45% higher retention rate than the average of all teachers in school districts that were in the program in that year.

Teacher Baseline Salary Grants

This grant, subject to appropriation on an annual basis, supports LEAs in paying teaching staff a minimum annual salary threshold (DESE, 2024e). As part of the fiscal year 2025 state budget, LEAs that currently employ teachers making at least \$25,000 and less than \$40,000 per full-time

equivalent (FTE) can apply for grant funds to boost their teacher salary to a baseline amount of \$40,000, \$2,000 higher than the \$38,000 baseline amount in 2024. In the 2023–24 school year, the state provided these grant funds to more than 300 school districts and impacted the pay of more than 6,800 teachers at a cost of nearly \$18 million.

Grow Your Own Statewide Program

The Grow Your Own Grant Program. This competitive grant program supports LEAs to create or strengthen their GYO teacher recruitment programs (DESE, 2024b). A total of 125 districts/LEAs are selected to be awarded a \$10,000 grant. Eligible districts/LEAs need to demonstrate evidence of clear rationale in their grant application, including planning for sustainability of the teacher pipeline and stakeholder engagement in the pipeline process.

DEWEY (Developing an Educator Workforce that Expands Yearly) Awards. This program is intended to support efforts in developing and implementing innovative approaches to recruiting and retaining teacher candidates (DESE, 2024c). The 2024 DEWEY Awards will provide fifteen EPPs with \$70,000 and five two-year IHEs with \$45,000 each. Awardees will be chosen through a competitive process.

The Grow Your Own Network. Through this network, districts around the state have the opportunity to connect, learn, and grow together in regional meetings (DESE, n.d.-a).

Teacher Recruitment and Retention State Scholarship Program

Missouri legislators have been working on the funding for the Teacher Recruitment and Retention State Scholarship Program (Missouri Senate, 2024). The act provides scholarship funds that may be used to cover up to 100% of the cost of tuition, university-charged fees, and other costs directly associated with teacher preparation, as approved by DESE. The number of students who may receive a scholarship is increased from 100 to 200 in the 2025–26 academic year, with 20 more students being added in each subsequent year until 2030–31 and all subsequent academic years, when 300 students may receive scholarships.

To be eligible for a scholarship, recipients need to sign an agreement to student teach at, apply for, interview for, and accept a position, if offered, in a Missouri public school that is a hard-to-staff school; or to teach at least one hard-to-staff subject area in a Missouri public school; or both, for two years for every one year the recipient receives a scholarship.

DESE plans to continue to make it a priority to invest in education and the future of the state. As Dr. Karla Eslinger, Missouri’s Commissioner of Education, explains (Manley, 2024):

“It should not be on the backs of superintendents to figure out where it is that we’re going to get these dollars. It’s all of our responsibility to make sure we fund education at the level where we can have excellence, where we can really and truly recruit and retain.”

– Dr. Karla Eslinger

A Review of Emerging Research on Teacher Recruitment and Retention

A comprehensive review of 120 empirical studies around the globe on teacher recruitment and retention (See et al., 2020) showed that targeted money can encourage people to become teachers but does not necessarily keep them in the field. The targeted money needs to be large and competitive, but its effect is only short-term. The authors concluded that ongoing professional development and early career support could be promising approaches for retaining teachers in the profession.

A recent study (Candelaria et al., 2024) found increases in teacher salary are associated with decreases in teacher turnover. It was estimated that an increase of 1% in current and future base salary is associated with a 0.15 percentage point decline in turnover. Another recent study (Zamarro et al., 2024) examined the impact of Arkansas's LEARNS Act, which increased the state's minimum teacher salary from \$36,000 to \$50,000, guaranteed all teachers a minimum raise of \$2,000, and added flexibility allowing school districts to deviate from traditional seniority-based salary schedules. The authors found early indicators of success of the initiative (e.g., teachers less likely to transition to non-instructional roles; increased new teacher placement in geographic areas of shortage).

Providing sustained financial incentives helps to recruit and retain teachers in disadvantaged schools. A study on the Accelerating Campus Excellence Program in Dallas Independent School District (Morgan et al., 2023) found that by offering salary supplements to high-performing educators who are willing to work in disadvantaged schools, the program resulted in immediate and dramatic increases in student achievement. When the stipends were eliminated, however, many highly effective teachers left, and test scores fell.

A number of studies show teachers prefer to work close to where they grew up. Nationwide, 60% of teachers worked in schools within 20 miles of where they went to high school (Reininger, 2012). When teachers have to spend more time commuting to work, they are more likely to transfer to another school or leave the district (Santelli & Grissom, 2022). Also, individuals who were assigned to a Teach For America region in their home state taught, on average, for 0.15 years longer than those who were not assigned to their home state (Blaushild et al., 2023).

GYO programs emerged as a promising approach to increasing teacher supply and diversifying the teacher pipeline (Edwards & Kraft, 2024). A recent study (Blazar et al., 2024) found participating students in Maryland's GYO program (i.e., Teacher Academy of Maryland) were more likely to become teachers by 0.6 percentage points and the effects are strongest for White girls (1.4 percentage points) and Black girls (0.7 percentage points).

The four-day school week is also becoming increasingly common. Across the nation, almost 2,100 schools in nearly 900 districts across 25 states have four-day school weeks (Rahman, 2024). Initial studies show there are pros and cons to the four-day school week. One recent study (Camp, 2024) showed four-day week calendars may help retain teachers who otherwise would have moved to another school. Another study (Nowak et al., 2023), however, found switching to four-day school weeks in one metropolitan school district is associated with a 5%

decrease in teacher retention for experienced teachers. They also found 2–4% home price declines relative to surrounding districts and a 0.2 to 0.3 standard deviation decrease in student scores.

Research highlights the key role strong principal leadership plays in retaining teachers. A study on a large urban school district (Sartain & Estrera, 2023) found teachers are most likely to seek transfers away from schools with less-experienced principals and weaker leadership. The authors recommend school districts provide extra support and mentorship for principals to be equipped with the needed leadership skills.

Many states are responding to teacher shortages by relaxing their certification requirements (Will, 2022). One recent study (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2023) examined the role of the emergency teaching license in Massachusetts, which requires only a bachelor's degree. Their results showed emergency licenses increased the supply of teachers by providing an entry point for individuals who previously could not meet traditional licensure requirements, thereby expanding the pool of individuals interested in the profession. They also found teachers with an emergency license tend to obtain permanent licensure and remain in the profession. A related study (Chi et al., 2024) found newly hired emergency licensed teachers were largely rated as proficient and had similar measures of student test score growth as their traditionally licensed peers.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grants

The Missouri Teacher Recruitment and Retention Program supports the efforts of LEAs, EPPs, and CCs with three types of grants, described briefly below.

LEA Teacher Recruitment (Grow Your Own) Grants

The GYO Program in Missouri is designed to recruit and support local students and adults in their home districts to return, after college, to their communities as teachers who stay in the profession (Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2023; DESE, 2023a). As Dr. Margie Vandeven, Missouri's former Commissioner of Education, introduced (CCSSO, 2023):

“When we got the opportunity to invest, the very, very, very first big decision we made at the state level with the funding that we received was: Let's invest in our teachers: \$50 million in grant products so that we would really focus on GYO... We've gone from about 15% of our districts (offering) GYO to about 85%. So significant growth there.”

– Dr. Margie Vandeven

The grants provide LEAs with a fixed amount of \$10,000 to establish or expand their GYO programs. The funding can be used to support activities focusing on (a) partnerships; (b) recruitment and selection; (c) preparation and support; and (d) evaluation (DESE, 2022).

LEA Teacher Retention Grants

The Teacher Retention Grants support LEAs in implementing research-based, proven strategies for improving their teacher retention efforts. The maximum grant amount is based on the LEA's teacher count, coupled with a per teacher allocation. This allocation is a function of an LEA's priority level, which is determined by the average percentages of students in poverty (i.e., Free and Reduced Priced Lunch) and of students of color (DESE, 2022).

EPP/CC Teacher Recruitment Grants

Recognizing the key roles EPPs and CCs play in the teacher development pipeline, DESE awards grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$40,000 to eligible EPPs and CCs for recruiting teacher candidates. EPPs and CCs can use the funds for activities in the areas of (a) partnerships; (b) recruitment and selection; (c) preparation and support; and (d) evaluation (DESE, 2021a).

Support from the Missouri Teacher Development System

In addition to financial resources, DESE provides the grantees with support on a regional basis through the Missouri Teacher Development System (MTDS). Serving as a resource to the grantees, MTDS representatives review and monitor grants, and provide technical assistance on the implementation of the grants (DESE, 2021a, 2022).

Overview of the Report

The remainder of this report is organized as follows. Chapter Two presents the methodology of the Phase IV evaluation. Chapters Three through Five present the findings on, respectively, LEA Teacher Recruitment (GYO) Grants, LEA Teacher Retention Grants, and EPP/CC Teacher Recruitment Grants. Chapter Six describes perspectives of LEA and EPP/CC lead contacts regarding a state system for teacher recruitment and retention. Chapter Seven provides a playbook with eight cornerstones for such a state system.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

CTAC used a mixed-methods approach for the Phase IV evaluation. The multiple sources of data included (a) statewide surveys of LEA, EPP, and CC lead contacts; (b) interviews with select LEA and EPP lead contacts, LEA administrators, human resource directors, principals, teachers, students, and state teacher association leaders; (c) grantee-provided data and state data; and (d) a review of literature and artifacts.

Research Questions

The following research questions (RQs) guided the Phase IV evaluation:

- RQ1: To what extent did the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grants support grantees to recruit and retain teachers?
- RQ2: Which strategies are most effective in improving grantees' teacher recruitment and retention efforts? Which strategies are less effective?
- RQ3: What are the perspectives of LEA and EPP/CC lead contacts regarding a state system for teacher recruitment and retention?

CTAC's evaluation in Phase IV was summative, examining the full implementation and impact of the recruitment and retention grants in order to use the evidence to support the building of a strong statewide system. Therefore, each question looked at both what has occurred in the final year of the grants as well as across the duration of the entire grant program.

Data Collection

LEA, EPP, and CC Lead Contact Survey

In partnership with DESE, CTAC developed and launched three web-based surveys for LEA teacher recruitment (Grow Your Own) grantees, LEA teacher retention grantees, and EPP/CC grantees, respectively, on March 25, 2024. CTAC sent the survey links to DESE and DESE forwarded the links to grantees.

CTAC provided DESE with weekly updates on survey participation. DESE utilized multiple approaches (e.g., reminder emails, phone calls, newsletters) to maximize the response rates. The surveys were closed on May 3, 2024.

The survey for LEA teacher recruitment (Grow Your Own) grantees had a series of Likert-scale questions, bipolar (i.e., Yes/No) questions, and open-ended questions. The questions focused on three areas: (a) effectiveness of the LEA GYO Grants; (b) effectiveness of the grant-supported recruitment strategies; and (c) the state system for teacher recruitment and retention.

The surveys for LEA teacher retention grantees and EPP/CC teacher recruitment grantees included a similar set of Likert-scale, bipolar, and open-ended questions.

As Table 1 shows, approximately three-fourths of LEA GYO grantees (71%) and retention grantees (77%) participated in the surveys. In addition, half of EPP grantees (50%) and one-third of CC grantees (31%) took the survey.

Table 1. Lead Contact Survey Response Rates, 2024

	Population	# Responses	Response Rate
LEA Teacher Recruitment (Grow Your Own) Grantees	444	314	71%
LEA Teacher Retention Grantees	493	382	77%
EPP Teacher Recruitment Grantees	40	20	50%
CC Teacher Recruitment Grantees	13	4	31%

Note. LEA = Local Education Agency. EPP = Educator Preparation Program. CC = Community College.

Table 2 shows the LEA lead contacts who completed the surveys were primarily from small and medium LEAs at Priority Level III in towns and rural areas.

Table 2. LEA Lead Contact Survey Respondents, 2024

	Grow Your Own Grantees (N = 314)		Retention Grantees (N = 382)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
By LEA Priority Level				
Priority Level I (PL1)	16	5%	19	5%
Priority Level II (PL2)	45	14%	60	16%
Priority Level III (PL3)	253	81%	303	79%
By LEA Locale				
City	24	8%	28	7%
Suburb	27	9%	34	9%
Town	62	20%	74	19%
Rural	201	64%	246	64%
By LEA Size				
Small (1–1,000 students)	206	66%	251	66%
Medium (1,001–15,000 students)	102	32%	124	32%
Large (15,001 or more students)	6	2%	7	2%

Note. The LEA priority level data were retrieved from DESE (2021b). The LEA locale data were retrieved from the National Center for Education Statistics (n.d.). The LEA size data were retrieved from DESE (2021b). Due to rounding, percentages may not always add up to precisely 100%.

CTAC used cross-tabulations to display survey findings. To examine the statistical significance of differences across groups, CTAC utilized Kruskal-Wallis H tests (McKight & Najab, 2010) for the Likert-scale questions, and Chi-square tests (Armstrong, 2014) for the bipolar questions. For the written comments, CTAC conducted thematic analyses (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify common themes and key issues.

Interviews

CTAC developed multiple protocols, respectively, for interviews with LEA lead contacts, EPP/CC lead contacts, superintendents, human resource directors, principals, teachers who have been hired in the last two years, students, and state teacher association leaders.

As Table 3 shows, CTAC conducted interviews with a total of 32 interviewees. CTAC conducted thematic analyses (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify common themes and key issues.

Table 3. Number of Interviewees, 2024

	Number of Interviewees
Local Education Agency Lead Contacts	3
Educator Preparation Program Lead Contacts	4
Superintendents	3
Human Resource Directors	6
Principals	4
Teachers	4
Students*	6
State Teacher Association Leaders	2
Total	32

Note. *Two online focus groups were conducted with the six students whose parents signed the consent form. For both focus groups, a supervising teacher, identified by the LEA, was also present.

Grantee-Provided Data and State Data

Grantees provided a variety of quantitative data they used to measure the effectiveness of their grants in both the Phase III survey (the baseline data and the 2022–23 data) and the Phase IV survey (the 2023–24 data). CTAC linked the data by grantee and used paired-samples T tests to examine the changes over the years. In addition, CTAC reviewed the relevant and available recruitment and retention data from DESE (e.g., the 2024 Report on Teacher Workforce).

Literature Review and Artifacts

CTAC continued to monitor emerging research and practices in teacher recruitment and retention nationally. In addition, CTAC collected and reviewed relevant artifacts from 29 LEA grantees, three EPP grantees, and two CC grantees.

Limitations

CTAC utilized a single-group pre/post design to examine the changes in perceptions and outcomes over the life of the grants. Because such a design includes a confounding factor between time and study condition (What Works Clearinghouse, 2022), it is not possible to establish a causal relationship between the grants and the changes observed. In addition, as collecting baseline data was not required, many grantees did not report their baseline data. Also, among those grantees that had spent the funding in 2022–23, many chose not to participate in the 2023–24 survey. Furthermore, administrative records on teacher recruitment and retention were not available and this study relied on grantees' self-reported data to examine the changes.

Despite these limitations, consistent findings emerge from the many qualitative and quantitative data points across the LEA, EPP, and CC grantees. These findings can inform the efforts of DESE as it develops a state system for teacher recruitment and retention.

CHAPTER THREE: LEA TEACHER RECRUITMENT (GROW YOUR OWN) GRANTS

This chapter examines the effectiveness of the LEA Teacher Recruitment (GYO) Grants.

Effectiveness of the LEA GYO Grants

Overall Effectiveness of the GYO Grants

LEA lead contacts are positive about the effectiveness of their teacher recruitment grants. **In both 2023 and 2024, two out of three LEA lead contacts believe their GYO grants contribute to improvement in their teacher recruitment efforts.** As Table 4 shows, 61% of LEA lead contacts in 2023 and 64% in 2024 agree with the survey prompt.

Table 4. Overall Effectiveness of the LEA GYO Grants, 2023 and 2024

Overall, the analysis of the data our LEA has collected shows the grant contributes to improvement in our teacher recruitment efforts.	2023 (N = 414)		2024 (N = 314)	
	n	%	n	%
Agree or Strongly Agree	251	61%	201	64%
Undecided	127	31%	89	28%
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	12	3%	24	8%
Not Applicable*	24	6%		

Note. *"Not Applicable" = "Not applicable. Our LEA is not tracking data that indicate which strategies are working best, working well, or not working at all." A Mann-Whitney U test, based on a five-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, indicated there was not a statistically significant difference among the responses from grantees in 2023 and 2024.

The disaggregated responses of LEA lead contacts are similar by LEA priority level, locale, and size (see Table 5). Within this context, the responses from lead contacts for large LEAs at Priority Level I in cities or suburbs appear to be the most positive.

Table 5. Overall Effectiveness of the LEA GYO Grants, 2024

Overall, the analysis of the data our LEA has collected shows the grant contributes to improvement in our teacher recruitment efforts.	By Priority Level			By Locale				By Size		
	I	II	III	C	S	T	R	L	M	S
Agree or Strongly Agree	69%	64%	64%	75%	74%	65%	61%	83%	68%	62%
Undecided	31%	20%	30%	25%	26%	31%	28%	17%	28%	29%
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	0%	16%	7%	0%	0%	5%	10%	0%	4%	10%

Note. Kruskal-Wallis H tests, based on a five-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, indicated there were no statistically significant differences among the responses from grantees by priority level, locale, and size, in 2024. In several tables throughout this report, C = City, S = Suburb, T = Town, R = Rural, S = Small (1–1,000 students), M = Medium (1,001–15,000 students), L = Large (15,001 or more students).

Indicators of Success

Many LEA lead contacts indicate in 2024 they are seeing indicators of success of their GYO grants. As Table 6 shows, LEA lead contacts believe they are seeing indicators of success in terms of increasing interest in the teaching profession (65%), collaborating with educator preparation programs/community colleges (54%), and building a larger teacher candidate pool (50%).

In addition, **higher percentages of LEA lead contacts in 2024 than in 2022 indicate seeing indicators of success of their teacher recruitment grants.** Notably, the responses of LEA lead contacts are statistically significantly higher in 2024 than in 2022 on all indicators. For example, the percentage of LEA lead contacts who agree they see a stronger interest in the teaching profession increases from 30% in 2022, to 58% in 2023, and then to 65% in 2024.

Table 6. Indicators of Success, 2022 to 2024

Are you seeing indicators of success of your teacher recruitment (Grow Your Own) grant in terms of...?	2022		2023		2024		One-Year Change	Two-Year Change
	n	%Yes	n	%Yes	n	%Yes		
Increasing interest in the teaching profession	328	30%	413	58%	314	65%	7%	35%*
Building a larger teacher candidate pool	328	24%	413	46%	314	50%	4%	26%*
Recruiting racially/ethnically diverse teachers	328	7%	413	18%	314	16%	-2%	9%*
Recruiting male teachers	327	12%	413	25%	314	26%	1%	14%*
Recruiting teachers in specific content areas (e.g., special education, math, science)	328	21%	413	33%	314	34%	1%	13%*
Recruiting teachers in schools in hard-to-staff locations	326	17%	413	32%	314	39%	7%	22%*
Providing customized support to schools related to teacher recruitment	324	19%	413	26%	314	35%	9%*	16%*
Collaborating with educator preparation programs/community colleges	326	34%	413	51%	314	54%	3%	20%*
Collaborating with community partners	326	25%	413	36%	314	36%	0%	11%*
Improving student achievement	323	18%	413	37%	314	37%	0%	19%*

Note. The prompt was, "Are you seeing early indicators of success of your teacher recruitment (Grow Your Own) grant in terms of...?" in 2022. *Indicates statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level.

Table 7 indicates the responses from LEA lead contacts are mostly similar by LEA characteristics. Within this context, the disaggregated data show differences in terms of recruiting racially/ethnically diverse teachers. **When compared to their peers in other LEAs, higher percentages of lead contacts for large LEAs at Priority Level I in cities indicate seeing indicators of success in recruiting racially/ethnically diverse teachers.** In addition, more lead contacts for large and medium-sized LEAs than for small LEAs report success in their LEAs' collaboration with EPPs/CCs.

Table 7. Indicators of Success, 2024

Are you seeing indicators of success of your teacher recruitment (Grow Your Own) grant in terms of...?	By Priority Level			By Locale				By Size		
	I	II	III	C	S	T	R	L	M	S
Increasing interest in the teacher positions	63%	67%	65%	63%	74%	69%	63%	83%	70%	63%
Building a larger teacher candidate pool	50%	47%	51%	54%	41%	56%	49%	67%	53%	49%
Recruiting racially/ethnically diverse teachers PL1 > (PL2, PL3)* City > (Suburb, Town, Rural)* Large > (Medium, Small)*	63%	18%	13%	67%	15%	16%	10%	50%	22%	12%
Recruiting male teachers	44%	24%	25%	38%	30%	29%	23%	50%	31%	22%
Recruiting teachers in specific content areas (e.g., special education, math, science)	38%	27%	35%	33%	37%	40%	32%	50%	36%	33%
Recruiting teachers in schools in hard-to-staff locations	56%	40%	38%	50%	19%	39%	41%	50%	33%	42%
Providing customized support to schools related to teacher recruitment	44%	44%	33%	46%	30%	34%	35%	67%	32%	36%
Collaborating with educator preparation programs/community colleges (Large, Medium) > Small*	56%	53%	54%	63%	74%	60%	48%	67%	67%	47%
Collaborating with community partners	44%	38%	35%	42%	37%	39%	34%	33%	44%	32%
Improving student achievement	56%	40%	35%	58%	37%	35%	34%	50%	36%	36%

Note. *Chi-square tests with the Bonferroni Adjustment indicated there was a statistically significant difference at the 95% confidence level between the responses from grantees. Percentages reported are those who agreed with the survey prompts. The ">" sign shows that responses of the first group are greater (i.e., being more positive) than the second group. Disaggregated responses (i.e., by LEA priority level, locale, and size) of groups in parentheses are similar.

In interviews and survey comments, LEA lead contacts elaborate on the indicators of success they are seeing. Many LEA lead contacts believe their grants enhance students' interest in the profession and help build a larger candidate pool.

We have been successful in increasing interest in the teaching profession and growing a teacher candidate pool. We have partnered with community organizations and numerous colleges and universities.

-LEA (PL1; City; Medium)

The number of students who have expressed interest in teaching has increased this year. Students who have participated were at first just interested, but after working with district teachers, they have decided to go to college to become a teacher.

-LEA (PL2; Rural; Small)

The GYO efforts in our district are really gaining steam. We have a solid pipeline starting with middle school students.

-LEA (PL3; Suburb; Large)

They also indicate the grants provide support for paraprofessionals/aides to get certified, and for districts to hire their alumni.

The GYO grant has allowed us to help our paras and aides who wanted to finish their college degree in order to be a teacher. It has allowed us to fill many necessary gaps in our district.

-LEA (PL2; Rural; Small)

We used our GYO funds to introduce Future Teachers of America to our district. This has been a huge success! We were able to give several scholarships to seniors and recent graduates. This increased our success in getting students to come back and teach in our district. Currently, more than one-third of our teaching staff are alumni.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

We had 16 of 38 new hires this year who were our graduates. We are hopeful to continue this trend with the influence of the GYO program and the perk of a foundation-supported scholarship that rewards returning graduates.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

LEA lead contacts highlight stronger collaboration they have built with EPPs/CCs.

We worked with area colleges to help our paraprofessionals to get into a career in teaching. The area colleges created programs to help those wanting to be teachers get their education faster. We have high school students who will take paraprofessional classes next year which helps them to get an education degree faster.

-LEA (PL2; Town; Small)

Our collaboration with educator preparation programs has been nothing short of effective. This partnership has not only strengthened our efforts but also reassured us of the effectiveness of the GYO initiative in achieving our goals.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Medium)

We have developed a greater partnership with two Departments of Education from local universities.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

Quantitative Data

Many grantees indicated in their grant applications they would measure the effectiveness of their grants using quantitative data. Table 8 compares their findings from 2022 to 2024. These findings are based on the measures identified in the Phase I evaluation (Liang & Slotnik, 2022a) as being the most commonly used by the grantees.

For example, data are available for 83 grantees in 2023 and 2024 who used the number of students who enroll in their GYO programs to measure the effectiveness of their grants. In 2023, an average of 8.51 students enrolled in the GYO programs in the 83 LEAs, and in 2024, that number increased to 8.82 (i.e., an average increase of 0.31 student). The change from 2023 to 2024 is positive but not statistically significant.

As Table 8 shows, **compared to 2022, all quantitative measures on the effectiveness of the LEA GYO grants are higher in 2024.** The two-year changes are all positive and four (out of five) are statistically significant. This finding is consistent with the perceptual data results, suggesting the grants contribute to improvement in LEAs' teacher recruitment efforts.

Table 8. Quantitative Data and Effectiveness of the LEA GYO Grants, 2022 to 2024

Measure	One-Year Change (2023 vs. 2024)				Two-Year Change (2022 vs. 2024)			
	n	Mean (2023)	Mean (2024)	Change	n	Mean (2022)	Mean (2024)	Change
Number of students who enroll in the GYO program	83	8.51	8.82	0.31	73	4.78	8.92	4.14*
Number of students who graduate from the GYO program	63	4.48	2.84	-1.63*	54	2.15	4.28	2.13*
Number of LEA graduates who enroll in education programs at Institutions of Higher Education	68	4.65	2.91	-1.74	56	2.32	2.91	0.59
Number of teaching staff and/or candidates who get certified	70	1.29	1.84	0.56	61	0.97	1.82	0.85*
Number of GYO scholarship recipients and/or LEA graduates that LEA hires	68	1.06	1.59	0.53	59	0.90	1.71	0.81*

Note. *Indicates a statistically significant difference at the 95% confidence level between the two groups. The survey also asked if grantees used the corresponding percentages to measure the effectiveness of their grant. Only a few grantees provided the percentages data. As the N's are too small, the results are not included in this table.

Some LEA lead contacts share other quantitative data they have collected to measure the effectiveness of their grants. The findings suggest the grants are effective.

Our Future Teachers of America (FTA) membership grew from eight members in 2022–23 to 11 in 2023–24. In 2022–23, one graduate pursued an education degree. In 2023–24, 63% of our graduating FTA students will be majoring in Education.

-LEA (PL2; Rural; Small)

Of our three students who received the scholarship last year, 100% are currently enrolled in education programs at post-secondary institutions. All three are in contact with our GYO facilitator on a regular check-in basis.

-LEA (PL3; City; Medium)

We provided five paraprofessionals with \$2,000 scholarships to complete their education programs. Of the five award winners, the district is hiring three as full-time certified teachers for the 2024–25 school year.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

Principals also identify some positive developments.

After COVID, we saw a decline in applicants. This year we have seen a few more candidates than before, which is a good thing. Hopefully the trend is shifting.

-Principal

We had a tough year hiring last year. This year is better. For the past two years, it has been hard to find certified teachers. We're getting back to a better place.

-Principal

Perceptual Data

Many LEA lead contacts indicate the perceptual data they have collected via surveys and/or interviews show their grants contribute to improvement in their teacher recruitment efforts.

Our high school senior class completed a survey: 70% stated their level of interest in entering the field of education had increased since their freshman year, and 74% stated they were considering education as a career.

-LEA (PL1; City; Medium)

We have three paraprofessionals currently taking college courses in teacher education. All of them indicated this grant has allowed them the opportunity to obtain a degree in teaching which they did not know was possible for them.

-LEA (PL2; Rural; Small)

I had a focus group that consisted of students, staff, and a board member. This group was very proud of the GYO work we have done. They realized that in small rural communities like ours, we have to give our high-school students tools and resources to become teachers and encourage them to come back home and teach.

-LEA (PL2; Rural; Small)

Quantitative Data on Increasing Teacher Candidate Diversity

Some LEA lead contacts provide data they have collected on teacher candidate diversity. Their data show their teacher candidates are getting more diverse in gender and race/ethnicity.

Increasing teacher candidate diversity is a focus of our overall program. In 2022–23, we had six students in our GYO program, and all were white females. Currently, we have five boys and 15 girls; two are African American, two are Hispanic/Latino, and 16 are white.

-LEA (PL3; Suburb; Medium)

We see growth in our internal recruitment of both men and persons of color.

-LEA (PL1; City; Large)

Key Points on Effectiveness of the LEA GYO Grants

- In both 2023 and 2024, two out of three LEA lead contacts believe their GYO grants contribute to improvement in their teacher recruitment efforts.
- Higher percentages of LEA lead contacts in 2024 than in 2022 indicate seeing indicators of success of their teacher recruitment grants.
- The percentage of LEA lead contacts, who agree they see a stronger interest in the teaching profession, increases from 30% in 2022, to 58% in 2023, and then to 65% in 2024.
- Compared to 2022, all quantitative measures on the effectiveness of the LEA GYO grants are higher in 2024.

Effectiveness of the Grant-Supported LEA GYO Strategies

In both 2023 and 2024, nearly all LEA lead contacts believe their teacher recruitment strategies are very effective or somewhat effective.

Table 9 shows LEA lead contacts' perceptions of the effectiveness of their grant-funded GYO strategies in 2023 and 2024. As an example, in 2023, 209 LEA lead contacts provided an effectiveness rating (i.e., "Very effective," "Somewhat effective," or "Ineffective") of the strategy, "providing scholarships." Of those 209 grantees, 43% chose "Very effective," 2% "Ineffective," and 55% "Somewhat effective" (i.e., by subtracting 43% and 2% from 100%).

As Table 9 shows, higher percentages of LEA lead contacts indicate in both years the following strategies are very effective: (a) providing scholarships for tuition, room, and/or board for students taking teacher education courses; (b) establishing dual credit/dual enrollment opportunities and/or scholarships to support students' education about the teaching profession; and (c) providing stipends to teachers and other LEA staff who coordinate any of these activities.

Table 9. Effectiveness of Grant-Supported LEA GYO Strategies, 2023 and 2024

2023					2024				
Rank*	Strategy	n	VE%	IE%	Rank*	Strategy	n	VE%	IE%
1	Providing scholarships	209	43%	2%	1	Providing scholarships	157	58%	5%
2	Providing stipends for coordinating these activities	178	40%	2%	2	Establishing dual credit/ dual enrollment, scholarships	140	54%	2%
3	Establishing dual credit/ dual enrollment, scholarships	204	40%	2%	3	Providing stipends for coordinating these activities	130	51%	2%
4	Connecting students to teacher education programs	192	39%	2%	4	Providing LEA employment to students	109	50%	5%
5	Providing stipends for coordinating these activities	168	39%	3%	5	Inviting students to participate in teaching clubs or academies	153	48%	5%
6	Inviting students to participate in teaching clubs or academies	204	38%	4%	6	Connecting students to teacher education programs	140	48%	4%
7	Providing informational trips	143	37%	3%	7	Providing stipends or release time for sponsoring or mentor teachers	116	46%	5%
8	Providing stipends or release time for sponsoring or mentor teachers	171	35%	3%	8	Providing informational trips	102	43%	8%
9	Providing events for students or sending them to existing events	247	34%	2%	9	Providing stipends for coordinating these activities	117	43%	6%
10	Providing LEA employment to students	148	34%	3%	10	Providing events for students or sending them to existing events	166	42%	5%
11	Providing guest speakers, campus visits, field trips	146	33%	1%	11	Hosting celebrations	85	40%	4%
12	Hosting celebrations	115	29%	3%	12	Providing guest speakers, campus visits, field trips	107	37%	7%
13	Connecting students to community member	152	27%	2%	13	Connecting students to community member	106	31%	4%
14	Creating materials	154	27%	8%	14	Creating materials	121	28%	9%
15	Developing announcements	125	22%	4%	15	Developing announcements	106	27%	7%

Note. The answer choices were “Very effective” (VE), “Somewhat effective” (SE), “Ineffective” (IE), and “Did not use.” n = Number of grantees who chose the answer choices of VE, SE, or IE. Those who did not answer the question or chose “Did not use” were excluded from the analyses. The percentage of SE can be calculated by subtracting the sum of VE and IE from 100%. *The data were sorted/ranked, by year, in descending order of “Very effective” (VE). See Liang and Slotnik (2023) for the full descriptions of the recruitment strategies included in DESE’s guidance document.

In addition, lower percentages of LEA lead contacts in both years find the following strategies very effective: (a) hosting events that connect students to important community members and stakeholders to demonstrate broad support for teacher recruitment; (b) creating materials that promote the teaching profession, such as brochures, banners, and/or posters; and (c) developing announcements featuring prominent individuals talking about the importance of teachers in their lives and the teaching profession.

For most strategies, only a very small percentage of LEA lead contacts find them ineffective.

Table 10 presents the disaggregated LEA responses by priority level, locale, and size. **The perceived effectiveness of the GYO strategies is similar by LEA characteristics.** Within this context, lower percentages of lead contacts for LEAs at Priority Level I in cities indicate the strategy, “providing scholarships for tuition, room, and/or board for students taking teacher education courses,” is very effective.

Table 10. Effectiveness of Grant-Supported LEA GYO Strategies, 2024

Strategy	By Priority Level			By Locale				By Size		
	I	II	III	C	S	T	R	L	M	S
Partnerships										
Connecting students to teacher education programs	11 (72%)	18 (50%)	111 (45%)	17 (58%)	14 (64%)	27 (62%)	82 (37%)	2 (100%)	60 (48%)	78 (46%)
Connecting students to community members	10 (40%)	9 (22%)	87 (31%)	15 (26%)	7 (57%)	21 (38%)	63 (26%)	1 (0%)	45 (33%)	60 (30%)
Providing informational trips	7 (85%)	11 (54%)	84 (38%)	10 (60%)	7 (28%)	20 (50%)	65 (40%)	1 (100%)	39 (41%)	62 (43%)
Providing stipends for coordinating these activities	12 (50%)	15 (60%)	103 (49%)	16 (50%)	12 (50%)	23 (43%)	79 (53%)	2 (100%)	48 (39%)	80 (56%)
Recruitment and Selection										
Providing events for students or sending them to existing events	10 (60%)	21 (38%)	135 (41%)	16 (43%)	13 (61%)	35 (51%)	102 (36%)	3 (66%)	62 (40%)	101 (42%)
Creating materials	8 (37%)	15 (20%)	98 (28%)	14 (35%)	9 (44%)	31 (32%)	67 (22%)	2 (100%)	50 (30%)	69 (24%)
Developing announcements	6 (50%)	16 (12%)	84 (28%)	11 (36%)	8 (37%)	24 (37%)	63 (20%)	2 (50%)	41 (31%)	63 (23%)
Providing guest speakers, campus visits, field trips	8 (62%)	10 (40%)	89 (34%)	12 (41%)	11 (54%)	21 (52%)	63 (28%)	2 (50%)	40 (50%)	65 (29%)
Hosting celebrations	5 (20%)	11 (36%)	69 (42%)	10 (30%)	7 (85%)	19 (42%)	49 (34%)	3 (100%)	28 (42%)	54 (35%)

Strategy	By Priority Level			By Locale				By Size		
	I	II	III	C	S	T	R	L	M	S
Providing stipends for coordinating these activities	11 (54%)	14 (57%)	92 (39%)	16 (43%)	10 (50%)	19 (26%)	72 (45%)	3 (100%)	38 (26%)	76 (48%)
Preparation and Support										
Inviting students to participate in teaching clubs or academies	8 (37%)	19 (52%)	126 (48%)	12 (33%)	15 (60%)	37 (48%)	89 (48%)	3 (33%)	64 (51%)	86 (46%)
Establishing dual credit/dual enrollment, scholarships	10 (30%)	15 (46%)	115 (56%)	14 (35%)	14 (78%)	28 (50%)	84 (53%)	2 (50%)	56 (53%)	82 (53%)
Providing LEA employment to students	9 (44%)	16 (56%)	84 (50%)	15 (33%)	9 (33%)	26 (46%)	59 (59%)	1 (0%)	45 (44%)	63 (55%)
Providing scholarships*	9 (11%)	23 (52%)	125 (62%)	13 (15%)	18 (72%)	36 (63%)	90 (58%)	4 (50%)	57 (61%)	96 (56%)
Providing stipends or release time for sponsoring or mentor teachers	10 (60%)	16 (50%)	90 (43%)	14 (57%)	10 (60%)	25 (32%)	67 (46%)	3 (100%)	45 (33%)	68 (51%)

Note. The answer choices were “Very effective” (VE%), “Somewhat effective” (SE%), “Ineffective” (IE%), and “Did not use.” n = Number of grantees who chose the answer choices of VE, SE, or IE. Those who did not answer the question or chose “Did not use” were excluded from the analyses. The percentage of SE can be calculated by subtracting the sum of VE and IE from 100%. For the disaggregated data (i.e., by priority level, locale, and size), the percentages in parentheses are those who chose “Very effective.” * There were statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level between the responses from grantees at Priority Level I and Priority Level III, and in cities and suburban areas. See Liang and Slotnik (2023) for the full descriptions of the recruitment strategies included in DESE’s guidance document.

Conditions Contributing to Strategy Effectiveness

For those who indicated one or more of their strategies is “Very effective,” they were asked to elaborate on what conditions in place contributed to the effectiveness of the strategies. LEA lead contacts believe **collaboration plays a pivotal role in effectively recruiting teachers** (e.g., between LEAs and EPPs/CCs, among LEA stakeholders, with the community).

The partnerships are the most powerful as it pertains to connecting students to opportunities. Our EPP partner has been especially supportive with dual credit opportunities, and the campus visits are powerful for our students.

-LEA (PL1; City; Medium)

[The conditions include] A strong partnership with district teachers and the middle school to enhance recruitment and job-shadowing experiences.

-LEA (PL3; Suburb; Medium)

We have a strong partnership with a private fund that supports teachers in our district. They provide funding each year for certification scholarships.

-LEA (PL1; City; Large)

The majority of our funds were used to pay the Registered Youth Apprenticeship Program's hourly rates and scholarship contributions. Thankfully, our community has made substantial investments in the scholarship fund, and it should last long into the future.

-LEA (PL3; Suburb; Medium)

LEA lead contacts also believe **the availability of the financial resources is a key condition contributing to the effectiveness of their strategies**. They indicate the funding enables them to incentivize students to pursue a career in teaching and support paraprofessionals to become certified.

The GYO scholarships have been very effective in building student interest in the teaching profession. When students are undecided on which professional path to take, the supplemental funding in the form of scholarships incentivizes them.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

We were able to use the funds to encourage exemplary paras to pursue their degrees.

-LEA (PL2; Rural; Small)

The greatest influencing factor on attending a college to major in education was a scholarship to help with expenses.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

LEA lead contacts note **GYO strategies are more effective when they provide students with earlier exposure to the profession and hands-on learning opportunities** (e.g., apprentices, interns, teaching assistants, dual credit/dual enrollment). Some students concurred.

We paid stipends to our student teachers for working full-time in the district. The condition that made this effective is the fact that this allowed them to be full-time members of our community. Students, families, and other staff members do not view them as typical student teachers. They begin working with our team before the school year begins and are embedded in our school throughout the entire year.

-LEA (PL1; City; Small)

Opportunities to experience working with children through our Summit After School Program and/or A+ Tutoring directly impacted several of our graduates who decided to pursue an education degree.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

Our local university and community college did a great job organizing hands-on experiences and tours for our high-school students. These experiences increased student interest in the profession.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

I wish I was introduced earlier. I've been juggling a couple of different fields that I am interested in. I wish that I could have been in this a bit longer and seen what I could do in the education field and the jobs that are offered.

-Student

Many educators highlight the importance of support from the school board, the district leadership team, and the community. They underscore the dedication from the sponsoring teachers.

Our school board and administrative team have made teacher recruitment and retention a priority. Teacher morale has been a top priority and is making a difference for our educators!

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

Our board supports the benefits we offer as well as the pay. Retaining teachers in our community is huge. Our community supported teachers and their pay through a bond levy and that speaks volumes.

-Human Resource Director

The selection of teachers passionate about growing the profession and supporting students was key to our effectiveness.

-LEA (PL2; Suburb; Medium)

The enthusiasm of our FTA advisor really contributed to the effectiveness.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

A few LEA lead contacts indicate having speakers and providing printed materials (e.g., pamphlets, brochures) are not effective strategies.

Speakers and materials promoting the profession did not seem to have a noticeable positive effect on the number of students wanting to become a teacher.

-LEA (PL1; City; Small)

Social media over pamphlets and brochures would be more effective.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

A number of LEA lead contacts note a lack of interest of students in taking advantage of their grant-supported opportunities hinders the effectiveness of their GYO strategies.

We are not sure how to gain interest in our FTA chapter. When we implemented this last year, there were posters, announcements, and personal invitations from staff members. The group started out with about 5–6 members and at the end of the year, only 1–2 would attend meetings. The meetings were engaging and service-focused, coming up with ideas for how to serve in the district, working with students in a "teacher-type" role. Students just became disinterested.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

We started our Educators Rising Program, but participation was low and not maintained.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

Some educators note many teacher candidates are not prepared to teach.

Teachers coming out of college were and still are not quite prepared to teach. They are not well prepared and aren't ready to start in the classroom like they need to be.

-Principal

The disconnect with what DESE is trying to do is with higher education. Too many candidates are not prepared.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

Colleges are just behind in their methods. They are antiquated. If there was some way to get everyone on the same page with what we need teachers to be able to do and create real work experiences for them while still in college, it would prepare them better. They need to learn the nuances of the job before jumping into the profession.

-Principal

To be more effective in recruiting teachers, many LEA lead contacts believe there should be more financial support to teacher candidates.

The grant is a small grant and does not allocate enough funding to provide teacher stipends AND pay students for teaching pathway internships.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

Student debt is a huge factor. What teachers make compared to what they must spend in order to be licensed [makes the strategies ineffective].

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

The gap between what the grant offered and what is required to actually retain, recruit, or hire teachers is too wide. I do believe that providing GYO tuition scholarships for significant amounts might help.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

To turn ineffective efforts into effective ones, we require additional funding.

-LEA (PL2; Rural; Small)

A number of LEA lead contacts emphasize that **LEAs need a mechanism to ensure those students or paraprofessionals they support return to their district.**

Make sure the students are tied to the school and monies are tied to actual coursework. Investing time, money, and effort only for them to take a job at another school is not logical.

-LEA (PL2; Rural; Small)

The system does not force an employee to work for you. We supported a teacher then she applied to another district. Good for her; bad for us.

-LEA (PL2; Rural; Small)

Employees that received the stipend but left the district made it ineffective.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

Our cadet students are in high school—we have yet to realize how many become teachers and/or return to our district. We have mechanisms in place to track that information and continue with our recruitment efforts accordingly.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

Creative/Innovative Strategies for Teacher Recruitment

One strategy many LEAs are using is to engage current teachers in recruiting new teachers and providing them with referral bonuses.

Our most effective strategy is our current staff recruiting teachers in their network. We give a \$500 referral bonus for any candidate hired through a staff referral.

-LEA (PL3; City; Small)

We have been purposeful in creating incentive options to help motivate district employees to spread the word about our postings and employment opportunities.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Medium)

We are trying a number of strategies in the way of referral bonuses, stipends for student teachers, and offering support to classified staff members who are interested in seeking certification.

-LEA (PL1; City; Medium)

We encourage our teachers to talk us up and say great things about us. Our teachers are putting our name out there in a good wide net. This is very important.

-Principal

Some LEAs place emphasis on hiring their alumni.

We are hiring our own alumni for paraprofessional positions. This strategy benefits the school by leveraging their familiarity with the community, fostering a strong connection to the school, providing positive role models for students, and offering potential career pathways within education.

-LEA (PL1; City; Medium)

We often hire home-grown teachers. Establishing that as a norm in our district helps us to find candidates.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

We hosted a few events this year and invited our former cadet teachers who are in college back to the district to stay connected. We are very purposeful in letting them know we want them to come "home" to us when they graduate.

-LEA (PL3; Suburb; Medium)

A number of LEAs focus on other strategies to recruit teachers, such as offering an extra step on the salary schedule and in-service trainings.

We have made starting pay a strategic effort. This seems to be the most critical factor in recruiting teachers. Students who graduate from our GYO program will be awarded a step on the salary schedule if hired after graduation.

-LEA (PL3; Suburb; Medium)

We partnered with colleges and started a program allowing students to earn college credits for working as a para while in high school, and then transferring to virtual learning to finish at a university while still working as a para at our school.

-LEA (PL3; Suburb; Medium)

I feel like offering an incentive for early retirement has helped out. I made these notices due in February. That way, I can get positions posted as fast as possible.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

Some LEAs provide candidates with earlier/guaranteed interviews.

We conduct interviews as early as possible. We feel this gives us the best pool of candidates.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

We started recruiting early in our district. We started in January when we know and are anticipating vacancies. We start interviewing early, hire them, and put them in a pool. This has been effective.

-Principal

We offer the students who graduate a guaranteed interview.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

Key Points on Effectiveness of the Grant-Supported LEA GYO Strategies

- In both 2023 and 2024, nearly all LEA lead contacts believe their teacher recruitment strategies are very effective or somewhat effective.
- LEA lead contacts highlight the effectiveness of such teacher recruitment strategies as providing scholarships and dual credit/dual enrollment opportunities for students; and offering stipends to teachers for coordinating the recruitment activities.
- LEA lead contacts believe strong collaborations, financial resources, and support from the school community all contribute to the effectiveness of their strategies.
- LEA lead contacts indicate providing printed materials (e.g., pamphlets, brochures) is not an effective strategy.
- Innovative teacher recruitment strategies include engaging current teachers in recruiting new teachers by offering referral bonuses; and providing teacher candidates with earlier/guaranteed interviews and new hires with extra steps on their salary schedule.

CHAPTER FOUR: LEA TEACHER RETENTION GRANTS

This chapter examines the implementation and impacts of the LEA teacher retention grants.

Effectiveness of the LEA Teacher Retention Grants

Overall Effectiveness of the Retention Grants

LEA lead contacts are positive about the effectiveness of their teacher retention grants. **In both 2023 and 2024, two out of three LEA lead contacts believe their grants contribute to improvement in their teacher retention efforts.** As Table 11 shows, 63% of LEA lead contacts in 2023 and 69% in 2024 agree with the survey prompt.

Table 11. Overall Effectiveness of the LEA Retention Grants, 2023 and 2024

Overall, the analysis of the data our LEA has collected shows the grant contributes to improvement in our teacher retention efforts.	2023 (N = 467)		2024 (N = 382)	
	n	%	n	%
Agree or Strongly Agree	296	63%	264	69%
Undecided	123	26%	99	26%
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	12	3%	19	5%
Not Applicable*	36	8%		

Note. **"Not Applicable" = "Not applicable. Our LEA is not tracking data that indicate which strategies are working best, working well, or not working at all." A Mann-Whitney U test, based on a five-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, indicated there was not a statistically significant difference among the responses from grantees in 2023 and 2024.

The disaggregated responses of LEA lead contacts are similar by LEA priority level, locale, and size (see Table 12). Within this context, the responses from lead contacts for large LEAs at Priority Level I in cities appear to be the most positive.

Table 12. Overall Effectiveness of the LEA Retention Grants, 2024

Overall, the analysis of the data our LEA has collected shows the grant contributes to improvement in our teacher retention efforts.	By Priority Level			By Locale				By Size		
	I	II	III	C	S	T	R	L	M	S
Agree or Strongly Agree	84%	67%	69%	79%	74%	72%	67%	86%	69%	69%
Undecided	16%	28%	26%	14%	24%	27%	27%	14%	27%	26%
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	0%	5%	5%	7%	3%	1%	6%	0%	4%	6%

Note. Kruskal-Wallis H tests, based on a five-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, indicated there were no statistically significant differences among the responses from grantees by priority level, locale, and size, in 2024.

Indicators of Success

Many LEA lead contacts indicate in 2024 they are seeing indicators of success of their teacher retention grants. As Table 13 shows, they point to success in such areas as retaining experienced, high-quality teachers (71%), providing stronger early career professional development (60%), and improving student achievement (56%).

In addition, **higher percentages of LEA lead contacts in 2024 than in 2023 or 2022 indicate seeing indicators of success of their teacher retention grants.** Notably, the responses of LEA lead contacts in 2024 are statistically significantly higher than in 2023 (one-year changes) and 2022 (two-year changes) on all indicators. For example, the percentage of LEA lead contacts who agree they see success in retaining experienced, high-quality teachers increases from 29% in 2022, to 62% in 2023, and then to 71% in 2024.

Table 13. Perceived Impacts of the LEA Retention Grants, 2022 to 2024

Are you seeing indicators of success of your teacher retention grant in terms of...?*	2022		2023		2024		One-Year Change	Two-Year Change
	n	%Yes	n	%Yes	n	%Yes		
Retaining racially/ethnically diverse teachers	282	8%	467	14%	382	21%	7%*	13%*
Retaining male teachers	282	17%	467	33%	382	42%	9%*	25%*
Retaining experienced, high-quality teachers	283	29%	467	62%	382	71%	9%*	42%*
Retaining teachers in specific content areas (e.g., special education, math, science)	281	23%	467	42%	382	51%	9%*	28%*
Improving teacher onboarding experiences	NA	NA	467	44%	382	52%	8%*	NA
Providing stronger early career professional development	NA	NA	467	46%	382	60%	14%*	NA
Retaining teachers in schools in hard-to-staff locations	280	18%	467	37%	382	48%	11%*	30%*
Providing customized support to schools related to teacher retention	281	21%	467	34%	382	50%	16%*	29%*
Collaborating with community partners	281	16%	467	23%	382	33%	10%*	17%*
Improving student achievement	277	19%	467	45%	382	56%	11%*	37%*

Note. The prompt was, "Are you seeing early indicators of success of your teacher retention grant in terms of...?" in 2022. *Indicates statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level.

Table 14 shows LEA lead contacts' responses, disaggregated by LEA characteristics. Compared to their peers, higher percentages of lead contacts for large LEAs at Priority Level I in cities indicate seeing indicators of success in retaining racially/ethnically diverse teachers. In addition, the responses of lead contacts for small LEAs are more positive in terms of retaining teachers in specific content areas, and for large and small LEAs in terms of retaining teachers in schools in hard-to-staff locations.

Table 14. Perceived Impacts of the LEA Retention Grants, 2024

Are you seeing indicators of success of your teacher retention grant in terms of...?	By Priority Level			By Locale				By Size		
	I	II	III	C	S	T	R	L	M	S
Retaining racially/ethnically diverse teachers PL1 > (PL2, PL3)* City > Suburban > (Town, Rural)* Large > (Medium, Small)*	79%	22%	17%	75%	41%	15%	14%	71%	26%	17%
Retaining male teachers	68%	42%	41%	61%	41%	32%	43%	71%	38%	43%
Retaining experienced, high-quality teachers	79%	67%	72%	79%	71%	70%	71%	71%	69%	73%
Retaining teachers in specific content areas (e.g., special education, math, science) Small > (Large, Medium)	58%	50%	50%	54%	44%	46%	53%	43%	42%	55%
Improving teacher onboarding experiences	53%	60%	50%	57%	56%	46%	52%	43%	49%	53%
Providing stronger early career professional development	68%	57%	61%	64%	56%	57%	62%	57%	58%	62%
Retaining teachers in schools in hard-to-staff locations (Large, Small) > Medium	63%	50%	47%	57%	38%	42%	50%	71%	37%	53%
Providing customized support to schools related to teacher retention	63%	58%	48%	61%	56%	49%	49%	57%	47%	52%
Collaborating with community partners	47%	33%	32%	50%	41%	34%	30%	57%	35%	31%
Improving student achievement	79%	62%	54%	68%	50%	51%	57%	57%	49%	60%

Note. *Indicates a statistically significant difference at the 95% confidence level between the responses from grantees. Percentages reported are those who agreed with the survey prompts. The ">" sign shows that responses of the first group are greater (i.e., being more positive) than the second group. Disaggregated responses (i.e., by LEA priority level, locale, and size) of groups in parentheses are similar.

In interviews and survey comments, many LEA lead contacts attribute their success in retaining teachers to their retention grants.

When we began the grant in 2021–22, our teacher retention rate had dipped to a low of 57%. As of 2023–24, our rate of teacher retention is 82%! And our overall employee retention rate went from 60% to 85%.

-LEA (PL1; City; Medium)

The funding was incredibly beneficial in providing support to our teachers. They felt confident and less stressed, which contributed to our ability to retain great teachers.

-LEA (PL2; Rural; Small)

The grant did help us to keep some of our high-quality, experienced teachers.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

As we implemented the Teacher Retention Grant, we are retaining certified teachers at a greater rate than the three previous school years. This includes teachers in hard-to-fill classrooms and subjects, such as science, math, and special education.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

LEA lead contacts indicate the funding enables their LEAs to provide teachers with more professional development opportunities customized to teachers' needs.

The grant allowed our LEA to provide ongoing training for staff based on the needs of individual schools to impact their instruction and classroom management.

-LEA (PL1; City; Medium)

The grant provided us with the opportunity to invest in professional development for our teachers in the key content areas of mathematics and ELA. The grant has had a very positive impact and we are grateful for this financial assistance.

-LEA (PL1; City; Medium)

The grant was extremely helpful for our teachers. Many of them are young and the money allowed them to take extra classes.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

LEA lead contacts also believe their grants help them to hire more substitute teachers to ensure dedicated professional development time and improve school climate and culture.

Following the COVID pandemic, there was a huge shortage of subs, and our teachers were stretched so thin covering classes. Having the extra cash in our substitute budget was incredibly helpful in improving staff culture, and thus improving retention.

-LEA (PL1; City; Small)

Through the grant, we were able to pay the salary for a full-time substitute that helps us with covering classrooms when teachers attend professional development.

-LEA (PL2; Town; Medium)

Teacher retention funds were allocated to support full-time building substitute teachers. This was very helpful in improving school climate and retaining teaching staff.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

Level of Difficulty in Filling Teaching Positions

In both 2023 and 2024, more LEA lead contacts indicate it is getting easier to retain teachers than those who believe it is getting more difficult. As Table 15 shows, 22% in 2023 and 25% in 2024 of LEA lead contacts indicate that, compared to the baseline, it is easier to fill the teaching positions at their LEAs, twice as large as those who indicate it is more difficult (11% in 2023 and 14% in 2024).

However, the majority of LEA lead contacts (67% in 2023 and 61% in 2024) indicate the level of difficulty has been about the same across the years.

Table 15. Level of Difficulty in Filling Teaching Positions, 2023 and 2024

Compared to the baseline (i.e., the point in time before the grant was implemented), how difficult is it to fill the teaching positions in your LEA?	2023 (N = 467)		2024 (N = 382)	
	n	%	n	%
Much easier	17	4%	10	3%
Easier	85	18%	85	22%
About the same	312	67%	232	61%
More difficult	37	8%	42	11%
Much more difficult	16	3%	13	3%

Note. A Mann-Whitney U test, based on a five-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, indicated there was not a statistically significant difference among the responses from grantees in 2023 and 2024.

Responses from LEA lead contacts are similar by LEA characteristics (see Table 16). Although the observed differences are not statistically significant, the table suggests that higher percentages of lead contacts for large LEAs at Priority Level I believe it is getting easier to fill the teaching positions in their LEAs in 2023–24.

Table 16. Level of Difficulty in Filling Teaching Positions, 2024

Compared to the baseline (i.e., the point in time before the grant was implemented), how difficult is it to fill the teaching positions in your LEA at the end of the grant implementation in 2023–24?	By Priority Level			By Locale				By Size		
	I	II	III	C	S	T	R	L	M	S
Much easier	0%	5%	2%	0%	3%	1%	3%	14%	2%	3%
Easier	42%	20%	21%	29%	26%	28%	19%	29%	25%	21%
About the same	47%	68%	60%	64%	68%	50%	63%	57%	59%	62%
More difficult	11%	3%	13%	4%	3%	19%	11%	0%	13%	10%
Much more difficult	0%	3%	4%	4%	0%	1%	4%	0%	2%	4%

Note. Kruskal-Wallis H tests, based on a five-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, indicated there were no statistically significant differences among the responses from grantees by priority level, locale, and size, in 2024.

Quantitative Data

Many grantees indicated in their grant applications they would measure the effectiveness of their grants using quantitative data. Table 17 compares their findings from 2022 to 2024. These findings are based on the measures identified in the Phase I evaluation (Liang & Slotnik, 2022a) as being the most commonly used by the grantees.

For example, data are available for 58 grantees in 2023 and 2024 who used the number of teachers retained to measure the effectiveness of their grants. In 2023, an average of 46 teachers were retained in the 58 LEAs, and in 2024, that number increased to 74 (i.e., an average increase of 28 teachers retained). The change from 2023 to 2024 is positive but not statistically significant.

As the table shows, **for many LEAs, quantitative data suggest the teacher retention grants are helping them retain teachers and reduce the number of vacant teaching positions.**

Table 17. Quantitative Data and Effectiveness of the LEA Retention Grants, 2022 to 2024

Measure	One-Year Change (2023 vs. 2024)				Two-Year Change (2022 vs. 2024)			
	n	Mean (2023)	Mean (2024)	Change	n	Mean (2022)	Mean (2024)	Change
Number of teachers retained	58	46	74	28	52	49	83	34*
Percentage of teachers retained	61	89%	89%	0%	50	85%	89%	4%*
Number of vacant teaching positions	91	12	13	1	74	15	12	-3
Percentage of vacant teaching positions	15	18%	14%	-4%	18	21%	19%	-2%
Number of applicants for vacant teaching positions	88	82	66	-16	66	118	79	-39
Number of vacant positions filled	62	9	15	6	52	13	16	3
Percentage of vacant positions filled	35	93%	91%	-2%	34	96%	88%	-8%*

Note. *Indicates a statistically significant difference at the 95% confidence level between the two groups.

Perceptual Data

Many LEA lead contacts believe the analysis of the interview/focus group data they have collected shows their grants are effective in supporting and retaining teachers.

Our climate and culture survey reported an overwhelming majority of teachers believed that efforts from this grant improved teacher satisfaction and retention.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Medium)

In our survey, 85% of the teachers who received funds to reimburse tuition costs stated that the funds were the deciding factor in their staying in education.

-LEA (PL1; City; Large)

Our survey data indicated that support and mentorship from retired teachers were the most successful components of our programming. Additionally, the extra time during the day for meetings beyond their scheduled planning time allowed for the review of data, curriculum, and assessments.

-LEA (PL2; Rural; Small)

The perceptual data also highlight the importance of compensation, administrator support, and professional development opportunities for retaining teachers.

The key finding from the surveys we conducted is the extra money that the grant provided to the teachers did help retain them in the teaching profession.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

Survey data tell us teachers are looking for other incentives we hadn't considered. Things like shortened school weeks, childcare for staff, more support for student behaviors, and much higher salaries are the most commonly mentioned strategies.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

Key findings indicate the continued need for personalized professional development, which we are providing and expanding, and competitive wages.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

Areas that need to be addressed include building level administrator support and additional support/strategies for students who exhibit extreme behaviors.

-LEA (PL3; Suburb; Large)

Key Points on Quality of Implementation and Effectiveness of the Grants

- In both 2023 and 2024, two out of three LEA lead contacts indicate their grants contribute to improvement in their teacher retention efforts.
- Higher percentages of lead contacts in 2024 than in 2023 or 2022 indicate seeing indicators of success of their teacher retention grants.
- The percentage of LEA lead contacts who agree they see success in retaining experienced, high-quality teachers increases from 29% in 2022, to 62% in 2023, and then to 71% in 2024.
- While more LEA lead contacts indicate it is getting easier to retain teachers than those who believe it is getting more difficult, the majority of LEA lead contacts (67% in 2023 and 61% in 2024) indicate the level of difficulty has been about the same across the years.

Effectiveness of Grant-Supported LEA Teacher Retention Strategies

In both 2023 and 2024, most LEA lead contacts believe their teacher retention strategies are very effective or somewhat effective.

Table 18 shows LEA lead contacts' perceptions of the effectiveness of their grant-funded teacher retention strategies in 2023 and 2024. As an example, in 2023, 208 LEA lead contacts provided an effectiveness rating (i.e., "Very effective," "Somewhat effective," or "Ineffective") of the strategy, "providing or increasing stipends for mentors of new teachers." Of those 208 grantees, 43% chose "Very effective," 1% "Ineffective," and 56% "Somewhat effective" (i.e., by subtracting 43% and 1% from 100%).

As Table 18 shows, higher percentages of LEA lead contacts indicate in both years it is very effective to provide or increase stipends for extra duties; and hire additional substitute teachers, aides, or paraprofessionals to ensure dedicated teacher planning time or provide more support to teachers.

Lower percentages of LEA lead contacts in 2024 find the following strategies very effective: (a) utilizing culture and climate surveys to determine and address working condition issues; (b) providing training to teachers on strategies for addressing the social-emotional needs of their students; and (c) providing services that address the social-emotional needs of teachers.

For most strategies, only a very small percentage of LEA lead contacts (0–5% in 2023 and 1–6% in 2024) find them ineffective. Within this context, a relatively higher percentage of LEA lead contacts in 2023 (12%) and 2024 (19%) note the strategy, "creating scholarships for teachers completing National Board Certification or stipends for teachers who have already earned their National Board Certification," is ineffective.

Table 18. Effectiveness of Grant-Supported LEA Retention Strategies, 2023 and 2024

2023					2024				
Rank*	Strategy	n	VE%	IE%	Rank*	Strategy	n	VE%	IE%
1	Providing or increasing stipends for mentors	208	43%	1%	1	Professional learning opportunities	243	49%	2%
2	Providing or increasing stipends for other duties	241	40%	2%	2	Providing or increasing stipends for other duties	192	46%	4%
3	Planning time or fill rates for time-off requests	196	40%	3%	3	Hiring additional substitutes, aides, or paraprofessionals	169	44%	6%
4	Hiring additional substitutes, aides, or paraprofessionals	221	39%	5%	4	Planning time or fill rates for time-off requests	142	43%	6%
5	Strengthening mentor program	274	36%	0%	5	Strengthening mentor program	225	40%	1%
6	Addressing working condition issues	294	35%	2%	6	Teacher voice and leadership opportunities	218	39%	5%
7	Professional learning opportunities	283	35%	1%	7	Scholarships for National Board Certification	62	39%	19%
8	Addressing students' social-emotional needs	209	32%	2%	8	Providing or increasing stipends for mentors	160	38%	3%
9	Teacher voice and leadership opportunities	268	32%	1%	9	Addressing working condition issues	254	36%	5%
10	Scholarships for National Board Certification	74	31%	12%	10	Addressing teachers' social-emotional needs	177	32%	3%
11	Addressing teachers' social-emotional needs	223	30%	2%	11	Addressing students' social-emotional needs	186	30%	4%

Note. The answer choices were “Very effective” (VE), “Somewhat effective” (SE), “Ineffective” (IE), and “Did not use.” n = Number of grantees who chose the answer choices of VE, SE, or IE. Those who did not answer the question or chose “Did not use” were excluded from the analyses. The percentage of SE can be calculated by subtracting the sum of VE and IE from 100%. *The data were sorted/ranked, by year, in descending order of “Very effective” (VE). See Liang and Slotnik (2023) for the full descriptions of the retention strategies included in DESE’s guidance document.

Table 19 presents the disaggregated LEA responses by priority level, locale, and size. **Overall, the perceived effectiveness of the teacher retention strategies is mostly similar by LEA characteristics.**

Table 19. Effectiveness of Grant-Supported LEA Teacher Retention Strategies, 2024

Strategy	By Priority Level			By Locale				By Size		
	I	II	III	C	S	T	R	L	M	S
Strengthening mentor program	16 (37%)	37 (40%)	172 (40%)	22 (45%)	17 (58%)	43 (46%)	143 (35%)	3 (66%)	71 (47%)	151 (36%)

Strategy	By Priority Level			By Locale				By Size		
	I	II	III	C	S	T	R	L	M	S
Providing or increasing stipends for mentors	15 (46%)	21 (42%)	124 (36%)	18 (50%)	12 (41%)	29 (27%)	101 (38%)	2 (100%)	51 (31%)	107 (40%)
Providing or increasing stipends for other duties	15 (60%)	32 (50%)	145 (43%)	20 (50%)	12 (66%)	36 (38%)	124 (45%)	2 (100%)	56 (44%)	134 (45%)
Hiring additional substitutes, aides, or paraprofessionals	12 (66%)	33 (45%)	124 (41%)	17 (64%)	15 (46%)	30 (40%)	107 (42%)	4 (100%)	55 (43%)	110 (42%)
Planning time or fill rates for time-off requests	10 (60%)	25 (52%)	107 (39%)	14 (57%)	10 (20%)	25 (40%)	93 (44%)	4 (75%)	43 (37%)	95 (44%)
Scholarships for National Board Certification	2 (100%)	8 (50%)	52 (34%)	8 (25%)	3 (66%)	11 (36%)	40 (40%)	1 (100%)	19 (36%)	42 (38%)
Addressing working condition issues	16 (50%)	39 (33%)	199 (35%)	25 (52%)	20 (40%)	52 (32%)	157 (33%)	6 (50%)	90 (34%)	158 (36%)
Addressing students' social-emotional needs	14 (42%)	28 (35%)	144 (27%)	21 (42%)	15 (46%)	33 (24%)	117 (26%)	3 (66%)	61 (29%)	122 (28%)
Addressing teachers' social-emotional needs*	11 (54%)	29 (37%)	137 (28%)	17 (35%)	19 (36%)	35 (25%)	106 (32%)	3 (100%)	65 (27%)	109 (32%)
Professional learning opportunities	13 (53%)	36 (61%)	194 (46%)	21 (52%)	17 (70%)	47 (40%)	158 (48%)	3 (100%)	80 (46%)	160 (49%)
Teacher voice and leadership opportunities	15 (60%)	33 (39%)	170 (37%)	22 (54%)	15 (53%)	46 (32%)	135 (37%)	3 (66%)	77 (40%)	138 (37%)

Note. n = Number of grantees who chose the answer choices of "Very effective" (VE), "Somewhat effective" (SE), or "Ineffective" (IE). Those who did not answer the question or chose "Did not use" were excluded from the analyses. The percentage of SE can be calculated by subtracting the sum of VE and IE from 100%. For the disaggregated data (i.e., by priority Level, locale, and size), the percentages in parentheses are those who chose "Very effective." *Indicates a statistically significant difference at the 95% confidence level between the responses from grantees of large LEAs and medium LEAs. See Liang and Slotnik (2023) for the full descriptions of the retention strategies included in DESE's guidance document.

LEA lead contacts indicate **one condition that makes their retention strategies effective is strong collaborations** (e.g., within LEAs, among LEAs, between LEAs and EPPs/CCs).

The effectiveness of our Teacher Retention Grant was underpinned by collaborative partnerships with principals, cross-departmental collaborations, engagement with community organizations, and partnerships with universities. These conditions fostered a holistic and sustainable approach to retaining teachers and supporting their development within our district.

-LEA (PL1; City; Large)

We had several teachers involved in the Beginning Teacher Assistance Program. We paired them up with a couple other districts and this proved to be an effective source of collaboration and support.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

We provided stipends for teachers to engage in summer planning and collaboration, which helped build trust and relationships among the team to set the conditions for better mentoring and professional relationships.

-LEA (PL1; City; Small)

Many LEA lead contacts believe **the availability of financial resources is pivotal for developing and retaining teachers.** The grant funding enables LEAs to provide stipends for extra duties, improve working conditions, and offer scholarships for teachers to advance their education.

We increased the stipends for teachers to take on extra duties. It made teachers feel valued and that their professional expertise was worth a higher monetary value.

-LEA (PL2; Rural; Small)

We are diligently trying to improve salary and working conditions. I honestly think working conditions is a huge driver. Teachers are unable to feel job satisfaction because of disrespectful kids and parents. Until we are able to enforce the sanctity of the classroom environment, it will be an uphill battle.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Small)

We created scholarships for advanced degrees in Reading and Administrative Leadership. Helping offset the cost of advanced education and helping teachers advance on the salary schedule contributed to greater teacher retention and satisfaction.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

LEA lead contacts indicate it is important to offer ongoing support, in response to teacher-identified needs, throughout a teacher's career continuum.

The hiring of teacher support specialists to support first- and second-year teachers in a non-evaluative manner has been the most important piece of our retention strategies. Due to the success, we are hiring these individuals with district funds after the expiration of the grant funds.

-LEA (PL2; City; Medium)

All of our very effective strategies were driven by staff voice. We want to know how staff feel and what their thoughts are.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

We offered self-selected after-school PD opportunities for staff throughout the school year. It proved successful.

-LEA (PL1; City; Medium)

Some LEAs focus on providing veteran teachers with leadership opportunities.

We developed our Legacy Leaders team, consisting of teacher reps from each building. This team helped develop and implement ideas (based on teacher feedback) to best support the wellness of our teachers.

-LEA (PL1; City; Medium)

We established a building leadership team that empowered lead teachers to serve as direct connections for new and inexperienced teachers, ensuring that their voices were heard and valued within the program.

-LEA (PL2; Rural; Small)

We have created a teacher leadership group to provide teachers with more voice in leadership decisions. We have created more opportunities to celebrate and recognize our teaching staff throughout the year. These strategies have been very effective. We retained 100% of our staff for the 2024–25 school year.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

LEA lead contacts believe **providing substitute teachers is effective and ensures that teachers have time to strengthen their craft. It also helps to increase teacher morale.**

Time constraints have been a consistent issue for teachers, according to staff surveys. Providing subs for teachers to give them time to collaborate, plan, and support one another has been very effective.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

Quite simply, substitutes were used more readily to afford teachers time-off for mental-health days, to collaboratively plan during contract time, and to provide support for students with chronic behaviors that could be challenging or trying.

-LEA (PL2; Rural; Small)

By providing full-time substitute teachers in each building, we were able to secure teachers planning time and time-off when they were sick. Having substitutes in the buildings increases teacher morale and well-being.

-LEA (PL3; Suburb; Medium)

While substitute teachers are a real positive, many LEAs face the challenge of finding enough substitute teachers.

We have not been able to hire enough substitute teachers for staff absences or to give teachers additional planning time.

-LEA (PL3; City; Medium)

There are not more substitute teachers out there to hire.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

A few LEA lead contacts indicate there is a lack of interest among their teachers in earning National Board Certification (NBC). However, other LEA lead contacts believe providing teachers with more information and financial incentives helps to motivate teachers to get NBC-certified.

Providing easily accessible information about National Board Certifications is helpful.

-LEA (PL1; City; Small)

In order for National Board Certifications to be effective, we have to tie an incentive to the salary schedule. Currently, we have no additional stipends for teachers after completion of the process, so teacher interest was minimal.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

If we continue with this grant program, we would like to include NBCT scholarships.

-LEA (PL3; Suburb; Medium)

Creative/Innovative Strategies for Teacher Retention

Some LEAs focus on increasing teacher pay with enhanced salary schedules.

We increased the amount we pay for a step at the end of our salary schedule. We feel this has added to teacher retention.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

We have removed some columns from our pay scale so young teachers can progress to higher pay faster.

-LEA (PL3; Suburb; Medium)

The certified salary schedule has been adjusted to include some additional steps for longevity (every five years). A staff attendance incentive has also been implemented.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

Some LEAs reward teachers for staying with the district (e.g., longevity awards, tuition forgiveness).

We created a longevity plan that pays staff who have been here for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 years, respectively.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

We have a robust tuition reimbursement program with a repayment provision. Teachers must stay for four years to avoid any repayment.

-LEA (PL3; Suburb; Medium)

Many LEAs provide non-financial support to teachers (e.g., childcare, four-day weeks, administrative support, other fringe benefits).

Opening a daycare to support our teachers has been extremely effective. This is an uncommon resource in our area and keeps teachers from working at other districts.

-LEA (PL2; Rural; Small)

Next year we are moving to a four-day week. We saw an increase in applicants following that announcement.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

Our most innovative strategy was to add an assistant principal and that has vastly improved the support that teachers receive in all areas (discipline, PD, etc.).

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

We provided more options for health insurance, and vision and dental for all staff. We also decided to purchase lunch for all staff every day in our cafeteria.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

We proposed to the Board converting our sick and personal leave into PTO. This transition would allow teachers to enter their leave earlier, instead of the night before.

-LEA (PL3; Suburb; Medium)

Some LEAs focus on supporting teachers to meet their family needs.

Our emphasis on family first has aided in a positive culture that retains teachers.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

We provided opportunities and teambuilding activities to create a sense of family. An example of being "human" is that teachers are allowed to leave at 2:30 p.m., if needed for appointments, without being made to take a half-day sick leave.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

We have allowed staff to supervise their own children's field trips without using a vacation day.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

A few LEAs provide expanded assistance to new teachers (e.g., engaging retired teachers to serve as mentors, informal mentoring services, more paid in-service time).

One of our most innovative strategies was engaging retired teachers to provide one-on-one support to new teachers. The retirees assisted new teachers in comprehensive planning, refined teaching techniques, and procedures. They contributed significantly to the success of the program by establishing a robust system of support.

-LEA (PL2; Rural; Small)

We provided informal teacher mentoring beyond the mentorship program. We asked teachers who were about the same age as new teachers to spend time showing the new teachers the ropes and being a 'lunch buddy' for them.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Small)

We implemented an extended paid in-service time for new teachers at the beginning of the school year so that these individuals were better prepared.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

A couple of LEA lead contacts underscore the contribution from district/school leadership to the effectiveness of their retention strategies (e.g., buy-in, positive relationships with teachers, consistency in leadership).

We had buy-in from our upper leadership which contributed heavily to the effectiveness of the innovative strategies we implemented.

-LEA (PL1; City; Large)

Our district recruits and retains teachers primarily through maintaining positive relationships between administrators and teachers. Our teachers recruit teachers from other districts to our district.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

We need to strive for consistency in leadership to ensure teacher retention continues. There have been a lot of changes to the principal and superintendent positions over the last several years. Consistency in these positions was one area that was identified by teachers as something they would like to see.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

In particular, some superintendents are proactively engaged in teacher retention.

I conducted in-person interviews with all new teachers in their first 30 days to ensure that they had adequate support and resources to do their jobs effectively. The outcome was very positive.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

Our district leaders meet with each teacher in the school district at least once during the school year. This provides an opportunity to build relationships and get to know the teachers at a personal level.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Medium)

We design custom treats for staff birthdays delivered by the Superintendent. It makes the staff feel happy and seen.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

Our superintendent is leading this charge of teacher retention. He'll meet 1:1 with teachers. He'll visit the school and send a note to our teachers. He is so relational and committed. He is the guiding force for the rest of us.

-Human Resource Director

One lead contact believes it is important to include teacher retention in the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP).

The most important condition was tying the retention of teachers to our CSIP. The CSIP is a live, working document that holds the district accountable for ensuring that teacher retention is a priority.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

Key Points on Effectiveness of Grant-Supported LEA Teacher Retention Strategies

- In both 2023 and 2024, most LEA lead contacts believe their teacher retention strategies are very effective or somewhat effective.
 - LEA lead contacts highlight the effectiveness of providing or increasing stipends for extra duties; and hiring additional substitute teachers, aides, or paraprofessionals.
 - LEA lead contacts believe strong collaborations and financial resources, targeted to teacher-identified needs, contribute to the effectiveness of their strategies.
 - Innovative teacher retention strategies include increasing teacher pay with enhanced salary schedules or rewarding teachers for staying with the district (e.g., longevity awards). Many LEAs provide non-financial support to teachers (e.g., childcare, four-day weeks).
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CHAPTER FIVE: EPP/CC TEACHER RECRUITMENT GRANTS

This chapter focuses on the implementation and impacts of EPP/CC teacher recruitment grants.

Effectiveness of EPP/CC Teacher Recruitment Grants

Overall Effectiveness of the Teacher Recruitment Grants

EPP/CC lead contacts are positive about the effectiveness of their teacher recruitment grants (see Table 20). **In 2023, two-thirds (62%) of EPP lead contacts believed their grants contribute to improvement in their teacher recruitment efforts, and that percentage increased to 85% in 2024.**

Table 20. Overall Effectiveness of EPP/CC Teacher Recruitment Grants, 2023 and 2024

Overall, the analysis of the data our EPP/CC has collected shows the grant contributes to improvement in our teacher recruitment efforts.	Educator Preparation Programs				Community Colleges			
	2023		2024		2023		2024	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree or Agree	24	62%	17	85%	6	50%	2	50%
Undecided	12	31%	2	10%	3	25%	2	50%
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	0	0%	1	5%	0	0%	0	0%
Not Applicable*	3	8%			3	25%		

Note. *"Not Applicable" = "Not applicable. Our EPP/CC is not tracking data that indicate which strategies are working best, working well, or not working at all." This answer choice was not available in the 2024 survey. A Kruskal-Wallis H test, based on a five-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, indicated there was not a statistically significant difference among the responses from EPP grantees in 2023 and 2024. The test could not be conducted for CC grantees as the N's were too small.

Indicators of Success

As Table 21 shows, **compared to 2022, higher percentages of EPP lead contacts in 2024 indicate seeing indicators of success in increasing interest in the teaching profession (45% vs. 85%), and in recruiting male teacher candidates (35% vs. 70%).**

Table 21. Perceived Impacts of the EPP/CC Teacher Recruitment Grants, 2022 to 2024

Are you seeing indicators of success of your teacher recruitment grant in terms of...?	Educator Preparation Programs						Community Colleges					
	2022		2023		2024		2022		2023		2024	
	n	%Yes	n	%Yes	n	%Yes	n	%Yes	n	%Yes	n	%Yes
Increasing interest in the teaching profession*	40	45%	39	77%	20	85%	9	44%	12	75%	4	50%

Are you seeing indicators of success of your teacher recruitment grant in terms of...?	Educator Preparation Programs						Community Colleges					
	2022		2023		2024		2022		2023		2024	
	n	%Yes	n	%Yes	n	%Yes	n	%Yes	n	%Yes	n	%Yes
Building a larger teacher candidate pool	40	53%	39	77%	20	75%	8	50%	12	58%	4	50%
Recruiting racially/ethnically diverse teacher candidates	40	35%	39	54%	20	50%	9	33%	12	25%	4	0%
Recruiting male teacher candidates**	40	35%	39	51%	20	70%	9	22%	12	33%	4	25%
Recruiting teacher candidates in specific content areas (e.g., special education, math, science)	40	20%	39	38%	20	35%	9	33%	12	33%	4	50%
Providing customized support to teacher candidates	40	55%	39	62%	20	65%	9	44%	12	67%	4	75%
Collaborating with local education agencies	40	63%	39	74%	20	90%	9	67%	12	83%	4	75%
Collaborating with community partners	38	55%	39	46%	20	50%	9	56%	12	33%	4	75%

Note. The prompt was, "Are you seeing early indicators of success of your teacher recruitment grant in terms of...?" in 2022. *There was a statistically significant difference among the responses from EPP grantees in 2022 and 2024, **and again in 2023 and 2024. There were no statistically significant differences among the responses from CC grantees across the three years.

In interviews and survey comments, EPP/CC lead contacts elaborate on the indicators of success. They highlight a stronger partnership with districts and community groups.

Connecting to our community and local K–12 partners is key to recruiting students in our area. We have hosted several events and tours for high school students and our community college partners.

-Educator Preparation Program

One of the greatest benefits of our grant has been strengthening partnerships with our local districts.

-Educator Preparation Program

We have developed new partnerships with districts and have begun partnering with community groups, such as Teachers Like Me and School Smart KC.

-Educator Preparation Program

The Teacher Recruitment Grant provided excellent opportunities for those pursuing degrees in education. We have created new partnerships with four-year institutions and high schools in our service region and have built relationships with community partners.

-Community College

EPP/CC lead contacts note a stronger interest in their teacher education programs and the teaching profession.

Our online ad campaigns, funded through the grant, increased interest in our program and the teaching profession. The campaigns have also helped to increase our online education pool for teacher candidates.

-Educator Preparation Program

Our events in which we bring high school students to campus indicate there is an increased interest in the teaching profession. There has also been an increase in the number of males attending our teacher recruitment events. We have also seen an increase in students interested in teaching mathematics in middle and high schools.

-Educator Preparation Program

Hosting the teacher day and college events has increased the interest of students in becoming teachers.

-Community College

EPP/CC lead contacts also indicate their enrollments are increasing.

The Teacher Recruitment Grant definitely assisted us in getting more students to attain their substitute certificate, which in turn will guide them to inquiring about becoming a teacher candidate in the future.

-Educator Preparation Program

We saw an increase in our enrollment, and we have more candidates going into shortage areas.

-Community College

Quantitative Data

Some EPP/CC lead contacts provide quantitative data on their recruitment outcomes. Data suggest the grant contributes to EPP/CC grantees' teacher recruitment efforts.

Our goal was to have a total of 25 new online Elementary Education Degree and Master of Arts in Teaching students for our Pathway for Teaching program. We exceeded our goal by having 43 new students.

-Educator Preparation Program

We are seeing an increase in applications to our teacher education program. For example, in October 2022, our program received zero applications, whereas in October 2023, we received 16 applications.

-Educator Preparation Program

One of our goals was to increase dual credit opportunities for high school students. We have added two additional schools who offer our Foundations of Education course and increased dual credit enrollment for Foundations of Education by 120%.

-Community College

Our teacher education program recognized the grant monies' positive impact on the recruitment and retention of teacher education candidates. In fall of 2022, our program experienced declining applicants. Grant monies supported our efforts to recruit. The number of candidates in our entry-level course will double in the upcoming semester.

-Community College

Perceptual Data

A number of EPP/CC lead contacts also share the perceptual data (e.g., surveys, interviews) they collected. They note teacher candidates appreciate the quality and assistance (e.g., networking opportunities, advisors) from their grant-supported programs.

We collected survey data and interview data. 100% of participants agreed that the program has been helpful, they want to be teachers, and the program gave teacher candidates opportunities to network.

-Educator Preparation Program

Our Student Advisory Committee meeting revealed two critical themes regarding our EPP program: Students recognize and appreciate the program's quality. They noted that candidates in our program benefit from foreshadowing and intentional sequencing in clinical coursework. Students also appreciate the availability of advisors from the education department faculty who complement content area advising.

-Educator Preparation Program

Students reported enjoying the campus tours and learning about our program and transfer opportunities.

-Community College

Quantitative Data on Increasing Teacher Candidate Diversity

Data provided by a few EPP/CC lead contacts indicate they are recruiting more diverse candidates into their teacher education programs. As indicated in the comments below, the EPP/CC lead contacts use the term “candidate diversity” in a variety of ways.

With our numbers of first-semester College of Education students, we saw that the numbers of diverse candidates, male students, and candidates in math, increased more than in previous years.

-Educator Preparation Program

Our goal is to recruit 30 new students into teacher education that meet at least one of the identified areas of historically excluded students (e.g., second-language learner, paraprofessional/ aide/ substitute, first-generation college student). We exceeded the goal by recruiting 59 students.

-Educator Preparation Program

Our grant did include strategies for increasing the number of students of color pursuing teacher certification. In fall of 2023, we had zero students of color. In fall of 2024, we had one.

-Community College

Key Points on Effectiveness of EPP/CC Teacher Recruitment Grants

- In 2023, 62% of EPP lead contacts believed their grants contribute to improvement in their teacher recruitment efforts. In 2024, that percentage increased to 85%.
- In 2024, EPP lead contacts indicate they see success in collaborating with LEAs (90%), increasing interest in the teaching profession (85%), and building a larger teacher candidate pool (75%).
- Compared to 2022, higher percentages of EPP lead contacts in 2024 indicate observing success in recruiting male teacher candidates (35% vs. 70%).

Effectiveness of the Grant-Supported EPP/CC Recruitment Strategies

In both 2023 and 2024, many EPP/CC lead contacts believe their teacher recruitment strategies are very effective or somewhat effective.

Tables 22 and 23 show the perceptions of lead contacts for EPPs, and CCs, respectively, of the effectiveness of their teacher recruitment strategies in 2023 and 2024. For example, as Table 22 shows, six EPP lead contacts provided an effectiveness rating (i.e., “Very effective,” “Somewhat effective,” or “Ineffective”) in 2023 of the strategy, “providing university employment

opportunities for students.” Of those six EPP grantees, 67% chose “Very effective,” 0% “Ineffective,” and 33% “Somewhat effective” (i.e., by subtracting 67% and 0% from 100%).

As Table 22 shows, higher percentages of EPP lead contacts indicate in both years it is very effective to (a) provide scholarships for tuition or room and board attached to involvement in a GYO program for students taking teacher education courses or participating in an educator preparation program; and (b) establish scholarships for students based on their involvement in recruitment activities.

Table 22. Effectiveness of Grant-Supported Teacher Recruitment Strategies (EPP Grantees), 2023 and 2024

2023					2024				
Rank*	Strategy	n	VE%	IE%	Rank*	Strategy	n	VE%	IE%
1	Providing university employment opportunities for students	6	67%	0%	1	Providing scholarships for tuition or room and board	7	86%	0%
2	Establishing scholarships for students based on their involvement in recruitment activities	15	67%	7%	2	Establishing scholarships for students based on their involvement in recruitment activities	7	71%	0%
3	Providing scholarships for tuition or room and board	15	67%	7%	3	Providing informational trips for high school/ middle school students and teacher candidates	12	58%	8%
4	Hosting events to connect high school students to teacher education programs and personnel	27	63%	0%	4	Hosting events for students or sending them to existing, external events	12	58%	8%
5	Hosting events with potential teacher education candidates and important community members and stakeholders	21	62%	5%	5	Hosting events with potential teacher education candidates and important community members and stakeholders	13	54%	0%
6	Creating materials	29	55%	3%	6	Creating materials	15	53%	7%
7	Hosting events for students or sending them to existing, external events	30	53%	3%	7	Hosting events to connect high school students to teacher education programs and personnel	14	50%	0%
8	Partnering with LEAs	20	50%	0%	8	Arranging for guest speakers, campus visits, and other field trips for secondary school students	12	50%	0%
9	Providing guest speakers, campus visits, and other field trips for secondary students participating in GYO teaching clubs or activities	14	50%	0%	9	Hosting celebrations	6	50%	0%

2023					2024				
Rank*	Strategy	n	VE%	IE%	Rank*	Strategy	n	VE%	IE%
10	Establishing dual credit/dual enrollment, or other creative learning opportunities	21	48%	0%	10	Establishing dual credit/dual enrollment, or other creative learning opportunities	10	50%	20%
11	Arranging for guest speakers, campus visits, and other field trips for secondary school students	23	48%	4%	11	Developing announcements	11	45%	9%
12	Connecting with high school students participating in teaching clubs or academies	23	48%	9%	12	Connecting with high school students participating in teaching clubs or academies	13	38%	15%
13	Providing informational trips for high school/middle school students and teacher candidates	19	47%	5%	13	Providing guest speakers, campus visits, and other field trips for secondary students participating in GYO teaching clubs or activities	10	30%	10%
14	Hosting celebrations	13	46%	31%	14	Collaborating with state and regional teacher leaders	10	30%	30%
15	Developing announcements	18	44%	0%	15	Partnering with LEAs	14	29%	7%
16	Networking with GYO program coordinators and developers	21	43%	5%	16	Providing university employment opportunities for students	4	25%	25%
17	Collaborating with state and regional teacher leaders	18	33%	11%	17	Networking with GYO program coordinators and developers	11	18%	9%

Note. The answer choices were "Very effective" (VE), "Somewhat effective" (SE), "Ineffective" (IE), and "Did not use." n = Number of grantees who chose the answer choices of VE, SE, or IE. Those who did not answer the question or chose "Did not use" were excluded from the analyses. The percentage of SE can be calculated by subtracting the sum of VE and IE from 100%. *The data were sorted/ranked, by year, in descending order of "Very effective" (VE), and then in ascending order of "Ineffective" (IE). See Liang and Slotnik (2023) for the full descriptions of the recruitment strategies included in DESE's guidance document.

Table 23. Effectiveness of Grant-Supported Teacher Recruitment Strategies (CC Grantees), 2023 and 2024

2023					2024				
Rank*	Strategy	n	VE%	IE%	Rank*	Strategy	n	VE%	IE%
1	Providing scholarships for tuition or room and board	3	100%	0%	1	Partnering with LEAs	3	100%	0%
2	Arranging for guest speakers, campus visits, and other field trips for secondary school students	6	67%	0%	2	Hosting events with potential teacher education candidates and important community members and stakeholders	2	100%	0%

2023					2024				
Rank*	Strategy	n	VE%	IE%	Rank*	Strategy	n	VE%	IE%
3	Establishing dual credit/ dual enrollment, or other creative learning opportunities	8	63%	0%	3	Creating materials	3	100%	0%
4	Establishing scholarships for students based on their involvement in recruitment activities	7	57%	0%	4	Developing announcements	1	100%	0%
5	Creating materials	9	56%	0%	5	Providing university employment opportunities for students	1	100%	0%
6	Connecting with high school students participating in teaching clubs or academies	9	56%	11%	6	Providing scholarships for tuition or room and board	2	100%	0%
7	Hosting events for students or sending them to existing, external events	10	50%	0%	7	Hosting events for students or sending them to existing, external events	4	75%	0%
8	Networking with GYO program coordinators and developers	5	40%	0%	8	Establishing scholarships for students based on their involvement in recruitment activities	4	75%	0%
9	Providing informational trips for high school/ middle school students and teacher candidates	5	40%	0%	9	Providing informational trips for high school/ middle school students and teacher candidates	3	67%	0%
10	Hosting events to connect high school students to teacher education programs and personnel	9	33%	0%	10	Arranging for guest speakers, campus visits, and other field trips for secondary school students	3	67%	0%
11	Providing guest speakers, campus visits, and other field trips for secondary students participating in GYO teaching clubs or activities	3	33%	0%	11	Establishing dual credit/ dual enrollment, or other creative learning opportunities	3	67%	0%
12	Hosting events with potential teacher education candidates and important community members and stakeholders	6	33%	17%	12	Collaborating with state and regional teacher leaders	3	67%	33%
13	Partnering with LEAs	7	29%	14%	13	Hosting events to connect high school students to teacher education programs and personnel	4	50%	0%

2023					2024				
Rank*	Strategy	n	VE%	IE%	Rank*	Strategy	n	VE%	IE%
14	Developing announcements	3	0%	0%	14	Providing guest speakers, campus visits, and other field trips for secondary students participating in GYO teaching clubs or activities	2	50%	0%
15	Hosting celebrations	1	0%	0%	15	Networking with GYO program coordinators and developers	3	33%	33%
16	Collaborating with state and regional teacher leaders	6	0%	33%	16	Connecting with high school students participating in teaching clubs or academies	4	25%	0%
17	Providing university employment opportunities for students	0	NA	NA	17	Hosting celebrations	0	NA	NA

Note. The answer choices were "Very effective" (VE), "Somewhat effective" (SE), "Ineffective" (IE), and "Did not use." n = Number of grantees who chose the answer choices of VE, SE, or IE. Those who did not answer the question or chose "Did not use" were excluded from the analyses. The percentage of SE can be calculated by subtracting the sum of VE and IE from 100%. *The data were sorted/ranked, by year, in descending order of "Very effective" (VE), and then in ascending order of "Ineffective" (IE). See Liang and Slotnik (2023) for the full descriptions of the recruitment strategies included in DESE's guidance document.

Conditions Contributing to Strategy Effectiveness

EPP lead contacts believe strong collaboration (e.g., between EPPs/CCs and districts, within EPPs/CCs) and institutional support are two of the conditions that contribute to the effectiveness of their teacher recruitment strategies.

We surveyed teacher candidates on what they wanted to learn. We took those ideas and collaborated with LEA partners to develop monthly PDs. We also provided PD with other partners such as attorneys who spoke about school law and other legal issues facing teachers and schools. LEAs served as mentors to teacher candidates.

-Educator Preparation Program

We have an incredibly supportive administration that has allowed the Teacher Education Program to think flexibly and creatively.

-Educator Preparation Program

We have buy-in across our EPP. Our faculty/ staff realize we must all work together to advance the profession. We also received tremendous support from the university.

-Educator Preparation Program

EPP/CC lead contacts also note **the funding for scholarships contributes positively to their teacher recruitment efforts.**

Scholarships particularly targeted to high-needs areas and individuals already in the school setting were VERY effective as it removed one primary, essential barrier for individuals already interested in teaching.

-Educator Preparation Program

Providing scholarships for required assessments has been very effective. This reduces financial barriers, particularly for our transfer students from community colleges who may not have taken the ACT or MoGEA and need to acquire their sub certificate.

-Educator Preparation Program

Money talks. Those GYO scholarships mean the world to low-income families.

-Educator Preparation Program

Of the students receiving our scholarship monies (i.e., teacher education scholarships, MoGEA stipends, and textbook scholarships), they were required to be degree-seeking for our AAT degree.

-Community College

EPP/CC lead contacts highly value the support from DESE/MTDS.

Support from DESE and MTDS was a huge contributing factor in the effectiveness of our strategies. Originally, this grant was written for a three-year spending period. When those parameters were changed, DESE was quick to help us transition to a different timeline and adjust where/how money was spent to meet deadlines.

-Community College

It is helpful for DESE to continue to write and get grants. DESE has gone a long way to eliminate barriers like the entrance exams. When we see a barrier, everyone collaborates to resolve the issue.

-Educator Preparation Program

EPP/CC lead contacts also believe when the learning activities are relevant and practical, they are more effective in engaging teacher candidates.

Getting students on campus to participate in classes in the simulation classroom was highly effective because it helped us to connect with the students and created interest in our program.

-Educator Preparation Program

Campus visits and dual credit opportunities helped high school students connect with teacher educators and 'see' themselves in an education setting.

-Educator Preparation Program

Having both networking and philanthropy events for our current teacher candidates, as well as future teacher candidates, was extremely important and both events were well-attended.

-Community College

Some EPP/CC lead contacts highlight the effectiveness of the marketing materials (e.g., ads, videos, T-shirts) they use in recruiting teachers. Similar to other responding groups, they are not highlighting the traditional marketing approaches, such as distributing printed brochures, as effective.

Creating relevant, updated, and eye-catching marketing materials attracted more attention at recruiting events from high schoolers.

-Educator Preparation Program

Advertising was highly effective, because we were able to produce videos of past and present students talking about our program and creating interest in it. We also pushed out monthly advertisements on our website to reach potential online teacher candidates.

-Educator Preparation Program

Purchasing advertisement materials such as sweatshirts and t-shirts for our teacher candidates proved very successful. They loved wearing them and were often asked about the program while doing so. It was great advertising.

-Community College

A few EPP/CC lead contacts note the challenges they face in collaborating with school districts: EPPs/CCs and districts may have different schedules, some districts may already have other partners, and the priorities of different organizations for allocating funding do not always align.

We explored dual enrollment and partnership opportunities with local school districts. Potential opportunities broke down when attempting to mesh K–12 schedules and enrollment deadlines with college schedules. Creating a high-quality GYO program with local EPP's is difficult when existing dual credit arrangements already exist with online/ distance providers.

-Educator Preparation Program

GYO partnerships are very time consuming. Districts use their portion of funding in different ways.

-Educator Preparation Program

Local K–12 districts were not terribly interested in partnering with us for the GYO, as they had allocated those funds elsewhere.

-Community College

A couple of grantees express a desire for a statewide campaign on teacher recruitment and a statewide emphasis on collaboration for EPPs.

I personally believe the funds would be better utilized on a statewide campaign run at the state level, instead of through individual schools.

-Community College

I wish all EPPs across the state could do more to collaborate on addressing the teacher shortage.

-Educator Preparation Program

Creative/Innovative Strategies for Teacher Recruitment

EPP/CC lead contacts elaborate on the creative/innovative strategies they use for teacher recruitment. One such strategy is to engage their current students in teacher recruitment.

[We have] student panels of our current education students to answer questions about college life and practicum/ student teaching.

-Educator Preparation Program

We hosted a student advisory panel and a graduate and program partnership panel advisory group to review and collaborate on program strengths and weaknesses. Student involvement was the most effective intervention we implemented.

-Educator Preparation Program

We use our students as recruitment tools. This is powerful for us, and our student ambassadors actually help recruit the next generation of teachers.

-Educator Preparation Program

A couple of EPP lead contacts believe their strategies are creative because they are more targeted (e.g., Temporary Authorization Certificate candidates, paraprofessionals).

Our strategies focused more on partnering with districts who are filling positions with candidates who qualify for a Temporary Authorization Certificate. Those students often have trouble paying for their required coursework, so we assisted. Our strategy was effective with those we were able to help, but we didn't reach many students.

-Educator Preparation Program

Providing grant funding to uncertified paraprofessionals or school personnel has been very effective; it is a mature and motivated population interested in teaching but needing financial support.

-Educator Preparation Program

Some other EPP/CC lead contacts indicate they use the funding to support innovative activities such as launching local campaigns, hosting celebration events, or building teacher apprenticeship programs.

We had a campaign: \$500 to Start; \$500 to Finish. It was very effective. Potential students called in asking about eligibility and were excited to apply.

-Educator Preparation Program

Our Celebrate Teaching event honored educators and served as a platform to celebrate current education majors and recruit sophomores and freshmen undecided majors on campus, showcasing the importance of their potential role in our institution.

-Educator Preparation Program

This pilot grant helped us to establish a plan for a more systematic apprenticeship program (implemented with another grant).

-Educator Preparation Program

Key Points on Effectiveness of EPP/CC Recruitment Strategies

- In both 2023 and 2024, many EPP/CC lead contacts believe their teacher recruitment strategies are very effective or somewhat effective.
- EPP lead contacts indicate providing students with scholarships for tuition or room and board is effective in teacher recruitment.
- EPP lead contacts believe strong collaborations, institutional support, funding for scholarships, and support from DESE/MTDS, all contribute to the effectiveness of their teacher recruitment strategies.
- EPP/CC lead contacts share their innovative teacher recruitment strategies, including engaging their current students in teacher recruitment and launching local campaigns to recruit teachers.

CHAPTER SIX: A STATE SYSTEM FOR TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

This chapter describes perspectives of LEA and EPP/CC lead contacts regarding a state system for teacher recruitment and retention.

Elevation of the Teaching Profession

LEA lead contacts and other **educators underscore the need for a state system for teacher recruitment and retention to elevate the status of the teaching profession.**

Education has moved from a highly respected and revered vocation to one that is struggling to find graduates. We have simply got to positively promote our own profession and find a way for teachers to earn a competitive salary.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

As a state, we need to have a positive spin about teaching as a whole. We need to do more to honor the profession. There is so much good in the profession.

-Human Resource Director

We need to highlight the successes of schools, get the word out about the good things going on, and highlight teacher awards and successes on social media.

-Teacher Association Leader

Collaboration

LEA and EPP/CC lead contacts believe **a state system for teacher recruitment and retention should place emphasis on collaboration among all stakeholders.** The goals should be to share best practices and eliminate barriers for teaching candidates.

Establishing collaborative partnerships between schools, districts, universities, community organizations, and the state can enhance teacher recruitment and retention efforts. These partnerships can facilitate access to resources, support services, and networking opportunities that promote professional growth and job satisfaction.

-LEA (PL1; City; Large)

We established a core curriculum to help students transfer credits to other institutions. A lot of students spend an extra year at some of their transfer institutions because the four-year institutions won't take all of our education classes.

-Community College

The partnerships between schools and nearby universities are vital.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

In particular, a state system should help LEAs and EPPs/CCs align their expectations for and efforts in recruiting and developing teachers.

University expectations should align more with district expectations.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Medium)

Better alignment of K–12 GYO programs and EPP recruitment efforts is sorely needed. Exploring and developing potential partnerships often feels like ships passing in the night—we are all working on the same goals but pursuing different strategies. A stronger organization at the top (from the state, DESE, or other organization) would help ensure a better use of resources by all constituents.

-Educator Preparation Program

LEA and EPP/CC lead contacts believe **LEAs, EPPs/CCs, and DESE are key partners in the development of a state system for teacher recruitment and retention** (see Table 24). In addition, they indicate other constituencies are important partners.

Table 24. Grantee-Identified Key Stakeholders in the Development of a State System for Teacher Recruitment and Retention

	LEA GYO Grantees (N = 175)	LEA Retention Grantees (N = 205)	EPP/CC Grantees (N = 16)
LEAs	115	142	10
EPPs/CCs	99	68	10
DESE	62	59	10
Legislators	23	39	2
Community/Business Leaders	12	25	1
Professional Organizations	11	21	3
Other State Departments and Officials	7	11	1
Other Stakeholders	7	4	1

Note. "DESE" includes the Commissioner, the State Board of Education, RPDCs, and the State GYO Coordinator. "Professional Organizations" includes teacher and administrator organizations (e.g., MOASBO, MOASPA, MASA, MAESP, MSTA, MSBA, MNEA, MOASSP). "Other State Departments and Officials" includes the governor, Department of Labor, Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development, and mental/behavior health agencies. "Other Stakeholders" include educational non-profits, foundations, lobbyists, media, and external experts.

Some LEA and EPP lead contacts elaborate on their responses.

DESE, legislators, and the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development are all key partners in the development of a state system.

-LEA (PL3; Suburb; Large)

A key partner is the teachers that are currently in education. Giving them a voice to be heard is vital to the continued development of our state system.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

K–12 schools and EPPs are the key partners in developing a teacher pipeline.

-Educator Preparation Program

Sustained Funding

LEA and EPP/CC lead contacts believe **it is essential for a state system to provide sustained funding for teacher recruitment and retention.**

The financial support from the state is the most critical component at this time.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Medium)

A state system will need to be fully funded so that districts in under-funded areas can provide competitive teacher salaries.

-LEA (PL3; Suburb; Large)

Express the dire need for educators to those who decide state funding amounts. Ask lawmakers to fully fund formulas and consider increasing teacher pay without condition. Neighboring states are pulling our teacher candidates outside of Missouri because of the salaries. Many potential teachers can't justify going into debt with the promise of a salary that will make it difficult to pay it off.

-Educator Preparation Program

Sustained funding will enable LEAs to strengthen their efforts in increasing teacher salary, which is crucial for recruiting and retaining teachers.

We need more money to pay teachers. Missouri ranks 47th in the nation for average teacher salaries. Until this area is addressed, the teacher shortage will persist.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

Providing funding to increase teacher salaries is the best strategy to help us continue to obtain and retain teachers.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

The pay difference from my district to a neighboring district is significant. I will have to make a decision at some point about possibly moving. It's the salary that will make me leave.

-Teacher

The only thing I am afraid of is the pay. I have talked to teachers about it, and I know the pay isn't very good. I want to help students in the future and teachers can impact their lives, but the pay is the issue. How will I afford a home and family on the pay of a teacher? I don't want to have three or four jobs at a time. One of my teachers is a waitress and manages a restaurant on the weekend. I don't want to do that.

-Student

We need to provide a competitive salary for our teachers. You can go to Kansas or Illinois and make more money. This needs to be addressed by the state system.

-Principal

The funding (e.g., for scholarships or tuition benefits) can also incentivize more students to pursue a career in education.

To recruit and retain teachers, it is critical the state provide college tuition benefits to aspiring teachers who commit to working in Missouri for a set number of years.

-LEA (PL3; Suburb; Large)

Scholarships via grants and funding for EPPs seem to be the most important drivers in teacher recruitment. Continuing to offer scholarships for prospective teachers seems to be the most direct way for us to recruit teachers.

-Educator Preparation Program

Give more opportunities for scholarships. Scholarships would give kids the extra push to go into the teaching field.

-Student

Some LEA lead contacts note the need for ensuring equitable distribution of resources (e.g., among different LEAs, between veteran and new teachers).

The state system should consider how to help fund teachers in a more equitable manner across the state. We would retain more teachers if pay was not a factor, but we have to compete with districts that have a larger funding base.

-LEA (PL2; Town; Medium)

Ensuring equitable distribution of resources, including funding, staffing, and support services, is essential for addressing teacher retention and effectiveness disparities. Statewide policies for resource allocation, including funding formulas and staffing ratios, can help ensure that all schools have access to the resources they need.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

Raise the base pay for all teachers and have that flow down. The plan currently in place only helps districts get staff to \$38,000, which is great, but is a slap in the face to staff who have spent 10 plus years at a district and are now only making what a brand-new teacher makes.

-LEA (PL2; Rural; Medium)

LEA lead contacts underscore the importance of having flexibility in a state system in how they can use the funding to address their unique needs.

Each district knows their teachers best. So allowing them the freedom to spend the money (within reason) on what they feel will recruit and retain teachers is crucial.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

While statewide incentive programs help attract teachers to high-needs areas, allowing districts to design their incentive programs provides flexibility to address local challenges. Districts could offer incentives such as housing assistance, relocation stipends, or specialized PD opportunities based on their unique circumstances.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

The state system is built primarily for high-school students interested in teaching. In the cities, we are interested in this work, but our needs are much more dire. We have a large number of classrooms covered by substitutes, and most of our efforts need to lie in converting those substitutes to certified teachers for now.

-LEA (PL1; City; Large)

Support to Teachers and Teacher Candidates

LEA lead contacts indicate **it is important for a state system to offer ongoing support, in response to teacher-identified needs, throughout a teacher's career continuum.** As examples, the support may include promoting teacher voice and leadership, enhancing school climate and culture, and providing PD on classroom management and teacher well-being.

Continue to allow for opportunities to increase teacher voice and teacher leadership opportunities, both locally and at the state level.

-LEA (PL3; Suburb; Medium)

Creating a supportive work environment is critical. This includes fostering a positive school culture, providing opportunities for collaboration and mentorship, and implementing policies that promote work-life balance and teacher well-being.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

Provide training, specifically in social-emotional learning, classroom management, and instructional strategies.

-LEA (PL1; City; Medium)

LEA and EPP/CC lead contacts and other educators highlight **the importance of support from principals to teachers.**

Teachers don't leave a school, they leave leadership. When leaders are supportive and let people try new things to work with kids, that speaks volumes to especially experienced teachers due to the things that are going on.

-Human Resource Director

Effective school leadership is essential for teacher recruitment and retention. Principals and administrators who prioritize teacher development, provide meaningful feedback, and advocate for resources and support systems, contribute significantly to a positive school culture and teacher satisfaction.

-LEA (PL1; City; Large)

In particular, many educators believe **principals' participation in the Missouri Leadership Development System (MLDS) contributes to the recruitment and retention of teachers.**

MLDS is huge. The Blue Ribbon Commission submitted strong data that administrators who participated in MLDS had higher retention in their buildings. I am supportive of MLDS. MLDS should continue.

-Teacher Association Leader

MLDS is the most beneficial program that I have ever participated in as a leader. I learn new strategies every single year to help me better serve the students and staff back at my building. Strategies I learned from MLDS help grow and retain our teachers.

-Principal

MLDS has absolutely helped me to recruit and retain teachers. The program gives very good coaching on how to do an evaluation, give specific feedback, and grow a teacher. That makes an impact in retaining teachers in our district.

-Superintendent

I wish I had MLDS when I came into this role. It teaches new administrators to communicate effectively and give honest and open feedback to help teachers grow. New administrators also become more reflective in what they do.

-Human Resource Director

LEA lead contacts believe **a state system should promote paid clinical learning experiences for teacher candidates.** These experiences (e.g., apprenticeships, internships) enable students to hone their crafts in teaching, appreciate the impact of teachers, and at the same time get paid.

Field experiences and apprenticeships are powerful. Apprenticeships through DOL that have some pay associated with them are very appealing to students.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

The most effective tool we have found to recruit future teachers is the opportunities in the classroom. Students get the opportunity to see what it is like to be a teacher and how they can impact a child. This has been powerful.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Medium)

Teacher Certification

Many educators indicate **a state system should, while maintaining high standards, provide more alternative routes to teacher certification.**

Even during a teacher shortage, we should not decrease expectations of our future educators. We should still keep certification requirements at a high standard.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

Watering down the education system with teachers who have not been properly prepared is going to be seen in the product it puts out.

-LEA (PL2; Rural; Small)

I came into teaching through the ABCTE option. If my only option had been going back to college for four years, I am not sure I would have done it. I like school, but I need to support my family.

-Teacher

Within this context, some lead contacts share their concerns on the GPA and testing requirements for teacher certification.

Reconsider the 3.0 GPA requirement for certification. Let's take science as an example. Someone may really want to be a science teacher, but they earn a 2.85 GPA. Local science-dependent businesses would be happy to hire that person, but we can't.

-LEA (PL3; Suburb; Medium)

Have we considered if the certification test is still relevant? It seems it is very heavily content-based, especially the elementary education one. Much of this content is far above what a teacher would need. It should focus more on best practices.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

Some educators hope the certification process can be further streamlined by making the information about certification more accessible and shortening the timeline.

If DESE could provide more clarity and streamlining for applying for certifications, it would increase our number of applicants. It seems to be a different process for every grade level and subject area with a long wait for approval.

-LEA (PL3; Suburb; Medium)

Make the certification process easier to understand. The website and forms are confusing for people who are not used to the DESE lingo or website.

-LEA (PL3; Rural; Small)

We have to review the four-year certification process for teachers. We need to look at shorter timelines, with an internship that includes pay for two years after two years of college coursework. This may lead to higher recruitment and retention.

-Teacher Association Leader

A few LEA lead contacts suggest providing multiple subject teaching credentials.

Certification has to adjust. Instead of certifying biology and chemistry separately, just treat science like math where you are certified for all subjects.

-LEA (PL3; Town; Medium)

Teacher placement based on need with any teacher certification. In other words, a middle-school teacher should be able to teach any content needed. There is no correlation between specific certification and the ability to teach kids.

-LEA (PL3; Suburb; Medium)

Sharing and Learning Opportunities

Some LEA lead contacts believe **a state system should promote the sharing of innovative strategies and effective practices for teacher recruitment and retention.** This includes, but is not limited to, creating a resource hub for research-based strategies, convening state conferences, and strengthening the GYO network.

Develop a repository of evidence-based best practices and ideas that districts can share and bring to their respective districts.

-LEA (PL2; Suburb; Medium)

We have no idea whether we are utilizing research-based best practices or effective administrative strategies. Consultation with and guidance from experts or those with a demonstrated pattern of success would be extremely helpful.

-Educator Preparation Program

Our GYO coordinator finds the State Conference (new in 2024) and the regional job-alike meetings (run by the state GYO coordinator) are very helpful.

-LEA (PL3; Suburb; Large)

The GYO Network is by far the most helpful piece of the state system.

-LEA (PL3; Suburb; Medium)

CHAPTER SEVEN: TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PLAYBOOK

The nation is facing a shortage of classroom teachers. Many effective teachers are leaving their classrooms and fewer candidates are entering the teacher pipeline. Factors such as negative perceptions of the profession and worsening working conditions contribute to this challenge.

Through the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grants, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) supported local education agencies (LEAs), educator preparation programs (EPPs), and community colleges (CCs) across the state to strengthen their existing strategies and experiment with innovative approaches for recruiting and retaining teachers.

Eight cornerstones of a playbook for a successful state system for teacher recruitment and retention emerge from this unprecedented financial investment; extensive collaboration among the LEAs, EPPs, and CCs; and learnings from four phases of a comprehensive evaluation.

Cornerstone #1: Effective teacher recruitment and retention requires the support of a state system. The decision to become a teacher or stay in the profession is influenced by interconnected factors within the state educational system. Some (e.g., certification) are policies at the state level, some (e.g., teacher voice) are practices at the school and LEA level, and some (e.g., salary) can be policies and practices at both the state and LEA levels. Focusing only on one or two factors without anticipating and making major changes at other levels is unlikely to be successful in addressing the state's teacher shortage challenge.

A state system is required to help all districts make progress in recruiting, developing, and retaining teachers. LEAs have very different levels of organizational capacity and resources for attracting teachers. Further, LEAs serving low-income students, students of color, and rural communities are often at a competitive disadvantage financially and lose teachers to districts that are better resourced. To ensure high-quality teachers for all students in all LEAs, it is the better part of wisdom to address teacher recruitment and retention as a state system.

In this context, the state education agency (SEA) should focus on such leadership functions as convening diverse parties in support of recruitment and retention, informing funding and policy decision-making, serving as a repository of evidence-based best practices to share with partners, and building the capacity of collaborators to advance best practices. Central to this cornerstone is creating the conditions through which all partners see how the status of the state's teacher workforce impacts each one of them and the success of their individual efforts.

An example in Missouri has been the active support of the State Board of Education. The Board convened a Blue Ribbon Commission on Teacher Recruitment and Retention and ensured that at least 50% of the membership included business leaders from across the state, as well as legislators and professional organizations. The intentional and strategic selection of commission members by the Board communicated clearly that a high-quality teacher workforce also matters to stakeholders outside of the education sector, highlighting the need for a state system.

Cornerstone #2: Statewide campaigns are needed to elevate the teaching profession.

Current perceptions about the teaching profession are at or near their lowest level in 50 years. The negative perceptions of being a teacher are detrimental to current and future teachers' career decisions. It is therefore imperative for the field to improve the perception of the teaching profession.

A state system should include launching promotional campaigns with a compelling theme such as *Our State Teaches*. The purpose of the campaigns should be to promote the value of teaching, strengthen the culture of respect and support for teachers, and enhance the statewide climate and culture for the profession. In essence, the campaigns should showcase the value, joy, and impact of teaching as a profession.

Elevating the teaching profession through a statewide campaign draws on practices from multiple sectors including health care campaigns to recruit nurses, statewide efforts to attract and retain talent in multiple fields, state campaigns to fill public jobs, the initiatives of teachers' unions to recruit new teachers in multiple states, and federal efforts to improve recruitment to America's Armed Forces.

Cornerstone #3: Effective teacher recruitment and retention requires collaboration and constituency building.

Collaboration (with both internal players and external stakeholders) is a must for recruiting and retaining teachers. However, the collaboration needs to be more meaningful than traditional approaches to partnership which often result in minor changes to business-as-usual practices. Instead, a state system's emphasis needs to be on collaborative investment in and ownership of the system for recruitment and retention. A broad base of support is essential for an effective state system.

An example of this collaboration in Missouri was the creation of a statewide Recruitment and Retention Task Force. This task force has been in place for the past three years and includes the leadership of all professional education associations in the state. These organizations are interdependently investing and collaborating to further educator recruitment and retention efforts.

Constituency building is therefore needed at three levels. The first level includes the core of the SEA, LEAs, EPPs, and CCs. The second level includes the governor, the state legislature, business and community leaders, teacher and administrator organizations, and regional support centers. The third level includes other state departments (e.g., Department of Labor, Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development) and other key stakeholders (e.g., foundations, non-profit organizations, the media). All three levels are needed in order to advance teacher recruitment and retention throughout the state and ensure there is sufficient expertise and support for changes in funding, policy, and practice.

Missouri is growing in its ability to take on teacher recruitment and retention as a state system. Leaders are owning the responsibility to be hands-on in addressing recruitment and retention needs. With the SEA as the catalyst, the state's educational and governmental sectors are demonstrating their leadership commitment by aligning their expectations, investing both short-term federal resources and long-term state resources, and synchronizing their efforts to strengthen teacher recruitment and retention.

Cornerstone #4: Funding is essential and must be targeted. For a state system to be well-positioned to attract and hold on to teaching talent, there must be funding for both compensation and non-compensation purposes. When it comes to funding, every “yes” must justify the “no’s,” meaning the state needs to target funding for maximum impact on the greatest areas of need. It also means that a state system must provide a reasonable level of prescriptive direction for the funding, while coterminously encouraging LEAs, EPPs, and CCs to engage in innovative practices.

Funding for Compensation Purposes

Leaders across the educational spectrum highlight the importance of providing focused and sustained funding to raise teacher baseline salaries across a state. For those who do enter teaching, there has long been a “pay penalty” compared to professions that require similar levels of education. In Missouri, starting teacher pay and average teacher pay have historically been among the lowest in the country. However, the governor and state legislature have responded in real-time to this problem by increasing the baseline teacher salary in 2024. The state has also provided Teacher Baseline Salary Grants to all eligible LEAs to cover the full cost of salary plus payroll benefits, and increase teacher pay for every starting teacher to \$40,000 per year. For teachers with more than two years of teaching experience, the state is spending more than \$45 million on a Career Ladder Program. Building on what the state has achieved so far, leaders are continuing to focus on increasing teacher compensation. As the state expands efforts to provide higher pay to teachers, it is also focusing on ensuring equitable distribution of the additional resources.

Funding for Non-Compensation Purposes

The efforts of LEAs’ to be innovative in encouraging the entry of new candidates into the teaching profession underscore the need to make funding available for non-compensation purposes. Three of the practices which LEAs, EPPs, and CCs highlight as promising are (1) providing funding for recruitment grants to LEAs, EPPs, and CCs at a cost of \$2.5 million per year to the state to incentivize participation in Grow Your Own initiatives, (2) offering stipends for teacher candidates in educator residency or registered apprenticeship programs, and (3) providing scholarships at a cost of \$800,000 to the state in the first year of the scholarship program to help with student loan debt relief so that entry into teaching is a more financially viable option for prospective teachers. This amount will grow to more than \$3 million dollars over a five-year period. These scholarships include a commitment from the individuals to teach in the same LEA where they received their support, establishing a unique teacher pipeline into that LEA.

Cornerstone #5: The tools of public policy need to be used strategically. There are three tools of public policy: legislation, regulation, and the role of the bully pulpit. A state system for recruitment and retention must draw on all three. The legislation and regulation signal the state’s priorities and frame the policy direction and pathway to implementation, while the bully pulpit builds understanding of and support for the changes. Two examples below are areas that can be addressed by using these tools of public policy.

Routes to Teacher Certification

There are multiple routes to becoming a classroom teacher. These different routes have expanded during this teacher shortage era. They include traditional preparatory programs, alternative certification, and a broad category of “other” that includes test-based certification without coursework, preparation from other states and countries, and substitute teachers and student teachers being recognized as teachers of record.

States increasingly value the availability of alternative routes for teacher certification. These alternative routes make it possible to hire novice teachers even if they have not gone through traditional teacher preparation programs. The growing need is for a state system to continue to explore innovative routes to teacher certification, while having meaningful standards for that certification. This requires the state to effectuate a balance between eliminating unnecessary barriers while ensuring readiness through necessary requirements. A key first step is to conduct a detailed review of the criteria for teacher certification and propose adjustments where feasible. These adjustments can then be embedded, as appropriate, into legislation or regulation. It is important that these adjustments become major speaking points for the SEA in advancing these changes. Stakeholders must clearly hear the SEA is working to provide new teachers that are classroom ready, while still doing everything to eliminate unnecessary requirements and cost.

Residencies and Apprenticeships

Informed policy matters for innovative pathways such as residency programs and apprenticeship programs. Research shows that strong educator residencies have rigorous and intentional selection criteria, relevant coursework built around the classroom experience, structured coaching and feedback, evaluation for continuous improvement, and expert and ongoing mentorship (Fitz & Yun, 2024; National Center for Teacher Residencies, 2014). In addition, states and districts must set the conditions to enable residencies to succeed, such as developing strong partnerships with teachers’ associations and educator preparation programs, providing financial supports, and aligning recruitment with teacher subject area shortages (Fitz & Yun, 2024; Worley & Zerbino, 2023). In addition to the two teacher residency programs in the state, Missouri is one of the leading states in the country for teacher apprenticeship programs. These programs allow potential future teachers to undergo teacher preparation training while working in schools and earning a paycheck (Will, 2023). The state can take the lead in promoting policy actions in each of these areas and use the power of the bully pulpit to assemble key partners in supporting innovative approaches to preparing teachers.

Cornerstone #6: Funding and policy choices trigger decisions related to teacher development. A state system for recruitment and retention must anticipate the requirements for teacher development that result from funding and policy decisions. The state cannot leave to chance educator development. It must purposefully recognize, for example, that an increase of novice teachers and teachers who have received less formal preparation means districts and schools must be able to accelerate their development into accomplished teachers. Similarly, the state needs to recognize that teachers with experience, who remain in the profession, also have developmental needs. Districts and schools need to support experienced teachers to become expert instructors in their own classrooms and teacher leaders who influence other teachers’ practices.

Several implications are highlighted below:

Induction

Developing teachers who enter from various pathways, and with different levels of preparation, requires LEAs to rethink their induction strategies. Research shows that induction affects teacher commitment and retention, instructional practices, and student achievement (Glazerman et al., 2010; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Schmidt et al., 2017). Research also finds that less than 1% of teachers actually receive a comprehensive induction (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

A comprehensive induction program is multi-year and instructionally focused. In a state system for recruitment and retention, the SEA needs to provide LEAs with a framework for induction that includes the content needed to accelerate teacher skills, approaches and sequences for delivery of the content, and methods for determining the impact of the induction.

In response to low teacher retention data, particularly related to the first two years of teaching, the state of Missouri offers two significant components of comprehensive induction. They are both required in statute and regulation. The Beginning Teacher Assistance Program (BTAP) regulation was revised to require two years of capacity building to ensure new teachers develop critical skills and knowledge, participate in support networks, and experience success as a new teacher in their first years in the profession.

In addition to BTAP, new teachers in Missouri participate in two years of required one-to-one mentoring. The state's regulatory standards for mentoring are being revised as well to ensure new teachers are fully supported in their beginning years of teaching. Both efforts are being carried out to improve the instructional skills and retention rates of new teachers in Missouri.

Principal Leadership

Principals play a pivotal role in teacher recruitment and retention. In particular, effective principals have lower rates of teacher turnover. Research shows that principal support is a deciding factor in teacher decisions to remain in their schools, even more important than salary. Effective principals are more likely to retain high-performing teachers. Moreover, principal leadership is second only to effective instruction among school-related factors that contribute to student achievement. Yet, the task of developing principals as skilled school leaders is largely left to individual districts. In a state system for recruitment and retention, a formalized system for leadership development and support must also be included.

Developing effective principals and enhancing their leadership ability to recruit, develop, and retain teachers is a challenge which lends itself to a state-level response. The Missouri Leadership Development System (MLDS) is a highly successful system for building the capacity of principals in five leadership domains and at each phase of their careers from Aspiring (pre-certificated), to Emerging (initial career entry), through Developing (mid-career), and ultimately to Transformational (exceptional). MLDS is widely hailed by superintendents, principals, and teachers in Missouri. MLDS specifically includes trainings for principals on how to address teacher recruitment and retention. In particular, it strengthens principals' capacity to build cultures and structures which enhance teachers' professional and personal growth. In addition to

its impact on principal leadership, school culture, working conditions and teacher pedagogy, it has resulted in principal retention rates over the past six years that are more than ten percentage points higher than the state's average principal retention rates.

Statewide and Regional Professional Development

Building teacher capacity means a state system must have a delivery mechanism for professional development so that it can share evidence-based practices, provide LEAs with current research, and build multi-district learning communities.

The Missouri Teacher Development System (MTDS) provides a competency-based approach for developing teachers statewide, with just-in-time learning, support for different phases of new teacher learning, and statewide networking opportunities. Teacher retention rates for those participating in MTDS exceed 95%, far surpassing the state's average teacher retention rates. MTDS demonstrates the value of involving teachers in cohort-based learning opportunities as a means to improving teacher retention.

In addition, Missouri has a statewide network of professional learning centers called the Regional Professional Development Centers (RPDCs). These regional centers provide teachers with trainings, coaching, and instructional materials. The centers provide some of these trainings in regional meetings with staff from multiple schools and provide others on-site where the trainers come directly to the school. As regional centers, they ensure close proximity of high-quality professional learning to all teachers throughout the state.

Cornerstone #7: A state system needs to recognize the critical importance of teacher voice. The voices of current teachers are pivotal when conducting outreach to and recruiting potential candidates—they are effective recruiters for new teachers. As Darrion Cockrell, Missouri's 2021 Teacher of the Year, emphasizes, teachers are walking billboards for the profession (Missouri Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support, 2022). Students' aspirations for becoming a teacher can be heavily influenced by their current teachers.

Teacher voice is also key to pinpointing the areas where pedagogical development is most needed. Further, teacher voice is essential for understanding the school factors that are critical to retention—a principal with leadership skills and a supportive school culture that values the teacher both professionally and personally. Including teacher voice is critical to helping ensure efforts by a state system for recruitment and retention are responsive to a new generation of teachers whose aspirations and needs may differ from the state's veteran teachers.

The challenge is how to promote teacher voice at state and LEA levels. Addressing this challenge requires two-way communication between the SEA and LEAs, as well as direct communication with teachers. The SEA should share evidence-based practices for enhancing teacher voice as part of its general guidance on school improvement for all districts as well as its targeted guidance for schools in Comprehensive Support and Improvement status. At the same time, the more enterprising LEAs are often knowledgeable and skilled in engaging teachers as partners in school improvement. The SEA must also create opportunities for teachers to offer input directly at the state level, where their ideas, opinions, and suggestions can be collected and used to inform state policy. In Missouri, a Teacher Advisory Committee meets directly with the

Commissioner of Education multiple times throughout the year. This provides opportunities for the Commissioner of Education to hear directly from teachers who represent different types of schools across the state.

Cornerstone #8: Teacher retention requires the alignment of three factors: recruitment, development, and compensation. Retaining teachers depends on attracting promising and well-prepared teacher candidates to the teaching profession, supporting their growth and development at the hands of an effective leader in each school, and providing professional and appropriate compensation.

In a state system for teacher recruitment and retention, retention is a dependent variable. A higher rate of retention happens when a state system effectively addresses recruitment, development, and compensation. These three factors are the leading indicators of success, while retention is a lagging indicator of success.

Engaging multiple partners to jointly boost recruitment results in an increase of well-prepared new teachers on the supply-side of the teacher workforce. Using state-administered programming like BTAP is an effective way for SEAs and LEAs to collaboratively provide effective professional development. Steering efforts such as MLDS ensures there are principals who can improve the organizational conditions of the schools which results in teachers being more successful in their teaching. Using regulations and statutes to promote appropriate levels of compensation results in teachers feeling appreciated and compensated for the very challenging work they perform. Recruitment, development, and compensation working in tandem results in improved retention rates of teachers.

Cornerstones in Action: A Primer on Do’s and Don’ts

Table 25. Do’s and Don’ts in Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Do	Don't
Cornerstone #1: Elevate teacher recruitment and retention to a state system that addresses issues through state and local level investments and actions from numerous key stakeholders	Leave teacher recruitment and retention to a single player/stakeholder at a single level (e.g., the Human Resources leader at the local level)
Cornerstone #2: Develop statewide campaigns to elevate the profession by explicitly highlighting the benefits and valuable contributions that come from teaching	Assume people want to be teachers and that those impacted by teachers know the many benefits and valuable contributions of the profession
Cornerstone #3: Build a constituency group at multiple levels with a variety of internal players and external stakeholders collaborating to provide the necessary support and expertise for funding, policy, and practice	Attempt to address recruitment and retention with single, isolated strategies implemented at only one specific level (e.g., state level)
Cornerstone #4: Target funding for both compensation and non-compensation purposes (e.g., scholarships, tuition benefits, stipends) for supporting teachers and teacher candidates	Focus funding on traditional marketing approaches (e.g., distributing printed brochures) that have a relatively low payoff

Do	Don't
Cornerstone #5: Maintain high standards for teacher certification while also providing more alternative and innovative routes, and eliminating unnecessary barriers to teacher certification	Lower the standards for teacher certification which could communicate the message that anyone can do the job with relatively little training and preparation
Cornerstone #6: Create a robust system of teacher development and growth that is supported by highly effective principals	Provide routine, invaluable professional development which fails to meet the needs of teachers and is delivered by less effective principals
Cornerstone #7: Create mechanisms at the state and local levels to promote teacher voice and ensure that teacher ideas and suggestions inform state and local policies	Overlook teacher voice as the critical and necessary source of data and information that it can be
Cornerstone #8: Improve teacher retention by implementing interconnected and effective recruitment, development, and appropriate compensation strategies	Believe that any one single approach in isolation, such as compensation or development, will improve teacher retention for the long-term

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