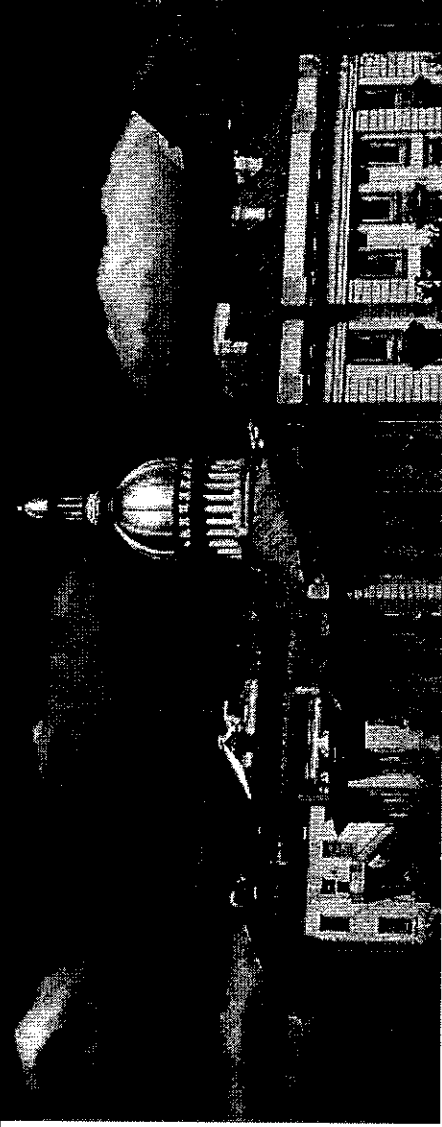


APPENDIX



NJ Joint Committee on the Public Schools

2/22/22

17



TOM PURYEAR

Education Chair, New Jersey NAACP



DR. JULIAN VASQUEZ HEILIG

Dean, University of Kentucky College of
Education

Education Chair, Kentucky NAACP

NAACP



Over the past four decades, the number of education majors across the nation has more than halved.

-21%



4%

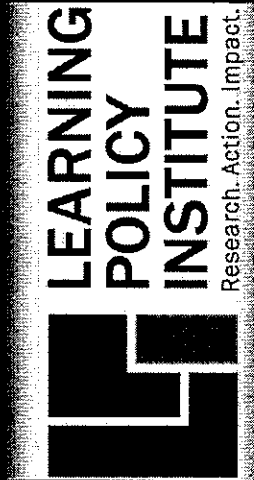


THE EDUCATION DEGREE HAS SEEN A DRAMATIC DECLINE, FALLING FROM 21 PERCENT OF ALL GRADUATES IN 1970 (176,307) TO JUST 6 PERCENT (105,656) BY 2011

THE DECLINE HAS CONTINUED THE LAST DECADE ACROSS THE NATION AS THE MOST RECENT NATIONAL DATA SHOWS THAT EDUCATION MAJORS DROPPED FURTHER TO 4 PERCENT (83,944)


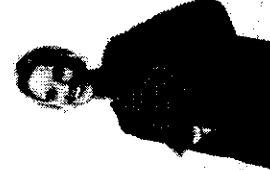
Source: NCES

MADE WITH beautiful.ai



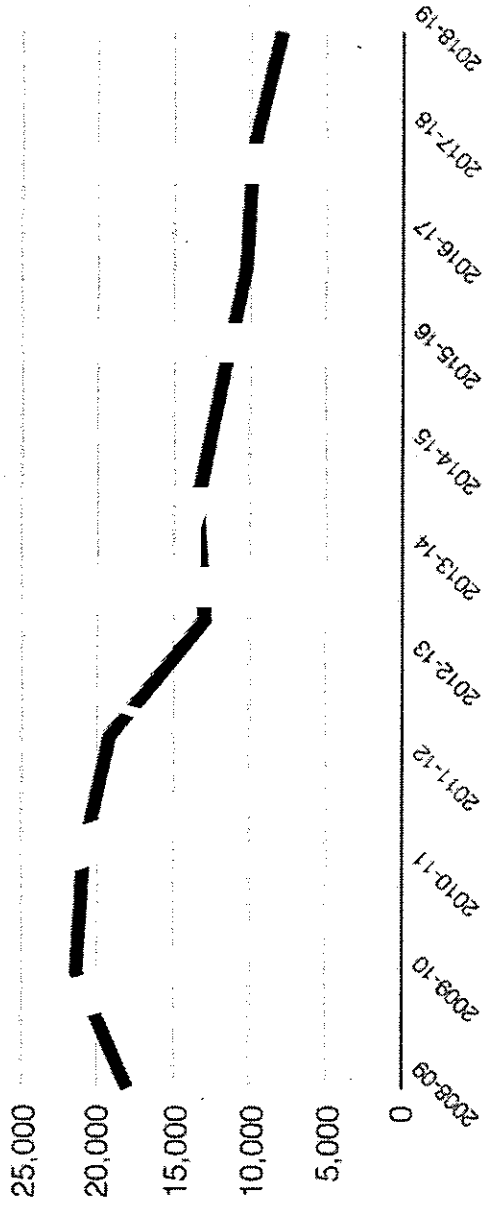
“Longstanding shortages, which are often most acute in high-need fields and high-need schools, appear to be growing more severe due to a range of pandemic-related factors, including rising early retirements and resignations and a reduced pipeline of incoming teachers.”

HOW THE PANDEMIC IS IMPACTING THE TEACHER WORKFORCE, 2021

<p>NEW JERSEY POLICY PERSPECTIVE</p> 	<p>TEACHER QUALITY IS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT IN-SCHOOL INFLUENCE ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN NEW JERSEY</p>		<p>"New Jersey's teaching workforce is mostly white and female; there is little evidence of a trend toward a more diverse teaching workforce"</p>
<p>-49%</p> <p>NUMBER OF CANDIDATES COMPLETING TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS IN NEW JERSEY HAS DROPPED THE PAST DECADE</p>	<p>\$</p> <p>"THE RESEARCH ON TEACHER QUALITY SUGGESTS THAT QUALIFIED PEOPLE BECOME TEACHERS BASED, IN PART, ON HOW WELL TEACHING PAYS COMPARED TO OTHER JOB"</p>	<p>Gap in pensions and health benefits do not fully close the pay gap between teachers and college-educated workers in other professions</p>	

Enrollment in New Jersey Teacher Preparation Programs

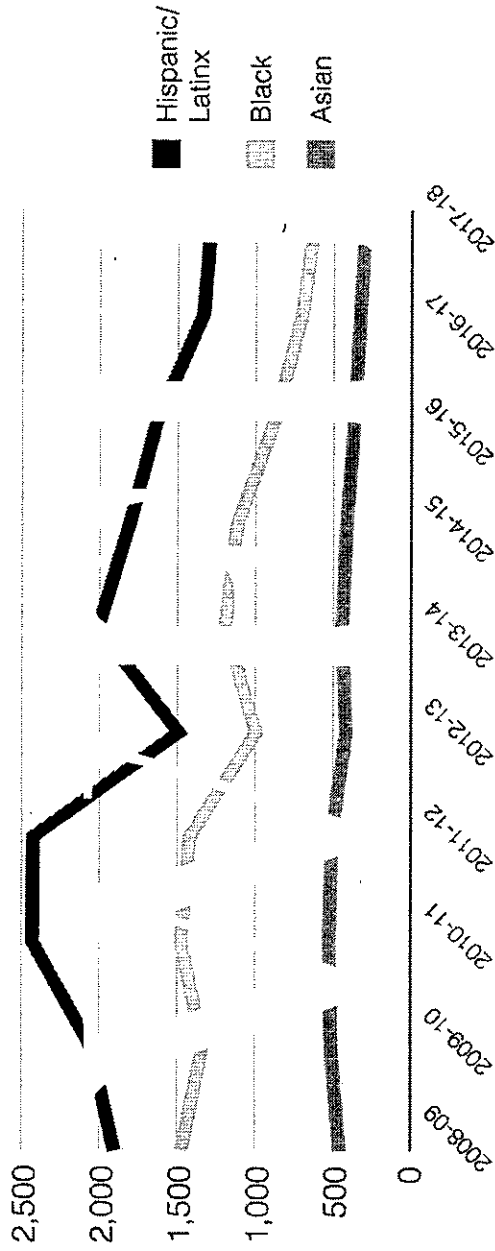
Enrollment dropped 63 percent since the 2009-10 school year.



Source: U.S. Department of Education,
Title II Act Data Reports.

NEW JERSEY POLICY PERSPECTIVE NJPP.ORG

Enrollment in New Jersey Teacher Preparation Programs, by Race



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Title II Reports.

NEW JERSEY POLICY PERSPECTIVE NJPP.ORG

7x



NJPP, 2020

33% 

In NJ, Latinx enrollees of any race declined by 33 percent

58% 


In NJ, Black/African American enrollees declined by 58 percent

36% 

In NJ, Asian American enrollees declined 36 percent

8x

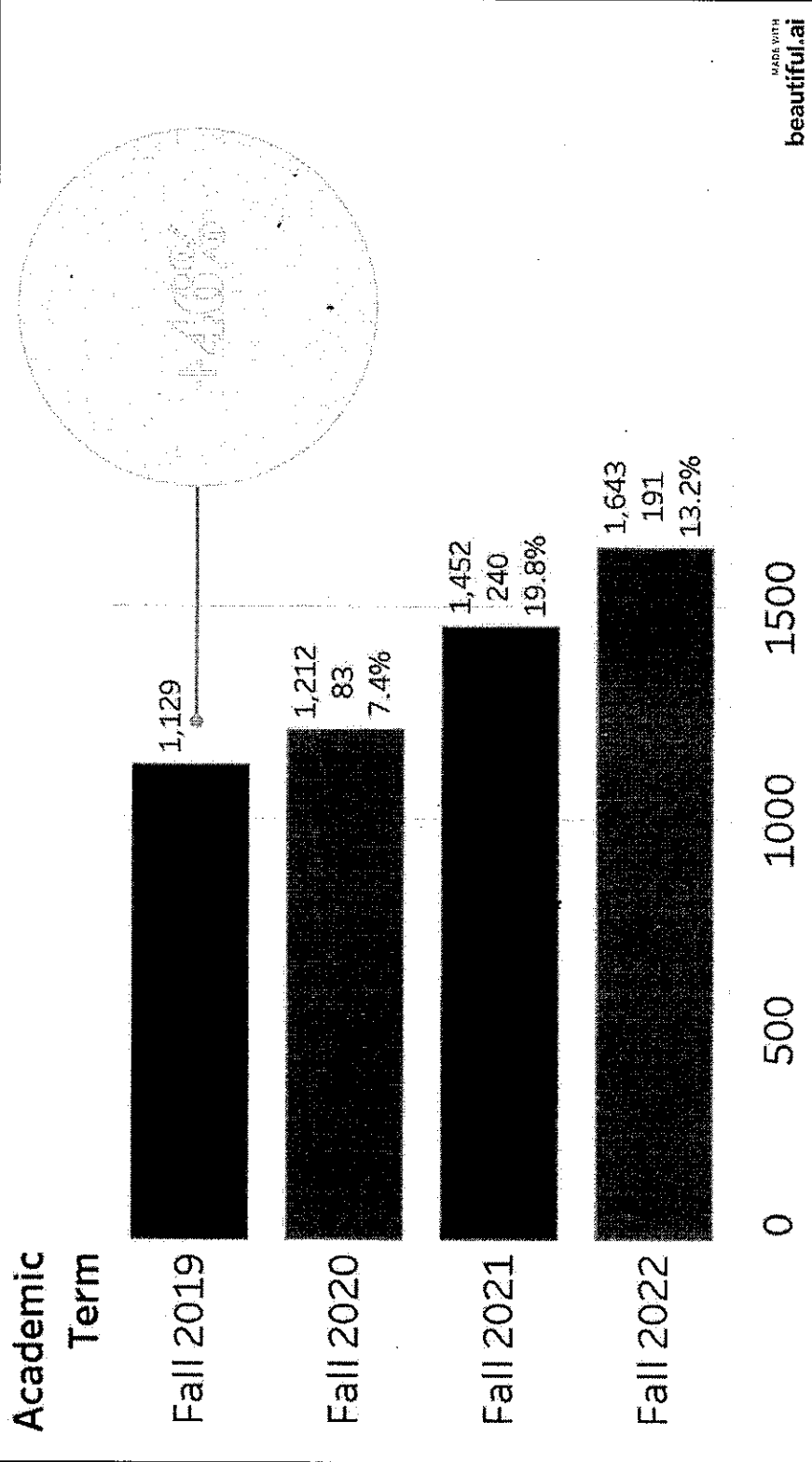
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University of Kentucky College of Education

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9x



Academic Term

Academic Term	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021*
	1,363	1,348	1,287	1,153	1,065	1,110	1,072

UNIVERSITY OF
KENTUCKY COLLEGE OF
EDUCATION



WE'VE STABILIZED OUR
ENROLLMENT DROP IN OUR
TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM
THE LAST THREE YEARS.

//X

“Rome wasn't burned in a day.”

Colleges of education and the teaching profession are facing challenges on multiple fronts that have made it difficult to grow the number of teachers entering the profession. I've heard from our students that the challenges are vast and include, but are not limited to,

- LOWER RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI) RELATIVE TO OTHER MAJORS,
- REDUCTION OF RESPECT FOR THE TEACHING PROFESSION
- ONEROUS REQUIREMENTS OF PROBLEMATIC EDUCATION REFORM
- GROWING AVAILABILITY OF ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION
- PROBLEMATIC WORKING CONDITIONS EXACERBATED BY A PANDEMIC
- PARENTS DISCOURAGING THEIR CHILDREN FROM BECOMING TEACHERS
- KNOWLEDGE OF LOW SALARIES AND BENEFITS RELATIVE TO OTHER COLLEGE EDUCATED PROFESSIONALS
- LACK OF CAREER PATHWAY OPPORTUNITIES
- PROBLEMATIC POLITICAL LEADERSHIP
- EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

12x

Internal
Barriers:
Lack
of new
resources
directly
invested
stymies
growth in
teacher
education
programs.

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● **AT A DISADVANTAGE?**

Colleges of education— due to the method of intensive training of teachers and other educators— can find themselves at a disadvantage in university designed incentive systems and performance funding.

● **PROFESSIONAL TRAINING**

Accreditation requires that faculty supervising students in the field are not assigned more than six teacher candidates per course. Similarly, educational psychology programs accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA) have caps on course sizes for counselors and other areas.

● **UNIVERSITY INCENTIVE SYSTEMS**

When university incentive systems and performance funding are designed and implemented, colleges that have larger class sizes, train large numbers of students online and have larger student to teacher ratios perform better in modeling because they appear more "productive" based on university delineated priorities focused on revenue.

● **WHAT ABOUT SOCIAL PROBLEMS?**

Colleges of education typically operate at a severe disadvantage in university-designed performance funding models despite their key role in training educators to address the burgeoning teacher shortage, and, more broadly ensuring the health of the US educational system, economic opportunity and addressing social problems.

Public Policy

NEW JERSEY A-5576

- "Retired teachers and staff members could return to work during the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years"



NEW JERSEY S-4203

- "The proposed law would eliminate the state residency requirement for all public school employees for a three year period."



2021 TEACHER DIVERSITY PACKAGE

- "Aimed at increasing the diversity of the state's education workforce, preventing teacher shortages, and cultivating inclusive learning environments."



DIRECT PERFORMANCE FUNDING

- Performance funding system could be supported to address the rapidly growing teacher shortage. This funding could be based on initial investments along with long-term performance expectations. In a similar fashion to health care performance funding it would directly reward colleges of education for meeting teacher education growth and efficacy goals.



KENTUCKY HB 527 AND HB 277

- Loan forgiveness in Promise Zones
- Loan forgiveness for expedited programs

**Testimony of Heather Moran, Principal of Logan Township Middle School
Before the Joint Committee on the Public Schools
February 22, 2022**

Good morning, Chairman Rice, Chairwoman Jasey and members of the Joint Committee on the Public Schools. I am Heather Moran, the proud Principal of Logan Middle School in Logan Township Middle School in Gloucester County. My school currently serves 371 students in grades 5 – 8. I have been the Principal at Logan for 10 years and I am especially proud of the academic achievement we were able to achieve pre-pandemic and the work we are doing to provide all students with equitable opportunities due to the School Climate Transformation Grant we were awarded.

As a lifelong educator, I can personally attest to the fact that the challenges our schools have faced since March 2020 are like nothing we have seen before in public education. Students, teachers and school leaders like myself have had to find inner reserves of creativity, flexibility and resilience to meet the challenges we face each and every day.

As I planned for our students' return to school this September, I hoped that this school year would be closer to a return to normalcy than we had experienced in a while. Yet, this school year has doggedly refused to do so, insisting on being in many ways even more challenging than last year! A key reason for that has been difficulties in staffing, not only in my building but across New Jersey. And, these staffing issues plague school leaders like me – not only within the teaching positions, but in **all** positions within my building and across the district.

Let me share a snapshot of some of the staffing challenges I have faced in my building and how this has impacted my students.

Instructionally, we are dedicated to our mission at Logan Middle School to provide a well-rounded, quality education linked to New Jersey's Learning Standards, through a comprehensive curriculum taught by high quality staff. This is especially important as students have returned to school bringing not only learning challenges, but significant behavioral issues and mental health needs with them to school. Yet, the pandemic, through actual cases of COVID, its quarantine and health/safety requirements, resulting staff leave requests and our difficulties in finding long-term and short-term staff replacements has definitely strained our ability to staff our classrooms and fill other building positions. This directly impacts our students in terms of the consistency of working with their teachers and the provision of the services they need whether these services are instructional, counseling or other supplemental services. Staffing levels also concern me as a school leader responsible for the health and safety of all and the security of my school building.

Here are some of the specific challenges I have faced this year:

- Despite the level of student needs in my building, I was unable to provide intervention services in math and English Language Arts (ELA) consistently because my intervention teachers were needed to cover other classes.
- In September, I needed a permanent Physical Education teacher. Normally, I receive many applications for such a position, but this year only four individuals applied. Once I hired the teacher, his prior district held him to his 60 days' notice requirement. As a result, my students did not have adequate health classes for the first marking period in the critical middle level grades.
- Our district's PreK – K building has been unable to fill a special education position at all. In order to care for our youngest learners, we have had to take a special education teacher from my middle school and move her to this position. I now have many students with IEPs in Science and Social Studies classrooms without the support of a trained special education teacher to modify their assignments and help them interact appropriately with grade level content. This is an issue I am working to address right now.
- Despite the major increase in student mental health needs, I only have one school counselor for an entire building of 371 middle school students. The inability to meet individual needs in this area has resulted in far more disciplinary interactions interrupting instruction, rather than addressing these needs through appropriate mental health services.
- In the fall, I will have a vacancy for a middle school science teacher. I am already losing sleep over whether I will receive applications from properly certified candidates for this critical position.
- As is occurring across most New Jersey school districts, my teachers have sacrificed their prep time to cover classes. This has led to greater stress and workloads for teachers who are already stressed, exhausted and overworked. I cannot afford to lose another teacher to another district, retirement, or profession.
- Last summer, I had difficulty in filling summer teaching positions and was unable to fill one such position altogether. Our extended school year program for our neediest students could only be filled by brand new hires which is a significant challenge since these students benefit from our most experienced educators. This year, we reached staff exhaustion levels normally experienced in June, before the holiday break in December. I am truly concerned about the summer program offerings we will be able to provide our students in June 2022.
- One of my biggest worries is the availability of substitutes and paraprofessional roles such as cafeteria-playground assistants, crossing guards, classroom aides, and cafeteria staff as these positions currently go unfilled. All of these gaps in

Hex

necessary roles in a building's safety net make supervision a true concern and can cause safety issues.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Since these widespread challenges will continue to threaten school operations and instructional programs now and into the future, I thank this committee for your interest in seeking to understand and address the scope of this problem. From the perspective of a principal, responsible for a school building, I thank you for enacting legislation that has sought to widen the pool of candidates available to us to fill positions across our schools, including positions in school leadership such as principals, assistant principals and supervisory roles where similar trends and vacancies are occurring.

I also urge you to pass S904/A2229 which would further increase our candidate pool by temporarily relieving the New Jersey residency requirement for new hires in our schools.

Other ideas that could be explored is to examine programs in other states that make certification of teachers easier, more relevant to their work or responsive to candidates from different walks of life. Tennessee has created a program that treats teacher candidates like apprentices where they work, earn money and complete their programs all at the same time. I truly fear what will happen to public schools if we do not move in these creative directions.

Another request is to not enact any new mandates on schools at this point in time. We simply do not have the staff to take on any new responsibilities.

Finally, I would ask this Legislature to develop a campaign to promote the teaching profession as a strong and important career path in our state. We need to rebuild New Jersey's strong tradition of believing in our top-notch system of public education, supporting our educators and modeling to our youth our strong state priority in public education as the pathway to a promising future.

Thank you.

Submitted by:
Heather Moran, Principal
Logan Township Middle School

17x

Testimony of Anthony Scotto
Before the Joint Committee on the Public Schools
February 22, 2022

Good morning. My name is Anthony Scotto; I am currently the Director of Curriculum & Instruction for the Hamilton Township School District in Mercer County. In my role, I am responsible for the curriculum of the school district but also the hiring of teachers across the district. We are a large district that serves almost 12,000 students; we have 17 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, 3 high schools, and one alternative middle/high program. While we are a very large school district, we are very proud of the work we have done particularly in the areas of program enhancements, new teacher induction, professional learning, technology, access & equity.

I am here today to share what staffing challenges have looked like for the last two years, particularly since the pandemic has impacted staffing. Every year, districts manage ongoing vacancies before, during, and after the school year. However, with a greater number of vacancies and a significantly smaller pool of teachers, our districts continue to struggle with staffing.

Why do we have a smaller pool? There are multiple reasons starting with pandemic impacts with more teachers requesting leave, some to take care of older parents in this health crisis or to take care of school age children. We have experienced more paternity leave requests than ever before. Regretfully, we have also had some phenomenal teachers choose to leave the profession at the height of their careers due to pandemic impacts. Unfortunately, there do not seem to be enough new teacher candidates entering the profession to replace them.

Lately, we have found that a minimal number (if any) candidates are applying for tenure track and/or long-term substitute positions. This often creates an interruption in learning for the district, school, and most importantly... the students. Yes, there are times we can secure a candidate, but not every time. Here's an example of what it looks like when we cannot secure a teacher for a long term or permanent vacancy:

At the elementary level:

- Intervention teachers (often known as basic skills teachers) are pulled from their programs to cover classes. This could be daily, for several days, or an extended period of time.
- We are also seeing a shortage of related arts teachers (i.e.: art, music, etc.). This then requires classes to be combined and/or the teacher loses their preparation period.

At the middle school level:

- The Language Arts Teacher has to go on leave, we post for a long-term substitute.... unfortunately, we have to go to plan b. We now have to ask our existing teachers to write lesson plans and grade assessments for the class(es) not covered. Next step is the principal needs to secure classroom coverage for these students. While the lessons are developed and assessed by a member of

the department, the students do not have the opportunity to interact with that teacher (as the other students on the grade level team get to).

At the high school level:

- A member of the math department has left mid-year or taken an extended leave of absence. With no applicants or certified content area substitutes, we now have to “stream” instruction from another high school in the district. Our recent tech enhancements certainly have made this possible, but now the teacher is teaching 20-22 students in his/her own classroom and 18-20 students (virtually) in another classroom on the other side of town. Not the ideal instructional model, but we certainly make it work.

What does all of this mean for the students? Wherever possible, we try to mitigate any interruption in their learning and provide consistency in instruction. However, the use of substitutes and streamed instruction does have an impact. So far, we have not had to eliminate any course offerings and I plan to fight to keep the breadth of curriculum that we currently offer in Hamilton for our students as long as I can.

This June I will complete my 27th year in education; the current staffing situations are the most unique I've ever seen (or had to manage as a central office leader). While we are dealing with these issues, perhaps the state will consider the following recommendations:

1. **Strengthen the turnaround time for issuance of substitute and teacher certificates.** The length of time it takes to have certification credentials approved by the NJDOE is a barrier to getting staff on board. For example, I submitted paperwork in November to our county office to have substitute credentials and I just got the approval the other day – in February. This needs to be streamlined.
2. Proactively work with colleges and universities to increase enrollment in teacher education programs and/or revisit current requirements for graduation and certification. In Hamilton, we have a strong induction program for new teachers. We should examine programs like ours and consider educational apprenticeship programs with highly effective teachers to assist new teachers once they are on the job. We should also explore eliminating current requirements that do not really help them such as the EdTPA, which is a time-consuming assessment portfolio process taken often while serving as a student teacher.
3. Allow schools to use what they have learned from the pandemic to modernize our profession and employ the use of technology to address some staffing shortages
4. Permit school districts with greater flexibility to hire an alternate route candidate (particularly districts that have a very comprehensive new teacher induction program such as the four-year new teacher induction program we have in Hamilton).

Lack of staffing slows down the business of the district....and the business of the district is teaching and learning. I know the staffing issues we are facing in Hamilton are occurring across Mercer County as I attend County Roundtable meetings regularly. I also suspect these issues are occurring statewide from conversations with my peers at NJPSA. I thank you for listening and considering our collective recommendations this morning.



**Testimony Of Education Law Center
on the State's Teacher Shortage**

Joint Committee on the Public Schools

February 22, 2022

Thank you, members of the Joint Committee on the Public Schools, for the opportunity to speak to you on behalf of Education Law Center (ELC) about the current teacher shortage in New Jersey public schools. My name is Sharon Kregel, and I'm the Policy and Outreach Director at ELC.

A serious teacher shortage existed in New Jersey and across the country well before the arrival of Covid-19. Since March 2020, that shortage has been exacerbated by an exodus of teachers in the wake of the myriad of stresses and strains resulting from the impact of the pandemic on our schools.

There are many anecdotal reports and much press coverage of districts experiencing a large number of their teachers leaving the profession or taking early retirement, along with the extreme difficulty of filling vacancies. But we still don't know the full extent of the teacher shortage, including the actual number of vacancies, the specific subject areas most in need, or those districts that are facing the greatest challenges. The reason: the NJ Department of Education (NJDOE) does not currently collect or publicly report data on teacher vacancies across the state. This makes it impossible to answer this Committee's question about deficits in student learning and what can be done to support our students, especially those in high need districts, as they emerge from the pandemic.

The Murphy Administration and the NJDOE have not put in place a systemic strategy to tackle the current teacher shortage. Instead, they are following the State's playbook used throughout the pandemic, and that is to leave the problem to districts to try to solve, largely on their own. That hasn't worked with remote learning, inadequate building conditions, student trauma, and other needs resulting from the pandemic. And it will not work in this case, where solutions extend beyond what individual districts can do and can only be accomplished on a systemic, regional, or statewide basis.

And we know that solutions do exist. States across the country, as documented by the Learning Policy Institute, are focusing on programs to address the teacher shortage, including scholarships, loan forgiveness, teacher residencies, Grow Your Own programs, and mentorship.

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20x

Grow Your Own and teacher residencies are an especially innovative way to expand the pool of potential teachers by targeting existing school staff, who are already integrated into the school community, and by supporting them to achieve the credentials they need to become great teachers. Some states have used federal ESSER funds to establish teacher residency programs or a Grow Your Own program.

The Learning Policy Institute highlights these programs among its list of efforts states can make to reverse the teacher shortage. In addition to those already listed, these include making sure districts have the resources to be able to offer competitive compensation, encouraging strong partnerships with educator preparation programs, and supporting student and staff mental health.

But these initiatives are complex, and their implementation will require districts, institutions of higher education, policy experts, researchers, and professional associations to work together under NJDOE leadership. Simply put, we need a comprehensive state initiative to tackle the chronic and severe teacher shortage at the district level, both short and long term. And it must have the full support of the Governor, his administration, the Legislature, and state officials in the Departments of Education and Higher Education.

We urge this Committee to issue an immediate call to the Governor to begin work on this State initiative.

We must, however, also address structural barriers that will hold back even the best efforts to build and sustain a well-qualified teacher workforce for New Jersey's public schools.

First, the NJDOE is itself severely short staffed. An ELC analysis showed that since 2014 the NJDOE has lost a staggering 24% of its total workforce, and that percentage is much higher in some job categories. Just before the pandemic, the Department lost 57 staff members in 2018-19, and another 38 in 2019-20. Clearly, the capacity of the NJDOE to develop and lead a systemic strategy and assist districts already facing a host of challenges created by remote learning and school reopening during a continuing health crisis is extremely compromised.

Second, the multiyear underfunding of the SFRA school funding formula impedes districts' ability to recruit and retain teachers. The cost of hiring and retaining teachers in all subject areas is built into the SFRA formula. But underfunded districts are unable to provide the full staff complement envisioned by the formula. Getting to full SFRA funding as quickly as possible is a necessary corollary to solving the teacher shortage problem and a particularly significant issue for high need districts.

The numbers regarding underfunding are stark: 373 districts are owed state aid, and 122 of them are below the adequacy target set by the SFRA. Of the 122, 46 are low

wealth (DFG A or B). A total of \$1.2 billion in outstanding state aid is owed to districts, and over half of that (\$583 million) is owed to those 46 districts.

In FY22, 153 districts are below adequacy, affecting 50% of the state's student population. These districts are owed a total of \$1.7 billion in state and local funding, and two-thirds of that is owed to low wealth districts. That means 92% of students in low wealth districts are below adequacy. Furthermore, Black and Latino students in New Jersey are far more likely to attend schools that are spending well below the adequacy level.

Finally, we would be remiss if we didn't note that one of the most significant concerns regarding New Jersey's teacher workforce is the lack of racial and ethnic diversity. Our teachers do not reflect our diverse student population, a problem that is rooted in structural obstacles like the cost of higher education and potential biases in certification exams.

Research shows that diversifying the teacher workforce improves academic outcomes and behavior for students of color, including improved reading and math test scores, improved graduation rates, and what a Learning Policy Institute [research brief](#) calls "increased aspirations to attend college."

In addition to the programs described above, methods to recruit and retain a diverse teacher workforce include stipends and scholarships to increase the likelihood of finishing teacher prep programs. Districts can help pay for the cost of certification, hire in cohorts so peer support is available, and provide mentoring.

Teachers of color are often recruited to work in under-resourced schools and often concentrated in these schools. That is one of the many reasons districts must receive the resources to which they are entitled under the school funding formula. The NJDOE also needs to make sure culturally appropriate and anti-racist curriculum is part of these and all New Jersey schools, and that the Amistad program and the new requirement to include Asian American and Pacific Islander history are implemented everywhere and well.

Until we develop and implement a comprehensive, statewide plan to ease the teacher shortage while diversifying the teacher ranks, we'll continue to endure the untenable situation we have now: individual districts, going it alone, often competing with each other, and unable to provide their students with the school experience they need to overcome the challenges of the past two years.

Testimony for Joint Committee on the Public Schools meeting - 2/22/22

Rhena Jasey-Goodman, Induction Coordinator
Montclair State University

Teacher Preparation During a Pandemic

- Teachers currently in their first year of teaching completed their student teaching experience virtually. As a result, they did not have the opportunity to develop classroom management skills, how to support students in person, how to set up and structure a classroom space to maximize learning, or experience the physical nature of teaching.
- Limitations in their preparation left new teachers unprepared to meet the heightened needs of the students returning to the classroom after being virtual for over a year. So now we have the least prepared teachers being tasked with teaching the neediest students across the state.

Student Needs / Challenges

- Many students missed over a year of instruction due to issues with virtual learning. Some of our students were not able to learn virtually due to learning styles or other behavioral issues. This learning loss impacted some populations more than others.
- Some students experienced Covid related trauma, financial instability, and/or mental health challenges.
- Most students are now demonstrating immaturity and difficulty with social emotional interactions with peers. (Many schools claim students seem to be behaving like the students two grade levels behind would traditionally behave. For example, the juniors are behaving like freshmen.)
- Students need to relearn how to "do school", how to interact with peers, and how to be more independent.

Impact of Teacher Shortage on Student Learning

- Vacancies exist in many roles related to education - certified teachers, paraprofessionals, bus drivers, bus aides, substitute teachers.
- Fewer bus drivers and aides leads to some students having no way to get to school each day - this impacts our special education students and elementary students most
- Fewer paraprofessionals leads to many students without the one-on-one support they are legally required to have. This also means the Classroom Teacher does not have help to provide individualized instruction and attention for the students in their class. This can lead to an increase in behavior challenges and makes it even more difficult for the teacher to teach.
- Fewer Certified Teachers means other educators are being pulled to cover classes. Department Chairs, Vice Principals, ESL Teachers, Academic Interventionists, Literacy / Math Coaches, LDTCs and Special Ed Teachers are being told to cover a class without a teacher instead of performing their other responsibilities. This means that teachers are not receiving as much supervision and support as they have in the past. It means students are not receiving the individualized support they need. Students assigned to a class without a full time teacher are not receiving consistent instruction.

- A lack of substitute teachers means that when a teacher is out, other teachers need to cover that teacher's class during their prep and lunch. This leads to burn out when it happens frequently. Teachers need those prep and lunch periods to engage in professional learning with their colleagues, plan, prepare for classroom activities, etc.
- Induction Mentor Teachers are often pulled to cover classes, and therefore have less time to spend mentoring and supporting the new teachers.

Short Term Actions

- SubIn program at MSU to provide more substitute teachers for school districts
- Waive the fees associated with obtaining a substitute teaching license
- Support schools and districts to create better working environments - being more creative with schedules, providing more time to teach and less time on standardized tests
- Identify principals who are managing these challenges well - what can be replicated?

Long Term Actions

- Reduce barriers to entry into the teaching profession - edTPA, cost of Praxis
- Leverage Induction Mentor Teacher more effectively - better training and support
- Consider funding more targeted instructional and social emotional support for our students as they recover from the impact of the pandemic
- Promote wellness and support for teachers - they need to feel supported and not under attack.

Questions to Consider

- What do students need to be successful? How can we provide what they need?
- What do teachers need to be successful?
- How can we encourage more young people to become teachers and remain in the teaching profession?
- How can we encourage the best teachers to work in schools with the neediest populations?

Testimony of David Aderhold, President of Garden State Coalition of Schools

02.22.22

Today we have been asked to offer testimony on how staffing shortages have affected students and student achievement.

The past 24 months have been the most trying time within recent history. In the midst of COVID, school systems have been confounded by the pressing needs of our students, academically, emotionally, and socially. We are now at a crossroads where we must meet those very needs during the greatest staffing challenge that we have experienced in recent history. The lack of certified teachers, nurses, counselors, and support staff, coupled with a decrease in substitutes has had a profound effect on the services provided to our students.

The pipeline is broken

The staffing shortages are directly impacted by the broken pipeline of educators entering our vocation. That pipeline was fractured before the pandemic, but eviscerated as a result of it. Since March of 2020 our profession has seen dramatic increases in retirements and early retirements, and increases in medical leaves and maternity leaves. The decrease in the numbers of people entering our profession has had a detrimental effect on both student learning and staff morale, driving larger class sections, causing teachers to carry additional sections, and requiring teachers to cover classes over and above their contractual course loads. This has driven some districts to offer fewer sections of some course offerings, and, in some cases, required students to sit idle with limited instruction while districts search for replacements. The challenges in finding appropriately certificated leave replacements cannot be overemphasized. The overall impact on the learning and overall school environments can be profound.

Shortages and barriers

Let's be clear, the challenges with the current staffing shortages are systemic and have been

exacerbated by the pandemic, but they existed before the pandemic. The failed education policies of the Christie administration, continued by the current NJDOE, current State Board, current Legislature, and current Governor are directly impacting the teacher pipeline. The failure of EdTPA, in particular and its disruptive and destructive impacts on the teacher pipeline were predictable. Before its implementation in 2017, university and college presidents, education advocates, and district administrators all testified against EdTPA, yet we continue this broken practice which has consistently provided our system with fewer new educators every year. Worse, the barrier posed by EdTPA has decreased minority representation in our educator workforce, which has had a detrimental impact on our students. There is no doubt that this program increased the cost of becoming an educator, as well as the cost of becoming certified, creating multiple barriers to becoming an educator.

Examples and data

The failed policies of EdTPA coupled with the continued negative public conversation about educators, the changes in benefits received by our educators--including both changes to health benefits and pension--and the profound challenges of the pandemic, have only exacerbated the current situation.

A holistic approach to address the teacher pipeline is required and we need to take immediate emergency steps to address the pervasive vacancies that are found throughout the profession. As a former urban high school principal who became a suburban superintendent, I have often remarked that the staffing trends seen in the urban and urban rim districts have often been a predictor of the trends we would see within the suburban districts. As an example, as a principal I would hope for a handful of physics or chemistry candidates to apply perhaps only to have one or two candidates. However, when I came to WWP I found our applicant pools were flush with prospective teacher candidates. Twelve years later, we have had a Chemistry vacancy since October that we are just filling. We had only one applicant who met the standard for employment. Today, we have vacancies across all certification areas. Teachers leaving the profession for industry, over 80 maternity leaves, and countless medical leaves. Trying to find a maternity leave position for hard to fill certifications such as Dual Language

Mandarin/Elementary or Culinary Arts is near impossible....but trying to find positions that we used to have in abundance is also difficult. Simply, there are not enough candidates graduating in any certificate area to fulfill the needs. This situation is coupled with certification areas where programs have been closed or no do not produce enough candidates to meet the needs. Here are two examples:

1. In the area of World Languages, TCNJ used to produce the highest quality Spanish Teachers. Now today, their program is closed.
2. Another area would be Teacher of Technology. TCNJ produces 3-6 candidates a year, barely enough to fill the vacancies in my district, let alone the needs of the entire state. Districts are all vying for the same candidates.

Immediate solutions needed

There are no longer enough candidates to fill the vacancies statewide and the legislature, NJDOE, and

State Board need to take emergency actions to address the broken teacher pipeline.

What can be done? A few steps have already been taken:

- Allowing 30 credit subs;
- Making it possible for retired nurses and retired teachers to re-enter the workforce without pension penalties.
- Next, we must address the following areas:
- Provide full Reciprocity for those entering NJ with teacher certification from outside of the State;
- Expand upon Alternate Route pathway for career changers;
- Create embedded and funded residency programs;
- End the NJ residency requirement;
- Develop programs enabling Instructional Assistants to become certified.
- Incentivize high school students to become teachers through grants, scholarships and loan forgiveness;

- Rethink the ongoing negative campaign against public education that has been waged in the name of “accountability”. This campaign and philosophy caused harm by advocating for and facilitating the implementation of an assessment system that fails to yield meaningful, reliable, or valid data; a teacher prep program that is now outsourced to Pearson; and a broken pension system that has driven educators and future educators from the system.

Through my work in Garden State Coalition of Schools, NJASA, and Mercer County ASA I am constantly hearing distress cries from educators, with some superintendents wondering how they will find enough staff to open successfully next fall. We need to take immediate and actionable steps to support our students and our educators. If we do not take positive action now, we will lose the opportunity to mitigate the impacts we are currently facing, not to mention the projected severe staffing challenges for the next decade.

Sean M. Spiller
NJEA President
Testimony before the NJ Legislature Joint Committee on Public Schools
February 22, 2022

Good morning, members of the Joint Committee on the Public Schools. I am Sean Spiller, a high school science teacher in Wayne and the president of the New Jersey Education Association. On behalf of the over 200,000 members working in our public schools, it is an honor to address you this morning on an issue that we are all concerned about—the impact of the current teacher shortage on our students' achievement and emotional and social well-being.

As we have known, educators are leaving the classroom for retirement as the pandemic makes it harder to reach our students in a continuous and meaningful way. College students are shying away from education preparation and certification programs, and still more mid-career educators are choosing to leave the profession because of the environment in which they are being asked to teach. This is a matter that needs to be taken seriously and addressed immediately.

I have invited with me to testify today from Paterson Public Schools and the chair of the NJEA Urban Education Committee, teacher Todd Pipkin and from Jackson Public Schools, librarian and full-time release president of the Jackson Education Association, Lisa Crate. They will share their own experiences, but before they do, I would like to offer an overview of what's happening in our schools for us to consider.

Normally, students will visit specialist teachers for arts and music, and students will have weekly time in the library. Students in need may visit their school counselor or the nurse. In some classrooms, there may be a general education teacher and a special education teacher in a classroom, as well as paraprofessionals.

Not anymore, and far from ideal, we are now in a position where we have to make sure every classroom has adequate coverage, pulling teachers from their preparation periods, pulling the special education teacher to cover classes, pulling a teacher-certified paraprofessional out of their role to cover a class, and asking the specials teachers, counselors, and librarians to cover classes. When we do not have enough substitutes to cover classes, students are sent to the cafeteria or auditorium for study-hall with either self-directed learning or with seat-work assigned from their class.

When we pull educators to cover other classes, we not only violate the IEPs-individualized education plans—for our special needs students, we also ask a teacher to cover a class for which they may have no context and no expertise in the content—a revolving door of teachers who are not prepared for the class they cover. Teachers lose important preparation time to ensure the success of their own students, especially important as they deal with the interrupted learning of the pandemic. And we ask non-instructional certified staff to place the social and emotional well-being of their students lower in priority than the covering of classes. Experienced teachers are stretched too thin to help with pre-

service teachers or mentoring programs, limiting those teachers' preparedness to enter the profession or the support to continue beyond the first few years of their career.

We are finding that there is also a shortage in our Educational Support Professional ranks as well. From bus drivers to cafeteria staff and computer techs--this shortage of school staff at all levels is greatly impacting our students' social and emotional learning as well as academic achievement.

It is imperative that we listen to our educators, that we explore some resolutions together, and that we continue our commitment to New Jersey's children to give them the best education in the nation.

Thank you.

Background information

<i>Joint Committee on the Public Schools</i>	
Joint	JPS Schedule
<i>Committee Members</i>	
<u>Beach, James</u>	Possible resolutions if asked: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examine, analyze, and reduce the onerous requirements of educators which have no bearing on student achievement.• Enhance the pipeline with creative offerings to invite and recruit a more qualified and diverse workforce, i.e. student debt forgiveness, mortgages at significantly reduced interest, etc.• Prioritize standards for student achievement.• Pull in vetted volunteers to do contract tracing, etc. to free up staff to step into classrooms.
<u>Caputo, Ralph R.</u>	
<u>Cryan, Joseph P.</u>	
<u>Flynn, Victoria A.</u>	
<u>Greenstein, Linda R.</u>	
<u>Jasey, Mila M.</u>	
<u>Matsikoudis, Michele</u>	
<u>O'Scanlon, Declan J.</u>	
<u>Reynolds-Jackson, Verlina</u>	
<u>Rice, Ronald L.</u>	
<u>Simonsen, Erik K.</u>	
<u>Testa, Michael L.</u>	
<u>Thompson, Samuel D.</u>	
<u>Wimberly, Benjie E.</u>	

Good Morning.

My name is Todd Pipkin and I am a Special Education Resource & Inclusion teacher at Eastside High School in Paterson and I am also the chair of the New Jersey Education Association Urban Education Committee. What I will share with you is both my own experiences in Paterson and those of my colleagues on the committee representing every county in the state.

From what I have seen in the high school where I work, many students that enter as 9th graders are below grade level in reading and math; the pandemic has made this worse. I can only assume that this is common across the state. The impact of teacher shortages will only expand this student achievement gap as time progresses.

In my high school, where we have roughly 2000 students and 150 teachers, it is not uncommon for us to have over 40 classrooms in need of a teacher on any given day. As a result, students often have to be housed in the auditorium with several classes under the supervision of a few staff members.

In addition, teachers are solicited regularly to cover classes during their preparation periods as another means to help address the shortfall in staffing. This takes away from the allotted preparation period, that is otherwise used to prepare for instruction, make parental contacts, work collaboratively with colleagues, restroom usage, making copies, grading papers, preparing lesson plans, etc. This continues to happen because we don't have an adequate number of substitutes. This daily interruption of learning, inconsistency in student daily schedules, and other stop-gap measures, exacerbate the already existing achievement gap.

Needless to say, this everyday staff shortage impacts our students in many ways. For example:

- . Students lose the essential continuity of the given content.
- . Students' retention and comprehension of materials is affected by the lack of consistent access to resources and instruction.
- . Students are continuing to fall further behind and may be unprepared to move on to the next grade level.
- . Students' interest and motivation towards learning wanes due to ongoing disruptions.

This is not just a Patterson problem or even a New Jersey problem. A recent NEA article stated overall 55% of those teachers surveyed now plan to leave the profession sooner due to COVID and other extenuating issues from staff shortages. This not only impacts students today, but kicks the can down the road. Students over the next several years will need experienced teachers to help them advance.

As experienced teachers leave, there will be new teachers entering a profession at a time when mentoring, support, and experience will be found wanting. The number of teachers leaving the profession are higher for Blacks (62%) and Hispanic/Latinos (58%). The article also mentioned that according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, in January of 2020, only two months before the pandemic changed the face of public education, there were 10.6 million educators in the United States. Today there are only 10 million educators. That's a reduction of 600,000 educators from our schools.

Taken together, the interrupted learning, the current lack of staff, and a future that may see inexperienced staff dealing with the fallout of pandemic learning, puts the future of students' long-term

achievement in question. To say I am greatly concerned for my students and colleagues is an understatement.

Thank you for the opportunity to address such a pertinent issue, in the profession that I love so dearly. I hope we can work together on solutions.

Joint Committee on the Public Schools Testimony
Lisa Crate, Teacher

My name is Lisa Crate and I am the president of the Jackson Education Association in Ocean County.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak today and would like to take this time to talk about how the shortage of teachers has had a direct impact on what is going on in education specific to my district. As I speak and tell my story though, I'm sure that everyone here will be able to relate and will recognize similar trends in their districts, as well.

It goes without saying that every district has students whose academic, social and emotional growth have been interrupted despite our best efforts during the last two years of this pandemic. With budgets cut due to S2 and teachers, paraprofessionals, child study team members, counselors and nurses stretched to their limits, we are finding that the needs of our students can only be met when we are present, in full, working toward normalcy.

Unfortunately, here's what's actually happening. The shortages have forced all of us into positions we'd never thought or believed we'd be in.

We have resource teachers whose sole purpose is to work with students who are most in-need of assistance pulled on a daily basis to cover classes.

We have student counselors who should be meeting with students to help with issues that arise each and every day due to students having been isolated for so many months, being pulled to cover duties and classes.

We have principals spending three periods a day, every day, covering lunch duties leaving the administrative support necessary for our teachers to have success on hold until they can be available.

We have no qualified people available to take over special education positions, forcing class sizes to balloon to over 30 students in some classrooms in order to make sure that IEPs are met.

As a full time release president, I have jumped back into the fray over the past two years, assisting paraprofessionals and teachers in their classrooms, and fully taking over and teaching a kindergarten class for the weeks running up to Christmas Break so our newest students could have some consistency prior to the holidays.

Not one area of staffing has gone untouched by the shortage we are now facing. Educators have gone above and beyond and continue to do so at a rate that is literally burning them out. And when I say educators, I mean all educators: teachers, paraprofessionals, social workers,

speech therapists, nurses, secretaries, principals, supervisors. Everyone. Every single person is affected by the shortage and when they're affected, our students feel it.

Covering these shortages on a daily basis is like trying to put a bandaid on a mortal wound.

Incoming teachers who start out enthusiastic about helping every student, like we all felt when we first started our careers, are being forced to jump through hoops to get certified. Just like students, our best teachers come from time and experience and true mentorship, not how well they can take a test.

We are at a point where educators are leaving the field out of frustration and exhaustion at a rate that is somewhat alarming and the search to find replacements has been close to impossible depending on the position.

But this is not really a surprise. After all, the last decade or so has been one where educators across the country have been treated as mere servants. They have had to fight for livable salaries, respect and acknowledgment of the professionals they are. The mistreatment and disrespect over the years has worn people down, left them deflated and feeling as if no matter what they do to try to make a difference, it's all for naught as the next bill or test or mandate that comes down will rip the rug out from under them once again.

So how do we move forward? How do we not only address this crisis but work together to fix it so this new generation of teachers coming into the field can not only feel welcomed, but also respected and valued for their commitment to our students? It can be done, but we have to be committed to doing it together with an approach that listens to and takes advice from all of the stakeholders. It's not going to be done with appreciative words, or Teacher Appreciation Day – it needs to be done through deeds. If we can accomplish that, then there's no stopping us and our students will continue to be the full beneficiaries of the best education in the country.

Good morning

For months Dr. Julian Heilig, professor from the University of Kentucky has been insightful in providing our NAACP components with quality research and insights on how to improve instruction in our nation's schools. The research behind the slides that were developed and shared with this committee have been very helpful in providing our organization a clearer vision as to what is needed to provide quality instruction for all New Jersey students.

My brief remarks are going to focus on only two areas: Cultural responsive

teaching and the current teacher certification process

In preparing for this presentation, I reviewed the legislation that was recently passed in the waning days of the last Legislation session. I was quite please to find that S 2834 had been passed by both legislative chambers and signed into law by our governor. As you know (Jasey/Reynolds), this legislation mandates that all candidates for a teaching certificate must complete a course or training on cultural responsive teaching. The statute defines cultural responsive teaching as a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including student's cultural references in all aspects of learning.

The adoption of this legislation is an excellent opportunity to expand the ability of our New Jersey teachers to provide instruction for all of their students.

But, what about our New Jersey teachers who have already achieved teacher certification? Our organization hopes that DoE and our Legislative branches find a process/procedure to have existing certified teachers participate in similar professional development component. Such an endeavor will improve the quality of instruction for more students.

My second point is that we hear a lot that obtaining a teaching certificate in

our state should be streamline but that the process must not sacrifice existing rigor. The NAACP is of the opinion that NJ should review its teacher certification programs/processes to determine if current practices impede entry into the profession.

It is well known that African American's performance on most standardized test do not have the same bell shaped curve results as other ethnic groups. We know that all NJ school districts do not provide the same quality of academic readiness as other NJ school districts. As such, NJ should reexamine its entry criteria into teacher ed programs by allowing interested students an earnest opportunity to achieve dreams to become educators. Flexibility is

needed without sacrificing rigor if our goal is to have a qualified and diverse teaching force.

Thomas Puryear, Education
Chairperson
NJ NAACP State Conference



New Jersey School Boards Association

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February 22, 2022

Testimony

The Teacher Shortage and its Impact on the Achievement Gap

The Joint Committee on the Public Schools

The New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), a federation of all of the district boards of education in the state, believes that continuous efforts to improve and increase the supply of qualified candidates for school employment are beneficial as long as those efforts do not compromise the quality of the applicant pool and do not result in state mandated intrusions into the authority of local boards of education, including but not limited to their right to: determine their local budgets and deliver an instructional program that best meets the needs of their students and their local communities. Further, the NJSBA believes that incentives, such as grants and loans, should be made available to attract outstanding students to the teaching profession, particularly in those areas of critical shortage. Loans to students who agree to teach a certain number of years in areas of critical shortage should be forgiven.

Legislative Response to the Current Teacher Shortage

While loans and grants may be one tool to expand the supply of qualified candidates in the teaching profession, the Legislature recently passed and the Governor enacted the following legislation aimed at providing more immediate relief from the current teacher shortage. These include:

- P.L.2021, c.420—Authorizes the Commissioner of Education to develop alternatives to the Praxis Core Academic Skills test for career and technical education teachers. This law will hopefully increase the supply of CTE teachers by creating alternate pathways for these teacher candidates to demonstrate core competencies.
- P.L.2021, c.408--Permits teacher and professional staff member who provides special services retired from TPAF to return to employment for up to two years without reenrollment in TPAF if employment commences during 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years.
- P.L.2021, c.296--Permits school nurse who is retired from TPAF to return to employment for up to two years without reenrollment in TPAF.
- P.L.2021, c.279--Establishes alternate route to expedite certification of teachers at early college high school programs.

- P.L. 2021, c.224--Directs DOE to establish five-year pilot program for issuance of limited certificate of eligibility with advanced standing and limited certificate of eligibility for certain teacher candidates.

There are also various bills that have been introduced in the current legislative session to increase the teacher supply. These include:

- A-2941/S-1559--Permits non-instructional staff member retired from PERS to return to employment in school district for up to two years without reenrollment in PERS if employment commences during 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years.
- A-677/S-896--Prohibits State Board of Education from requiring completion of performance-based assessment as condition of eligibility for certificate of eligibility with advanced standing.
- A-148/S-833--Eliminates requirement for State residency for public officers and employees with limited historic exceptions.
- A-2229/S-904--Eliminates requirement for State residency of public school employees for period of three years.
- A-896/S-546--Provides supplemental appropriation of \$20 million for loan redemption program and tuition reimbursement program for certain teachers of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
- A-1287--Establishes teacher recruitment grant program in DOE; appropriates \$6 million to DOE
- A-1694--Establishes loan redemption program for certain bilingual education teachers
- A-1820--Directs DOE to conduct study on feasibility of using and expanding virtual learning in school districts with teacher shortages.

Background about the Shortage

Fewer students are choosing education as a profession:

- Between 2006 and 2019 there was a **22%** decrease in the education degrees conferred by American colleges/universities according to the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Further, AACTE also noted that in 2020, **19%** of the undergraduate programs and **11%** of the graduate programs had significant decreases in enrollment.
- Teach for America, which recruits teachers for service in low-income school districts, reported significant decreases in recruitment.
- Between 2009 and 2020 of all the degrees awarded by New Jersey's public and private colleges/universities, **9.6%** were in education. In 2020, of all the degrees awarded by New Jersey's public and private colleges/universities, only **5.6%** were in education.
- Between 2009 and 2020, there was a **41% decrease** in the number of education bachelor degrees awarded in our state: **11.76%** of those bachelor degrees in 2009 while **6.9%** were awarded in 2020.

There are numerous factors and trends that have led to reduced interest in being a teacher:

- Expanded opportunities in business and industry for women and minorities

- Society’s diminishing respect for teachers
- The increasing emotional stress associated with teaching
- Proliferation of testing and its emphasis to determine teacher success and remuneration
- Movement to standardization that inhibits individual teacher creativity

Impact of the Shortage

Teacher shortages are having a negative impact students and their families in NJ, no matter their demographics or socio-economic status. One way to address this shortage is by modifying the requirements to earn a Certificate of Eligibility or Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing. NJSBA believes that these requirements can be modified to increase the supply of teachers while still ensuring that every student is taught by an effective teacher.

These are issues of equity and fairness. Ensuring that all students have the benefit of a highly effective teacher with whom they can identify should be one of the outcomes of the current teacher shortage. Our state is rapidly diversifying and becoming minority-majority. Students and their families deserve to see themselves in the adults with whom they interact on a daily basis.

Another challenge of the teacher shortage that especially affects our urban districts is the lack of continuity of staff who work with our children. Many teachers in high poverty, low performing schools leave those districts within 3-5 years. Some leave for positions in high-performing, low poverty districts; increasingly, others are simply leaving the profession.

When one considers that it takes 3-5 years for a novice teacher to develop into a master teacher, the imbalance of experienced/less-experienced educators who work with our students who have the same potential as their suburban peers means that the teachers with whom they work are still on a deep slope of professional learning. This deficit has impacts on student learning which impacts their future opportunities and often lessens the collaboration with the families of their students. It is important to note that the impacts are not only academic, but also affect the status of Social Emotional Learning as well as co-curricular opportunities all of which contribute to a student’s post-secondary successes.

NJ DOE reports student achievement discrepancies among high schools in our state. According to the Deans of Rider University and The College of New Jersey Schools of Education, New Jersey’s requirements for teacher certification have a disproportionately negative impact on “marginalized students” who have graduated from “poorer-performing high schools.” Achieving a 3.0 GPA or passing and paying for the additional costs associated with the edTPA assessment are greater challenges for students from marginalized backgrounds than for others. Addressing these barriers will not only increase the supply of teachers but also further diversify our teaching corps.

Removing Barriers while Maintaining Teacher Quality and Accountability

There are four main requirements to receiving certification as a teacher in NJ. They are:

- (1) A minimum number of subject area course credits;
- (2) A minimum GPA;
- (3) A minimum score on a Commissioner-approved test of basic reading, writing, and mathematical skills;
- (4) A minimum passing score on an appropriate State test of subject matter knowledge.

With all due respect to the processes used to assess each of those four requirements for a CEAS to determine a “cut score” for each is essentially arbitrary and fails to account for current clinical supervision and evaluation processes or human factors that include setting goals and diligently working to be successful. Cut scores are not comprehensive predictors of effective teaching. By relying so heavily on them, we fail to consider that we all learn differently and that not all of us fully demonstrate our knowledge on tests and standardized assessments.

Enactments like P.L. 2021, c.224, which establishes a pilot program that permits teacher candidates to be excused from any one of the four requirements above, is a prime example of how barriers to entry into the profession can be removed.

The removal of these barriers will not negatively impact teacher quality because NJ enacted a very robust accountability system for teachers. The 2012 TEACHNJ act, *N.J.S.A. 18A:6-117 et seq.*, provided the greatest paradigm shift to ensure excellence in the teacher corps. It and its AchieveNJ implementing regulations, ensure that educators in NJ receive the most effective evaluations to improve instruction. Administrators must be certified in a research-based, NJDOE-approved evaluation system. The focus of New Jersey’s teacher evaluation system is on ensuring effective teaching and learning.

Teacher recruitment and induction has also changed. Candidates demonstrate their accomplishments through professional portfolios and evaluations conducted by professors, cooperating teachers, and district/school administrators. District rigorous hiring processes include multiple interviews and demonstration lessons. Induction programs provide professional learning in content, and district instructional expectations. Effective mentoring is also another critical aspect to ensure excellence in the classroom.

These recruitment, induction, mentoring and evaluation processes provide greater assurance of teacher quality than arbitrary cut scores on teacher assessments and GPAs. These authentic measurements of teacher quality provide districts with significantly more information with which to ensure teacher quality and success.

Additionally, teacher professional learning supports the continued improvement of their craft. In many districts, the local teachers’ association collaborates with building administration and identifies coaches to assist teachers with their instructional and/or student management practices.

The impact of formal collaboration on student learning and the retention of teachers regardless of the demographic or socio-economic profile has been well documented, especially in our state. In 2013, Professor Saul Rubenstein of the Rutgers School of Labor & Management, along with the NJSBA, NJASA, NJPSA, NJEA and AFT-NJ established the NJ Labor Management Collaborative which is providing professional learning to districts across our state in

collaborative decision making. The impact of this work is significant. Dr. Rubenstein's twenty plus years of research reports that formal collaboration has a greater impact on improving student achievement than by reducing a district's poverty rate by 10% --this is not to infer that we should not address poverty; it does suggest that poverty does not have to be a barrier to student learning. His research also reports that in a collaborative school, after five years, there is no difference in teacher retention between high poverty, low achieving urban schools and schools that are high performing in affluent suburbs which provides the important continuity of adults working with a schools' students that has a positive impact on all facets of learning.

This work is so significant that in September 2021, US Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona visited the Delran Township school district to learn about this work that he has subsequently been sharing in his keynote speeches at both domestic and international educational conferences. The National Education Association has provided a \$3 million grant to the NJ Labor-Management Collaborative of which \$1.5 million is to provide the professional learning in support of this work in New Jersey school districts to support student learning, healthy school climates, and the retention of teachers.

When considering the TEACHNJ act's significant impact on instructional quality and its impact on practice based on both legislation and research, revising the qualifications to be a successful teacher in NJ will not be detrimental to the students of our state and will provide additional qualified candidates to address the shortages that districts across the state are experiencing while supporting local control and furthering equity in our schools.

The NJSBA urges the Joint Committee to consider legislation that increases recruitment and reduces or eliminates the barriers that prevent many candidates from entering the teaching profession.



Testimony
Joint Committee on Public Schools
February 22, 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Ashley Bencan and I am here on behalf of JerseyCAN to share my perspectives on the education workforce in New Jersey. Since leaving the classroom, I have had the opportunity to work at the New Jersey Department of Education in the Teacher Preparation and Certification office, consult with organizations like JerseyCAN to advocate for the education workforce, and lead programs such as the NJ Tutoring Corp, which is - a pandemic born statewide high-dosage tutoring program.

Today's conversation around the staffing shortages and their link to student achievement could not be more timely. It is well documented by research that classroom teachers are the number one in-school influencer of student achievement. In 2020, JerseyCAN released the first New Jersey Educator Workforce Series, highlighting the current state of the educator workforce in New Jersey. That report showed that prior to the pandemic, New Jersey was only supplying approximately 5,000 newly certified teachers each year. And the state saw a 24% decline in the teacher pathways between 2013 and 2016, according to reports from NJDOE. Now, in 2021 4,000 New Jersey teachers retired,¹ and more may be on the way according to a recent poll from the National Education Association.² There simply is not enough supply to meet the demand, and what's worse, is there is zero demand data to inform the supply for the Education Workforce.

¹ [NJ's teacher pipeline: Fewer applicants, more retirees | NJ Spotlight News](#)

² [NEA survey: Massive staff shortages in schools leading to educator burnout; alarming number of educators indicating they plan to leave profession | NEA](#)

We know that many New Jersey students are no longer on grade level and for many, this pandemic exacerbated previous achievement and opportunity gaps. JerseyCAN released a snapshot report in 2021³ that showed this and a recent release from the NJDOE of the results from Start Strong in 2022⁴ also confirm that a majority of our student population may be off grade level. New Jersey students need teachers and more personalized learning now more than ever or an entire generation will not be able to realize their full economic potential.

New Jersey's students and educators need both long term and short term solutions. I wanted to share with you today 3 of those solutions that will ensure the state gets back on track.

1. A 5-year Teacher Certification Pilot Program;
2. An annual collection and publication of workforce projections to inform the supply and demand of all educators; and
3. High-dosage tutoring

First, the 5-year teacher certification pilot, is an initiative already passed by the legislature and is in the process of being implemented by NJDOE. The certification pilot will provide a more flexible pathway for educators into schools who are ready to support them with high quality induction programs. I mention this law, because it is a short-term and almost immediate tool that we can utilize. The NJDOE has already moved regulations, and now for schools to apply, we need the NJDOE to create and expeditiously release an application for schools to participate. It is critical this application is made public **soon** as districts are hiring now for the upcoming school year and that as many schools are accepted into the pilot as meet the criteria of the law. This program needs to be blasted and advertised so that all districts who are eligible will apply and take advantage of this opportunity.

³ [A Time to Act - COVID-19 Academic Slide in New Jersey Fall 2020](#)

⁴ [Start Strong Assessment Summary Report](#)

Second, the legislature also already passed S2835/A5292, which is a data collection and reporting bill, which will answer key questions that state leaders have been asking for years, such as

- What education jobs are in high demand in New Jersey and where are they located?
- How many Bilingual teachers does New Jersey need to adequately serve all bilingual students?
- How many non-white teachers does New Jersey need to better represent the distribution and diversity of the state's student population?
- What classes and programs **will no longer exist** in the next three years, if there are no trained teachers to continue that coursework?

According to the law, by June 2022, NJEEDS, the state's longitudinal data system, that combines data from OSHE, LWD and NJDOE must release a report with Educator Workforce Projections for the next 2 years. This report is critical to inform more than just answers to questions, but workforce incentives and policy that will restabilize the workforce. Without this information, statewide solutions will be ill-informed and likely fail. Accordingly, JerseyCAN urges swift but careful implementation of this bill by NJDOE as well as it can serve as a key data point to inform the education workforce pipeline needs and potential incentives from the legislature.

Finally, to directly address student achievement, we know that high dosage tutoring is one of the most effective solutions to accelerate students. The NJ Tutoring Corps is currently based out of TCNJ and funded through NJ Pandemic Relief Fund (NJPRF) and the Overdeck Family Foundation. These non-profits provided \$2.4 million to establish the inaugural summer program to reach 2000 k-5 students across 23 community partner locations. The results were clear – over 7 weeks students gained critical math knowledge and confidence⁵.

Now is the time to invest, lift up and prioritize the education workforce. Invest in scalable, proven strategies that close learning gaps for students and attract young professionals into teaching. Demand

⁵ [In tutoring we trust: Time to do away with educational disparities widened by COVID | Calavia-Robertson - nj.com](https://www.calavia-robertson.com/in-tutoring-we-trust-time-to-do-away-with-educational-disparities-widened-by-covid/)

the data to inform state level policy incentives that several other states have already enacted⁶. For years, New Jersey has prioritized other industries and relied on education to train those future workers. Who will be left to join the teaching profession?

In conclusion, I am grateful to the committee for letting me share this information with you today. We must prioritize our educator workforce because if the pandemic taught us anything, we know that when schools don't have staff to open, students and New Jersey's economy cannot flourish.

⁶ AZ HB 2862- Alternative instruction models and instructional time; TN SB 7002 Requires compensation for any camps, learning loss bridges to any staff providing educational services to children; GA- HB 32 Tax credit for teachers working in specific high need locations; MT -HB 143 Raising the competitive pay of teacher salaries

March 1, 2022

The Honorable Mila Jasey
Assemblywoman, District 27
The Honorable Ronald Rice
Senator, District 28

Dear Co-Chairs Jasey and Rice and members of the Joint Committee on Public Schools:

Thank you for your efforts to highlight the growing teacher shortage and launch a critical conversation about strategies to address this looming crisis. While the NJ Council of County Vocational-Technical Schools was not able to testify at the recent Joint Committee on the Public Schools hearing, we wanted to be sure that you and the members are aware of how a severe shortage of career and technical education (CTE) teachers will impact our county vocational-technical high schools and their students.

Even before the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted public education, vocational-technical schools have struggled to fill teacher vacancies in fields ranging from construction trades to information technology. Unlike academic teachers who are drawn largely from college and university educator preparation programs, our schools must recruit CTE teachers straight from industry and support them through the state's alternate route to certification. In many cases, these experienced professionals must take a pay cut to enter the teaching field. And while we are fortunate to have an alternate route to certification, the required pedagogy training is an arduous and expensive process that includes two years of evening and weekend classes (mostly online). The amount of training required was doubled in 2014, and now requires a total of 400 hours.

We are extremely grateful for the recent enactment of new legislation to permit CTE teacher candidates to demonstrate their academic competencies through alternatives to the college-level Praxis Core Academic Skills test, which had become a significant obstacle for many candidates who had little or no experience with this type of online exam. However, further action is needed to address current barriers to recruitment and ensure a robust support of future CTE teachers.

As the Joint Committee heard during its hearing, the EdTPA performance assessment is proving to be a major obstacle for teacher recruitment, and while this requirement does not currently apply to most CTE teachers, the Department of Education is considering adding this as a new requirement for all future CTE teacher candidates. This is tremendously concerning and would likely decimate the ranks of future CTE teachers, especially in areas such as construction trades, culinary arts, cosmetology, and other careers that do not necessarily require a college degree. There is no question that adding a performance assessment including videotaped lessons would be a substantial hurdle that would make it even harder for our districts to recruit potential teacher candidates and further exacerbate the teacher shortage.

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When a CTE vacancy cannot be filled with a qualified candidate who can complete the certification process, a county vocational-technical school may have to suspend or close a career preparation program. This will have a devastating impact on students in those programs, as well as on the employers who count on county vocational-technical schools to prepare their future workforce.

We appreciate the Legislature's focus on the critical issues and hope to be part of a continuing conversation focused on specific steps that can be taken to recruit more young people and seasoned professionals into the teaching field and to remove unnecessary or outdated obstacles to getting quality candidates certified in CTE and other critical fields. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jackie Burke
Executive Director

c: Mike Dicken, Council President
Rebecca Sapp