

2002 Teacher Supply and Demand Study

April 2002

Executive Summary

Introduction

As part of the State Regents' multiple initiatives to reform teacher education preparation programs dating back to 1992, the State Regents have conducted periodic studies to determine the current and future demand for new teachers balanced against the supply of teacher education graduates. The State Regents have partnered with various organizations to conduct these studies, including the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), the Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administration, and the Council on Professional Teaching Standards.

The last study commissioned and received by the State Regents in 1998 found that there were no shortages in the **production** of teachers; there were some shortages in the **hiring** of teachers. To address these hiring shortages, the State Regents approved recommendations supporting salary supplements and a loan forgiveness program in high demand subject areas and in low supply geographic sections of the state.

2002 Teacher Supply and Demand Study

In December 2000, the State Regents contracted with the SREB to update the 1998 teacher supply and demand study. Cosponsors of the 2002 study are the Oklahoma Commission on Teacher Preparation and the Oklahoma Education Association. The Oklahoma State Department of Education and the State Regents provided data. The study presents supply and demand information by two key factors: 1) geographic area; and 2) discipline area or educator position.

Key Oklahoma Findings

- Of the 49,403 Oklahoma educators in 1999-00, 2,816 (6 percent) were new, 1,650 (3 percent) reentered teaching with previous experience, and 44,937 (91 percent) were retained from the previous year.
- The largest percentage of attrition (13 percent) occurs during or immediately following the first year.
- Attrition of new teachers within the first three years is higher for those entering in 1995-96 (22 percent) than those entering in 1992-93 (16 percent), which was highlighted in the 1998 study.
- Alternatively certified teacher attrition is 10 percent, compared to 7 percent attrition of regularly certified teachers.

Up to 32 percent of educators will be eligible for retirement in five years. This is higher than the 25 percent reflected in the 1998 study.

- Of the bachelor's degree recipients who earned Oklahoma certification in 1996-97 through 1999-00, 68 percent taught in Oklahoma public schools. This compares to 56 percent from 1994-96.
- There may be as many as 5,826 certified teachers in the reserve pool in Oklahoma, a decline of 614 teachers from the reserve pool of 6,440 reported in the 1998 study. Of these, most are in elementary education (818); social studies (766); language arts (674); science (670); math (589); business (427); special education (411); administration (346); and vocational education (323).

2002 Study - Identified Teacher Education Shortage Areas

As found in the 1998 study, there is no shortage in the production of new teachers; however, there are shortages due to difficulties in hiring and retaining teachers. Based on the trends from the past four years, shortages can be expected in the following areas:

- early childhood;
- special education; and
- foreign language.

Possible shortages are projected in the following areas:

- guidance counselors;
- librarians;
- art/music;
- science;
- vocational education;
- mathematics; and
- speech pathologists.

The largest school districts are projected to need 3.1 percent more educators in 2004-05 than in 1999-00. Other school districts are expected to have a slight decrease in demand ranging from 0.4 to 7.8 percent with the rural smallest school districts having the largest overall decrease.

Contributing Factors to Shortage Areas

- **Teacher salaries.** A 2000 analysis of teacher salaries by the American Federation of Teachers, reports that the national average teacher salary during the 1999-2000 school year was \$41,820. Oklahoma was ranked 50th of 51 states (the report included the District of Columbia), with an average salary of \$29,525, or 70.6 percent of the national average. The report shows Oklahoma in a three-year sinking trend; Oklahoma ranked 48th in 1997-98 and 49th in 1998-99.

Sources: Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, Oklahoma State Department of Education

Although the minimum salary mandated in Texas is lower than that in Oklahoma, local districts in Texas are paying more. For instance, in Houston, first-year teachers with a baccalaureate are paid \$34,588 per year; in Denton, \$33,500; and in Fort Worth, \$36,250. Oklahoma districts generally pay just above the minimum state mandate of \$27,060 (by law, this figure can include benefits). A first-year teacher in Oklahoma City with a baccalaureate makes \$26,700 (plus benefits); in Tulsa, \$26,000 (plus benefits); and in Lawton, \$27,301. An Oklahoma teacher with a master's degree and 20 years of experience could earn a lower salary than a first-year teacher in Fort Worth, Texas. As evidenced above, in some instances, Oklahoma school districts include benefits in the salary minimum, which means teachers are paid even less.

Other states offer financial incentives beyond salary and benefits. For example, the Dallas Independent School District pays new teachers a minimum of \$34,100 and offers hiring bonuses based on the date of hire. Additionally, the district offers an annual stipend of \$3,000 for bilingual teachers; \$1,000 for math and science teachers (grades 7-12); and \$500 for special education or Spanish teachers. Other financial incentives include bonuses for academic performance in college, retention bonuses, grants for education loans, and low-interest mortgages.

- **Other incentives.** In 2001, the Texas legislature passed a bill allowing its State Board for Educator Certification to issue Texas teaching certificates to candidates from other states or countries who have passed certification examinations comparable to Texas exams. The Oklahoma Professional Teacher Examination was deemed comparable, and subject area exams are currently being evaluated for comparability. This essentially means that in the future, new Oklahoma teachers may not be required to take additional tests to teach in Texas.

Positive Steps to Address Shortages

- **Alternative certification.** Individuals with baccalaureate degrees in a field of study corresponding to an area of Oklahoma teacher certification may be eligible for alternative certification, a program that places career professionals with wide ranges of practical experience in the classroom.
- **Teacher Shortage Employment Incentive Program.** To participate in the incentive program, a student must be enrolled in a mathematics or science program; declare intent to serve in an Oklahoma secondary public school for a minimum of five years; and serve in an Oklahoma secondary public school for five years, teaching 75 percent in mathematics or science. After five years, the student receives as loan reimbursement or incentive pay an average cost of tuition/fees for a three year period.
- **The Teacher Job Connection.** In June 1998, the State Regents approved the development of the Oklahoma Marketplace website to inform Oklahoma students and alumni about employment opportunities in the state and to connect employers with highly qualified candidates. One component of the website is the Teacher Job Connection, a

free service that matches qualified Oklahoma teacher candidates to teaching vacancies in public and private Oklahoma schools.

- **Home loans.** Select Oklahoma banks offer innovative home loans to help teachers overcome the high cost of home ownership. One such program allows teachers to buy homes with no down payment and 100 percent financing. A second program makes borrowing money easier for teachers with limited savings and no credit history.

Conclusions and Recommendations for Action

As previously noted, there are no shortages in the **production** of teachers; there are shortages in **hiring** and **retaining** teachers. Low salaries, difficult work environments, and more attractive job opportunities in other fields cause many trained teachers to select other careers. Given that educator shortages are the result of issues unrelated to the number of teachers supplied by Oklahoma higher education institutions, the hiring and retention shortfall will continue until those issues are addressed directly by the appropriate governing entities. The following initiatives are recommended for State Regents' endorsement.

- Teachers should be paid salary supplements in high demand subject areas and in low supply geographic sections of the state. Simply stated, pay shortage area teachers well, and pay shortage area teachers in high need school districts even more.
- Consider initiating and expanding alternative financial incentives to attract students to teaching. Examples of monetary inducements successful in other states include entry-year and retention bonuses, stipends for bilingual teachers, and low-interest, no-money-down mortgages.