

INCREASING TEACHER SUPPLY

For More Information:

- www.cerra.org – Information about the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement and its Teacher Cadet and ProTeam efforts.
- <http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/account/2002report/TchSht02.htm> - An overview of the Mississippi teacher incentive programs.
- <http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/mtc/> The Mississippi Teacher Center.

Recruiting a sufficient supply of teachers to effectively staff all of North Carolina's classrooms involves many challenges which merit consideration. In addition to placing well-prepared teachers in schools that need them most and creating the conditions under which they will stay, it is important to consider how to create a consistently sufficient supply of quality teachers.

Annually, the state needs approximately 11,000 teachers, but only about 3,500 graduate from North Carolina institutions and even fewer seek licenses to teach in the state. North Carolina is struggling to meet the demand created by a growing student population, increased teacher retirements, lower class sizes and high teacher attrition rates. With mixed success, North Carolina has traditionally relied on out-of-state recruitment, lateral entry candidates and teachers returning to the profession to fill these gaps.

In addition to these sources for teachers, North Carolina is attempting to use other strategies to grow the teacher supply pipeline. These efforts range from attracting college students to the teaching profession through scholarships and loan forgiveness programs, to increasing overall teacher salaries to make the profession more attractive. Research shows that the flat career path of teaching, low status of the profession and low salaries are deterrents for young people. While North Carolina has made significant gains in the last decade around teacher salaries, it is clear that more needs to be done. According to 2002-2003 statistics, North Carolina ranks 23rd in the nation with an average teacher salary of \$42,411. North Carolina's beginning teacher salaries rank 34th in the nation at \$27,572. In comparison, the overall national average teacher salary is \$45,771 and \$29,564 for beginning teachers. While North Carolina has some existing strategies on which to build, the state has many issues to consider in developing a comprehensive teacher supply plan to increase the number of teachers entering the profession.

NORTH CAROLINA POLICIES AND PRACTICES

During the last two decades, North Carolina has invested significantly in expanding the available supply of teachers in the state but these efforts have not yet proved sufficient to address the enormity of the challenge.

North Carolina has enacted two important scholarship programs and one related program to encourage high school seniors and post-secondary students to pursue careers in education:

- **The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program:** A four-year scholarship of \$6,500 annually to pursue a degree in teacher education at one of thirteen approved state institutions. The program includes yearly enrichment activities to provide the Fellows with broader educational and leadership development experiences. Four hundred scholarships are awarded annually.
- **The Prospective Teacher Scholarship Loan Program:** A scholarship of up to four years available to full-time undergraduate students (\$2,500/year) or community college students (\$900/year) who pursue a course of study leading to licensure. Two hundred scholarships are awarded annually. Each year, 50 scholars who meet SAT and GPA requirements receive a Prospective Teacher Scholarship Loan specifically intended to encourage high school students in low-wealth and hard-to-staff districts to pursue careers in teaching. Read the hard-to-staff brief in this packet for more information on *The Prezell Robinson Scholars Program*.

The state has created two programs to support teacher assistants interested in becoming certified teachers:

- **The Teacher Assistant Scholarship Loan:** There are two types of awards in this program – the first is a \$3,500/year grant for full-time assistants who attend a North Carolina community college in a program leading to licensure; the second is a \$1,200/year grant for students seeking an early childhood associate's degree or a two-year degree in "other skills" of use in the public schools.
- **The Teacher Assistant Scholarship Fund:** Awards full-time teacher assistants up to \$4,800 per year to enroll in a four-year undergraduate program leading to teacher licensure. More than 225 awards have been awarded annually during the program's two year existence.

North Carolina also created NC TEACH to recruit and train mid-career professionals interested in becoming teachers. The alternative certification program is described in detail in the lateral entry brief included in this packet.

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Additionally, North Carolina's Model Teacher Education Consortium (NCMTEC) provides education, training and professional development to the state's practicing and aspiring teachers, paraprofessionals in particular.

In 1999, the state adopted legislation allowing retired teachers to return to the classroom. They earn their teaching salary concurrently with their retirement as long as they do not exceed the IRS earnings cap.

POLICIES AND PRACTICES ACROSS THE NATION

While many states have made some policy efforts to increase the number of teachers in the pipeline (many related to salary increases), only a few have made more systematic efforts and offered multiple incentives to increase teacher supply.

In **South Carolina**, legislative statute created the South Carolina Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement (CERRA), which has proven an effective resource to address teacher supply issues. CERRA is funded through a combination of public funds and private grants and is responsible for creating and administering key state efforts to recruit and retain individuals to the teaching profession. This includes South Carolina's Teaching Fellows Program (modeled after North Carolina's program) and all efforts related to teachers becoming National Board Certified. The two most notable efforts to boost the supply of new teachers are the Teacher Cadet and ProTeam programs.

The Teacher Cadet program is designed to attract talented high school students to the teaching profession through a challenging introduction to teaching. The program was piloted in four schools in 1985-86 and now serves more than 2,000 students annually in 150 high schools. The curriculum for the program includes a strong emphasis on observation, field experiences and hands-on activities. Twenty-four of South Carolina's 30 colleges and universities with teacher education programs partner with Teacher Cadet sites and offer college credit for successful completion of the course. The \$288,895 program budget (2000-2001) served 2,230 cadets at a relatively inexpensive per student cost of \$130.

ProTeam introduces seventh and eighth grade students to teaching as a career. The program was first piloted in 1989-1990 and now serves 24 schools and approximately 500 students annually. The students follow a curriculum designed to encourage them to complete high school and college and to consider teaching as a career option. Eight states have replicated ProTeam and are now offering the program to their middle school students.

In 1998, **Mississippi** passed the Critical Teacher Shortage Act containing several key components to increase teacher supply, specifically in high need subject and/or geographic areas. The Act includes provisions for both financial and non-financial incentives. The Critical Needs Teacher Scholarship Program provides full scholarships to teaching candidates who major in a designated area, obtain a teaching license and commit to teaching in specified area of the state. The recipient is required to teach one year for each year of tuition that he/she received

through the scholarship. The William E. Winter Teacher Scholarship Loan Program provides tuition loans for college students who plan to teach in subject or geographic shortage areas. The University Assisted Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grant Program provides scholarships for practicing teachers working toward a master's degree who transfer to hard-to-staff schools. The Mississippi Critical Teacher Shortage Act also provides up to \$1,000 in moving expenses for teachers to relocate to a shortage area, low-cost rental housing for teachers in some shortage areas and special no-interest home loans to teachers in shortage areas.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

- **What data are collected by the state with regard to the effectiveness of its efforts to increase the supply of teachers?** Do we know if the programs are accomplishing their mission? North Carolina has made a considerable investment in programs designed to fill the pipeline into the teaching profession. What has been the return on this investment? How many people are being recruited as a result of these efforts and what is their retention rate in the profession?
- **Are North Carolina's efforts targeting the teachers we need the most?** To what degree have we been successful in recruiting teachers in high-need subject areas and/or grade levels, teachers committed to teaching in hard-to-staff geographic areas and teachers of color? Should programs like the Prospective Teacher Scholarship Program focus a portion of the award on areas of shortage, such as special education or high school math—two areas NC administrators consistently report difficulty filling?
- **Should North Carolina adopt programs that put a greater emphasis on diversifying its efforts to increase the pipeline of potential teachers?** While the state has done relatively well in targeting college-age students for recruitment into the profession, could the state make more recruitment efforts earlier in students careers? Programs that target students in the years in which they are preparing for college and thinking about potential careers could be considered.

The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program

- The Teaching Fellows Program has proven to be effective in not only recruiting the top NC high school students to pursue teaching, but also in keeping them in the classroom after their formal obligation to the state has ended.
- Teaching Fellows has an 84.6 percent graduation rate for its first 13 cadres, with 74 percent of them completing their four years of teaching in the state's public schools.
- After five years, 89 percent of Teaching Fellows graduates are still in the classroom, compared with approximately 53 percent of traditionally prepared teachers and 40 percent of lateral entry teachers.