



NEWS RELEASE

Severe teacher shortage in Arizona continues

Phoenix, Ariz. – For the sixth consecutive year, Arizona School Personnel Administrators Association (ASPAA) survey results confirm the continued teacher shortage in Arizona. The data indicates about 28% of teacher vacancies across the state this year remain unfilled while half of the vacancies are filled by teachers who do not meet the state’s standard certification requirements. These results reinforce the need to increase funding for public education. Arizona teacher pay remains one of the lowest in the country, even with the recent education budget increase.

In addition to the continued teacher shortage, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted staffing in education. More teachers and staff are separating employment or have taken a full-year, unpaid leave of absence than in previous years with the primary reason related to COVID-19.

Arizona children deserve the best teachers and a stable workforce. School district and charter schools compete nationally for the limited pool of candidates. The inability to offer competitive salaries severely limits public schools from attracting the best and the brightest.

The severity of the teacher shortage must be addressed. Arizona’s leaders must make a collective effort to ensure the recruitment and retention of effective teachers through increased funding. Highly educated and skilled work force are cornerstones to a growing and thriving economy.

The survey focused on teacher vacancies and teachers who have already severed employment as of August 2020, and **145 school districts and charter schools** throughout Arizona participated.

Current figures are listed on the following page. We are available to the media for further comment or questions.

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Summary		
	28.13%	Of teacher positions remain vacant <u>a few weeks</u> into the school year. (n=1,728.86)
+	50.11%	Of teacher positions filled by individuals not meeting standard teacher requirements (using alternative methods) (n=3,079.60)
=	78.24%	<i>Of teacher positions either remain vacant or were filled by individuals not meeting standard teacher requirements (using alternative methods) (n=4,808.46 of 6,145.62)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,728.86 teacher positions remain vacant 3,079.60 teacher positions filled using alternative methods

Category	Item	Count	
Survey Responses	Arizona school districts and charter schools participating in the survey.	145	
Teacher Openings	Teacher openings needed to be filled for the 2020-2021 school year (in FTE).	6,145.62	
Current Teacher Vacancies	Vacancies filled by long-term substitutes.	537.10	
	Vacancies filled by contracted agency (e.g. special education positions).	335.40	
	Vacancies filled by administration or certified specialists (e.g. instructional coaches).	28.00	
	Vacancies collapsed in which an existing teacher(s) now has a class size that exceeds the school's class size limits.	100.00	
	Vacancies collapsed in which the school created multi-grade classrooms.	21.00	
	Vacancies filled by having teachers work on 6/5ths contract (no planning time for these teachers).	668.36	
	Vacancies were filled by having classified personnel (such as paraprofessionals) participate in an opportunity culture-type model?	39.00	
	Total Vacancies (As of August 31, 2020)		1,728.86
Individuals not meeting standard teacher requirements (alternative methods)	How many student teachers are a paid "teacher of record" because either they have the student Teacher certificate or the college/university agreed for your school district/charter to hire and pay the student teacher to take over a classroom before he or she had graduated?	168.00	
	Vacancies filled by individuals who are pending certification. These individuals are intended to teach in the same classroom for the entire year, but are not yet appropriately certified.	817.80	
	Vacancies filled by individuals who received an emergency teacher certificate or emergency substitute teacher certificate.	894.80	
	Vacancies fill by individuals who received a teacher intern certificate by participating in the teacher intern program (alternative pathway certificates).	525.00	
	How many Subject Matter Expertise certificates did your school district/charter issue to fill vacant teacher positions? (one of a few alternative pathway certificate options)	378.00	
	Vacancies fill by individuals hired from outside of the United States by means of the H1B1 or another visa.	296.00	
	Total Not Meeting Standard Requirements (As of August 31, 2020)		3,079.60
Separation of Employment	Teachers who did not report to work at the start of the school year.	141	
	Teachers who abandoned their job since the start of the school year.	56	
	Teachers resigned, regardless of reason, in which the school approved their "release of contract" since the start of the school year.	554	
	Total Teachers that Severed Employment (As of August 31, 2020)		751
	<i>Teachers who separated employment and held a standard teacher certificate.</i>		80.83%
COVID-19 Impact	School districts and charters that decreased in student enrollment (of 145)	106	
	Teachers resigned or retired citing COVID-19 as primary reason (of 751)	326	
	Teachers who took a full-year, unpaid leave of absence citing COVID-19 as primary reason	138	
	Other staff (non-teachers) resigned or retired citing COVID-19 as primary reason	633	
	Other staff who took a full-year, unpaid leave of absence citing COVID-19 as primary reason	342	