

Oklahoma Educator Supply and Demand Network

Recommendation Report

Report Commissioned by State Superintendent, Joy Hofmeister

Report Date: July 30, 2020

Authored by: The Oklahoma Educator Supply and Demand Network Members with Support from the Southern Regional Education Board

In 2019, the Oklahoma State Department of Education, under the direction of Superintendent Joy Hofmeister, convened a group of education practitioners from K-12 and higher education to recommend improvements for preparing teacher candidates during teaching internships and better supporting new teachers as they enter the profession in Oklahoma public schools. This group, called the ***Oklahoma Educator Supply and Demand Network*** (referred to below as the OESD Network), was supported by the Oklahoma State Department of Education, with the assistance of the Southern Regional Education Board. A membership list is provided in Appendix A. The OESD Network met regularly from November 2019 through July 2020.

The Self-Governing Charge of the OESD Network

For education shareholders to collaborate and take action to increase the quality and effectiveness of educator preparation practices and first-year teaching supports in Oklahoma.

In winter 2020, the OESD Network comprehensively reviewed Oklahoma's policies, initiatives and previous task force recommendations, as well as program successes and challenges related to practice-based training of in-state teacher candidates and their transition into and through the teaching workforce.

The OESD Network identified two priority challenges to solve:

- 1) Policy and implementation barriers to paid student teaching internships
- 2) Lack of a sustainable, statewide support plan for first- and second-year teachers

With the assistance of SREB, the OESD Network reviewed research, regional and national best practices, and innovative local programs to identify promising solutions to these two challenges.

The following outlines the two prioritized issues and the OESD Network's recommendations to state leaders for improvement.

Challenge 1:

Policy and Implementation Barriers to Paid Student Teaching Internships

Currently, existing state law allows for student teacher interns to be paid after completing “the minimum teacher internship requirement as established by the institution.” This phrasing has been interpreted by the Office of the Attorney General to mean that teacher interns may be paid only after the first 60 days — the current minimum internship requirement as established by state regulation. This application of the law has resulted in very few instances of student teacher interns receiving payment for time interning in Oklahoma schools.

The OESD Network feels strongly that the strategy of providing some compensation to student teachers will be an effective recruitment tool for educator preparation programs, as well as helping the overall goal of graduating more highly trained candidates from comprehensive teacher preparation programs in Oklahoma. This compensation strategy will only be successful, however, if it is applied to student teachers uniformly, applicable for an entire internship period, and funded and distributed equitably to all student teacher interns across the state.

Furthermore, a lack of statewide funding has left it entirely up to local entities to provide compensation to student teacher interns. As capacity is not uniform across the state, funding is inequitable. Combined with the 60-day restriction, this renders the law effectively useless as a tool for recruiting new teacher candidates. The OESD Network recommends adjustments to the law and a strategy for equitable funding to remedy the issue.

Recommendations

Statutory Language Amendment. Due to the interpretation from legal counsel within the state attorney general of statutory language amended via [HB 1781](#) (2019) regarding allowance to pay student teacher interns, interns are currently unable to receive monetary payment for the first 60 days (or 12 weeks) of their internship in an Oklahoma elementary or secondary school, except those employed as para-professionals. It is the Network’s understanding that this bill’s original intent was to allow payment to student interns for the entire teaching internship period. In order to rectify this issue, the Network suggests that the Act (relating to student teachers, amending 70 O.S. 2011, Section 1-116) be amended to permit paid student teaching from day one of a full-day student teaching internship, for up to one full school year. This amendment will remove the current unintended legal barrier to paid student teaching internships across the state.

Equitable Funding. In order to address the lack of equitable funding for paying student teacher interns, the OESD Network recommends that state lawmakers encourage the formation of a representative group of state education agency representatives, educator preparation providers and local school district representatives to work together to identify federal funding sources, state funding sources, grant pursuits or other innovative monetary sources, as well as procedural

elements for fund management. This combination of funds identified and pursued by the representative group, once awarded, should be:

- Established as the **Oklahoma Statewide Student Teaching Fund**
- Managed and distributed by an appointed state-based non-profit entity
- Distributed equally, per days of service, to all eligible student interns across the state
- Used to provide cost-of-living stipends for student teachers interning in Oklahoma public schools and enrolled at a Commission on Educational Quality and Accountability (CEQA)-approved, Oklahoma university-based educator preparation program.

The OESD Network recommends that this new state fund be issued as stipends to teacher interns — rather than as scholarships, salary payments or loan forgiveness options — because stipends: a) are more easily managed and distributed; b) are not subject to federal or state tax withholding (though they are taxable); and c) easily operate as an equitable funding strategy. Stipend amounts should depend on the number of days served in a full-day internship or co-teaching role, with the daily amount determined once the fund is established.

A common daily rate as established for the Statewide Student Teacher Fund rules shall be used across the state to ensure equity in payment to all student teaching interns.

To aid in accomplishing the mission of such a representative group, the OESD Network has curated a list of potential federal funds and non-profit organizations that may have interest in contributing to the Statewide Student Teaching Internship Stipend Fund.

Challenge 2:

Lack of a Sustainable, Statewide Support Plan for First- and Second-Year Teachers

Mentorship support is one of the most [promising and overwhelmingly successful](#) ways to grow, support and retain new educators no matter their preparation pathway. A leading researcher in this field, Dr. Richard Ingersoll, [reviewed multiple studies on induction programs and found](#) three overarching positive effects:

- **Teacher retention:** Participation in an induction program increases the likelihood that a teacher will remain in the field and at that particular school. Furthermore, studies [examined in the 1990's](#) found that teachers who participated in induction programs typically averaged a three-year retention rate around 90%, while new teachers who did not averaged a retention rate around 70% or less.
- **Teaching instruction:** “The majority of studies reviewed showed that beginning teachers who participated in some kind of induction performed better at various aspects of teaching, such as keeping students on task, using effective student questioning practices, adjusting classroom activities to meet students’ interests, maintaining a positive classroom atmosphere, and demonstrating successful classroom management” (Ingersoll 2011).

- **Student achievement:** “Almost all of the studies showed that students of beginning teachers who participated in induction had higher scores, or gains, on academic achievement tests.” (Ingersoll 2011)

Only a decade ago Oklahoma was a national leader in providing mentorship support for new teachers — yet [funding was cut and a moratorium](#) on the policy went into effect in 2010. As of 2018, 28% of Oklahoma teachers have zero to three years of teaching experience, according to the state’s [2018 Supply & Demand Report](#). This is a significant portion of the state’s teacher workforce who should be receiving critical support to help in the growth of their students and their own practice — a strategy that would help the state retain more of these new teachers.

Mentors are critically important through “just in time” support (e.g., a wide range of expert strategies and timely formative feedback) and with personal support (e.g., processing professional successes and challenges, implementing self-care). The [most successful mentorship programs](#) prioritize growth in areas challenging to early-career teachers, but also foster a people-driven approach emphasizing collaboration and growth of all teachers, even the mentors themselves.

In order to better support early-career teachers throughout all public schools in Oklahoma, the OESD Network proposes that state leaders amend requirements built into the Oklahoma Teacher and Leader Effectiveness (TLE) system in order to create a systemic expectation and requirement, as well as guidelines and resources, for sustainable, high-quality mentorship support of all first- and second-year teachers in Oklahoma public schools.

Recommendations

Short-Term Goal: *Pilot a 1st & 2nd Year Teacher PL Focus Mentoring Initiative*

The Oklahoma State Department of Education and appropriate partners, including the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness regional advisory groups, create and seek funding for a pilot program to design, test and assess a first- and second-year teacher mentorship and induction program embedded in the requirements of the Professional Learning Focus or PL Focus within TLE.

OESD Network Suggested Pilot Parameters:

Pilot Design

1. The pilot program must be tested within several state districts representing a diverse scope of Oklahoma public schools (geographic, race/ethnicity and socio-economic diversity).
2. Funding will need to be secured through state appropriations and/or through applicable current or future grant sources.
3. The pilot should be conducted for at least two years.
4. OSDE and/or the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability must collect applicable data and results from the pilot and use the analysis of the data to adjust the program design before scaling.

TLE Guidance

5. OSDE, in partnership with TLE stakeholders, should work to embed a thorough, quality high-needs instructional growth structure with individualized mentorship elements within the requirements of the PL Focus of the TLE for the first two years of a teacher's career.
 - This new PL Focus design should be organized into appropriate segments throughout the first two years of teaching, focusing on the highest-need areas for early-career teachers and at the most appropriate times during the school year, such as classroom management, engaging all students in active learning, time management, pedagogical skill, literacy instruction, cultural diversity and inclusion, virtual instruction, and social-emotional learning.
 - This two-year PL Focus design could be modeled heavily on the successful First Class program currently offered to a small cohort of first-year teachers annually by OSDE. In addition, OSDE may wish to partner with highly successful in-state educator preparation programs to assist in program development.
 - Flexibilities and individualized mentorship to assist early-career teachers with their specific high-needs growth areas should be prioritized within the guidelines and program structure.
6. OSDE should also work with and provide guidance to local school district leaders, principals and assistant principals on how to facilitate the successful new PL Focus design for new teachers and how to work in harmony with mentors to offer coordinated support to new teachers.

State-Based Mentoring Cohort

7. OSDE and key partner organizations and agencies will be responsible for selecting, hiring, training and overseeing a state cohort of mentors for the pilot program.
8. The state-based mentors will be responsible for mentoring all first- and second-year teachers in the participating pilot districts using weekly virtual interactions, with face-to-face interactions as possible. OSDE may look to other successful training programs it has instituted with strong mentorship components, like First Class, Lead 2 Succeed and Moving UP, to assist with design and mentor training. In addition, OSDE may look to other state programs, such as the [Arkansas Novice Teacher Quest](#), for design ideas.
9. Mentors who are effective during the pilot phase could then be groomed to become Head Mentors for the state of Oklahoma, overseeing and guiding cadres of future Lead and Master certified-teachers ([SB 980](#) - 2018) to serve as the peer mentors to all first- and second-year teachers statewide.

Long-term Goal: *Implement statewide the Oklahoma 1st & 2nd Year Teacher PL Focus Mentoring Initiative*

OSDE institutes new state PL Focus requirements within TLE and coordinates a statewide program to provide a two-year high-quality mentorship to all first- and second-year teachers in the state, designed using lessons learned during a diverse, multi-district pilot.

The Oklahoma 1st & 2nd Year Teacher PL Focus Mentoring Initiative would require all first- and second-year teachers in the state to follow a new research-based PL Focus plan specializing in early-career educator growth. This initiative must:

1. Require and provide a highly effective one-on-one peer teacher mentor to every first- and second-year public school teacher in the state (approximately 3,000 new teachers are hired annually in Oklahoma) through weekly virtual mentoring interactions.
2. Focus on the highest-need areas for early-career teachers based on individualized needs and research (e.g., classroom management, engaging all students in active learning, time management, pedagogical skill, literacy instruction, cultural diversity and inclusion, virtual instruction and social-emotional learning).
3. Provide ample individualized support and professional development opportunities to tailor the mentoring supports to the exact needs of every early-career educator.

The Oklahoma 1st & 2nd Year Teacher PL Focus Mentoring Initiative should:

- Be codified into relevant teacher effectiveness law, ([HB 2957](#) - 2016).
- Be required and delivered equitably to all public schools and their new educators in Oklahoma. The mentoring program would be complementary to, but would not replace, coursework requirements for those fulfilling emergency and alternative certification.
- Be managed by OSDE.
- Be funded by consistent appropriations to maintain sustainability statewide.
 - Funding will need to be secured for OSDE to manage and oversee an ample cadre of state-based coaches.
 - State-based, equitable incentive funding will need to be applied to all Lead and Master certified teachers providing virtual mentoring supports to new teachers, based on the number of mentees served.

Oklahoma has a multi-tiered system of support structures to help successfully implement this initiative, including:

1. A well-established and codified TLE system with individualized PL Focus requirements for all public-school educators in the state.
2. Several highly successful professional development programs with integrated coaching supports run by OSDE, including First Class, Lead 2 Succeed and Moving UP, from which to model a statewide program.

3. Newly codified ([SB 980](#) - 2018) advanced certification options for teachers to earn Lead or Master's Certificates, identifying them as highly-effective instructional leaders and peer mentors.
4. A robust set of courses developed by Oklahoma educator preparation programs that develop teachers' knowledge and skill sets, including those entering the profession through emergency and alternative certification pathways.
5. Mentoring programs in many local schools and districts that can help the statewide mentoring initiative succeed.

A Call to Action

Oklahoma's teacher shortage issue is severe, the state's Teacher Shortage Task Force reports. Oklahoma has lost teachers at an average rate of 10% (or 5,000 teachers) per year over the last decade, according to the state's [2018 Supply & Demand Report](#), with retirement accounting for only one-tenth of that turnover. The average age of a teacher in the state is 45, the report notes, so as the workforce ages, retirements will significantly increase.

State reported retention rates are just as alarming: "Among all beginning educators between 2012-13 and 2016-17, 81.8 percent taught after 1 year, 68.7 percent after 2 years, 62.8 percent taught after 3 years, 57.9 percent remained teaching after 4 years, and 53.9 percent of new educators taught after 5 years." The state continues to see a decline in supply, dropping from 52,939 to 50,598 in 2017-18. New hires average 9.5% of the teacher workforce annually. In 2017-18, 30% of new hires came in under a provisional or emergency license, 36% had zero years of teaching experience and 33% had one to three years' experience (OSDE 2018).

Oklahoma, along with most of the nation, continues to see a decline in interest in the teaching profession. From 2013 to 2018, program completers in traditional educator preparation programs declined by over 800, [from 2,152 to 1,314](#). Yet Oklahoma's P-12 student population continues to grow, requiring more teachers each year. Without a sufficient supply, the state will continue to rely on unprepared emergency certified teachers or long-term substitutes to fill vacancies.

Teacher turnover comes at a price. [The Learning Policy Institute](#) estimates the average cost of recruiting, hiring and onboarding a new teacher at over \$20,000 for each new hire. When nearly half of the state's teacher workforce leaves within five years, that is costing Oklahoma's school districts over \$1 billion dollars every decade to hire and train new teachers.

Therefore, it is imperative that we shift our investments to supporting, training and retaining our teachers. Teaching is a human endeavor, and all humans need encouragement and opportunities to grow. The OESD Network believes in the potential benefits of this early-career mentorship initiative — to new teachers' instructional growth and the growth of their students, the retention rate of new teachers, and the retention rate of career professionals who will have the opportunity to advance in the teaching profession as lead and master educators.

Appendix A:

Oklahoma Educator Supply and Demand Network Membership List

School Superintendents

Trice Butler, Wilburton Public Schools

Renee Dove, Okmulgee Public Schools

Shellie Gammill, Wewoka Public School District

Rick Garrison, Elk City Public Schools

Jeanette Smith, Eufaula Public Schools

Shannon Vanderburg, Frederick Public Schools

Oklahoma Educator Preparation Program Representatives

Vanessa Anton, Dean, College of Education, Northeastern State University and former President, Oklahoma Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (OACTE)

Bryan L. Duke, Associate Dean & Director of Educator Preparation, University of Central Oklahoma

Courtney Glazer, Director of Educator Preparation, Cameron University

Joshua Hawkins, Assistant Professor & Special Education Program Coordinator, Northwestern Oklahoma State University

Ed Klein, Chair, Department of Education, Southwestern Oklahoma State University

Stewart Mayers, Chair, Department of Educational Instruction and Leadership & Director of Teacher Education Southeastern Oklahoma State University

Gerald “Jerry” Mihelic, Director of Educational Leadership Program (Principals), East Central University

State Staffers

CCOSA: **Jeanene Barnette**, Education Policy and Research Analyst

Oklahoma State Department of Education: **Robyn Miller**, Chief Deputy Superintendent

Office of Educational Quality and Accountability: **Renee Launey-Rodolf**, Director

Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education: **Goldie Thompson**, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Teacher Preparation and Special Programs

SREB Support Staff (in alphabetical order):

[Megan Boren](#), [Stevie Lawrence](#), [Stephen Pruitt](#) and [Jessica Snellings](#)

Appendix B:

Potential Federal and Non-Profit Funding Source List for a Statewide Student Teaching Internship Stipend Fund

The following is a list of potential grant funders and federal funding options that could be considered by Oklahoma when seeking funding for paid student teaching internships.

ESSA Title II A Funds

States can use Title II A funds for:

- Developing or assisting local educational agencies in developing strategies that provide differential pay, or other incentives, to recruit and retain teachers in high-need academic subjects and teachers, principals, or other school leaders, in low-income schools and school districts, which may include performance-based pay systems
- Reforming or improving teacher, principal, or other school leader preparation programs, such as through establishing teacher residency programs and school leader residency programs
- Establishing or expanding teacher, principal, or other school leader preparation academies

Local education agencies can use Title II A funds for:

- Developing and implementing initiatives to assist in recruiting, hiring, and retaining effective teachers, particularly in low-income schools with high percentages of ineffective teachers and high percentages of students who do not meet the challenging State academic standards
- To improve within-district equity in the distribution of teachers, consistent with section 1111(g)(1)(B), such as initiatives that provide differential and incentive pay for teachers, principals, or other school leaders in high-need academic subject areas and specialty areas, which may include performance-based pay systems
- New teacher, principal, or other school leader induction and mentoring programs that are designed to improve classroom instruction and student learning and achievement; and increase the retention of effective teachers, principals, or other school leaders
- Recruiting qualified individuals from other fields to become teachers, principals, or other school leaders

Appendix B:

Potential Federal and Non-Profit Funding Source List for a Statewide Student Teaching Internship Stipend Fund (continued)

Potential Grant Funders

- [AFT Educational Foundation](#)
- [Americorps Oklahoma](#)
- [The Annie E. Casey Foundation](#)
- [Arabella Advisors](#)
- [Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation](#)
- [Ascendium Education Group](#) (formerly Great Lakes)*
- [Aspen Institute Education and Society](#)
- [The Bay and Paul Foundations](#)
- [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#)*
- [The Brinson Foundation](#)
- [Carnegie Corporation of New York](#)
- [Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation](#) (Oklahoma-based)
- [Deans for Impact](#)*
- [ECMC Foundation](#)
- [Jack Kent Cooke Foundation](#)
- [Longview Foundation for Education in World Affairs & International Understanding](#)
- [National Center on Education and the Economy](#)
- [National College Attainment Network](#)
- [National Council for Community and Education Partnerships](#)
- [National Education Association](#)
- [National Public Education Support Fund](#)
- [The NEA Foundation](#)
- [New York Life Foundation](#)
- [Overdeck Family Foundation, Inc.](#)
- [Rodel](#)
- [Strategic Grant Partners](#)
- [Taco Bell Foundation](#)
- [The Teagle Foundation](#)

* *More promising match for paid student teaching*

Appendix C:

References and Guidance

Aragon, S. (May 2016). “Teacher Shortages: What We Know.” Education Commission of the States. Online: <https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Teacher-Shortages-What-We-Know.pdf>

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Appendix C:

References and Guidance (continued)

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Guidance Links:

Online Training Modules. Vanderbilt University. Online: <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/induction/> and <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/tchr-ret/>.

Arkansas Novice Teacher Quest. Arkansas Department of Education. Online: http://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/public/userfiles/HR_and_Educator_Effectiveness/HR_EducatorEffectiveness/Induction_Mentoring/NT_Mentoring_Program_FAQS_7.13.15.pdf

SREB Research:

Mentoring New Teachers: https://www.sreb.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/mentoring_new_teachers_2.pdf?1516727553

First-Year Teacher Support Strategies: <https://www.sreb.org/publication/first-year-teacher-support-strategies-and-programs>

Promoting Teacher Leadership: <https://www.sreb.org/publication/state-efforts-promote-teacher-leadership>

Teacher Preparation Data: <https://www.sreb.org/resources/teacher-preparation-program-completion>