

# Bridging the Gap

*Building Strong Teacher Pipelines  
in Missouri's Rural Schools*

April 2025



# We have two primary objectives for our time together today:

- Develop a **high-level understanding of the major findings** from Education First's report on teacher pipelines in Missouri
- Explore the **potential implications of the report on your grantmaking strategies and/or organizational efforts** to strengthen the rural teacher pipeline in Missouri

# Agenda

- |       |                        |        |
|-------|------------------------|--------|
| 1     | Welcome                | 2 min  |
| <hr/> |                        |        |
| 2     | Overview of Findings   | 18 min |
| <hr/> |                        |        |
| 3     | Recommendations        | 18 min |
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| 4     | Small Group Discussion | 20 min |
| <hr/> |                        |        |
| 5     | Closeout               | 4 min  |
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# The team at Education First authored this pipeline study



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experience | quality | results



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# How did this report come to be?

## Why this report?

**Schools across Missouri currently face difficulties in finding enough appropriately certified teachers and in maintaining a stable teacher workforce.** Over the past decade, the educator ecosystem in Missouri has faced growing challenges, particularly in the number of vacancies and inappropriately filled teaching roles. These challenges are not felt equally across the state: Teacher vacancies affect students of color and students from low-income backgrounds in greater numbers, while inappropriately filled vacancies are a challenge in rural, city and suburban districts.

**While distinct, the challenges that Missouri schools face both in finding enough appropriately certified teachers and in maintaining a stable teaching workforce have real financial and human impacts.** The cost of replacing a teacher is estimated to be anywhere from \$11,860 to \$24,930, as it takes significant resources and personnel time to fill a vacant position. In addition, teacher turnover across schools and districts can undermine improvement efforts and make instructional progress and teacher collaboration more challenging.

## What does this report cover?



With support from WPPG, Education First conducted a **pipeline study** of Missouri's educator workforce. The goal of this project was to better understand the **challenges and opportunities** for strengthening teacher pipelines across Missouri. Grounded in the perspective of stakeholders from across the educator ecosystem as well as quantitative data on the teaching landscape, this research provides stakeholders a deeper understanding of the teacher **vacancies and shortages** in Missouri as well as teacher **recruitment, preparation** and **retention** in the field.

# To understand the educator ecosystem in Missouri, it is important to consider each phase of the teacher pipeline



The teacher pipeline has **three key phases**: recruitment, preparation and retention of teachers.

- **Recruitment** focuses on the value proposition for becoming a teacher and efforts to recruit a range of individuals into pathways that support them to become an appropriately certified teacher.
- **Preparation** focuses on the experiences of candidates within their preparation programs, both in terms of the content and training they receive as well as their lived experiences and potential challenges they face in completing their programs.
- **Retention** focuses on efforts to ensure those who do complete their programs become and continue to grow as effective teachers within the state.

# A set of key takeaways regarding teacher recruitment, preparation and workforce experiences in Missouri emerged from our analysis

## Teacher Shortages & Vacancies



- Districts with a **high number of inappropriately filled vacancies** often serve **more students of color**, more **lower income students** and have **larger** class sizes.
- Districts with a **higher percentage of overall vacancies** tend to be primarily **rural**, as do those who have the highest percentages of **inappropriately filled vacancies**.

## EPP Recruitment



- Teachers in Missouri are drawn to teaching in part because of a desire to have an **impact** in their community.
- The majority of Missouri EPPs – 69% - are concentrated in **cities and suburbs**, leading to stronger teacher pipelines in non-rural areas.
- Financial **incentives** exist to attract teachers, but negative **perceptions** of the profession impede workforce growth.

## Preparation



- Candidates surveyed for this study shared a desire for more training to support **stronger instructional practices** and **student engagement**.
- Financial **burdens** from tuition, unpaid student teaching and certification fees can hinder EPP completion.
- Coursework **requirements**, particularly in math, may impact the number of appropriately certified teachers entering the workforce.

## Retention In The Field



- **Turnover** of teachers across the state has both **financial costs** and **impacts student learning**.
- **Retention** of current teachers is crucial to ensure vacancies across the state are filled annually.
- DESE implements programs to ensure robust mentorship for new teachers to promote **retention**, and there are **opportunities to expand** these programs to address challenges with retention.



# Teacher Shortages & Vacancies in Missouri

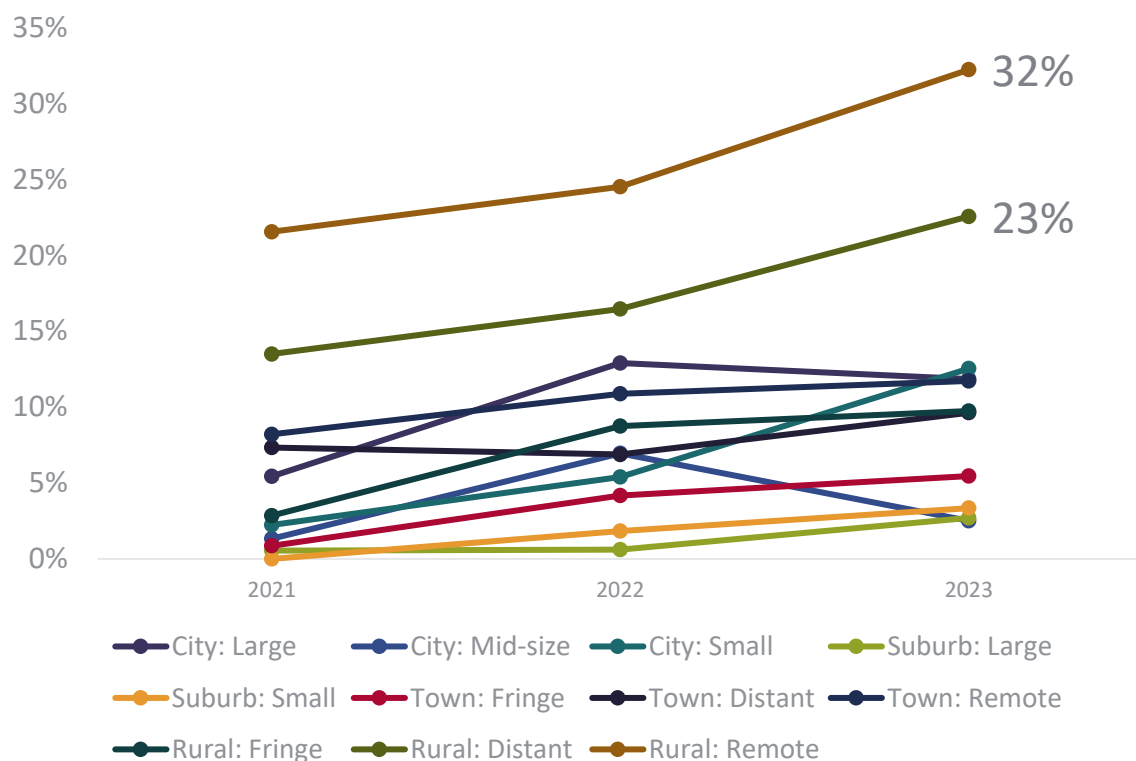
- What do **teacher shortages and vacancies** look like in Missouri?
- To what degree **are shortages felt equally** across the state?



# *Inappropriately Filled Vacancies*

# The highest percentage of vacancies filled inappropriately were in rural geographic locales

Percent of All Vacancies Filled Inappropriately  
by Geographic Locale



In 2023, the geographic locales with the highest percentage of all certification area vacancies filled inappropriately were **Rural: Distant (32%)** and **Rural: Remote (23%)**.

# *Vacancy Rates*

# Districts facing the highest *percentage* of teacher vacancies were primarily rural and needed to replace over a third of their teaching staff

While the **number of vacancies** in these districts may be **relatively small**, they represent a **large percentage** of the **overall teaching workforce in each district**. This level of **turnover** of teachers can have a real **financial** cost for districts, as well as on the **lived experiences** of students who face turnover of the trusted adults within their schools.

Percentage of Vacancies in Terms of Total Teachers

District	Geographic Locale	Total Vacancies	Total FTE Teachers	% Vacancies
<i>Kingston 42</i>	Rural: Distant	3	6	50%
<i>Atlas Public Schools</i>	City: Large	7	16	44%
<i>Winston R-VI</i>	Rural: Distant	10	23	43%
<i>Spickard R-II</i>	Rural: Distant	3	7	43%
<i>Mirabile C-1</i>	Rural: Distant	3	7	43%
<i>Crossroads Charter Schools</i>	City: Large	41	103	40%
<i>Orearville R-IV</i>	Rural: Distant	3	8	38%
<i>Roscoe C-1</i>	Rural: Remote	3	8	38%
<i>BONCL R-X</i>	Rural: Distant	3	8	38%
<i>Golden City R-III</i>	Rural: Distant	9	25	36%

# Looking across the state overall, four certification areas have the highest total number of vacancies

Between 2021 and 2023, the **top four certification areas with the highest number of vacancies** were Elementary Education, Mild/Moderate Cross-Categorical, Mathematics and Social Science. These certification areas are the highest in numerical vacancies in part due to the large number of overall teaching positions in these areas.

The large and often increasing number of vacancies across these subject areas are indicative of **turnover** of teachers across the state – even if those teachers leaving positions vacant are then hired as an appropriately certified teacher in a different district, filling a different vacancy, there are **costs** to both students and districts.

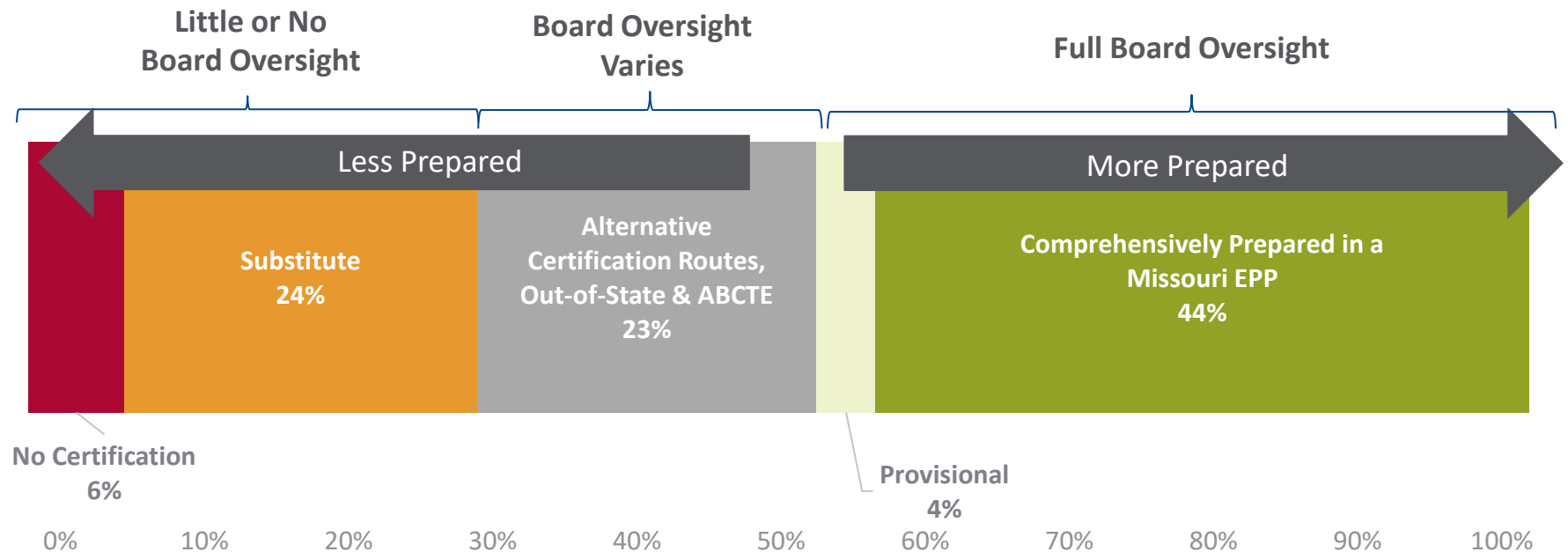
Certification Areas with Highest Vacancies, 2021-2023			
Certification Area	Vacancies		
	2021	2022	2023
Total – All Certification Areas	5264	8649	8389
Elementary Education	1624	2235	2672
Mild/Moderate Cross-Categorical	844	1534	1301
Middle and Secondary Mathematics	449	574	664
Middle and Secondary Social Science	268	638	447

# *Certification of First-Year Teachers*

# In 2023-24, over half of first-year teachers were not comprehensively prepared in a Missouri EPP

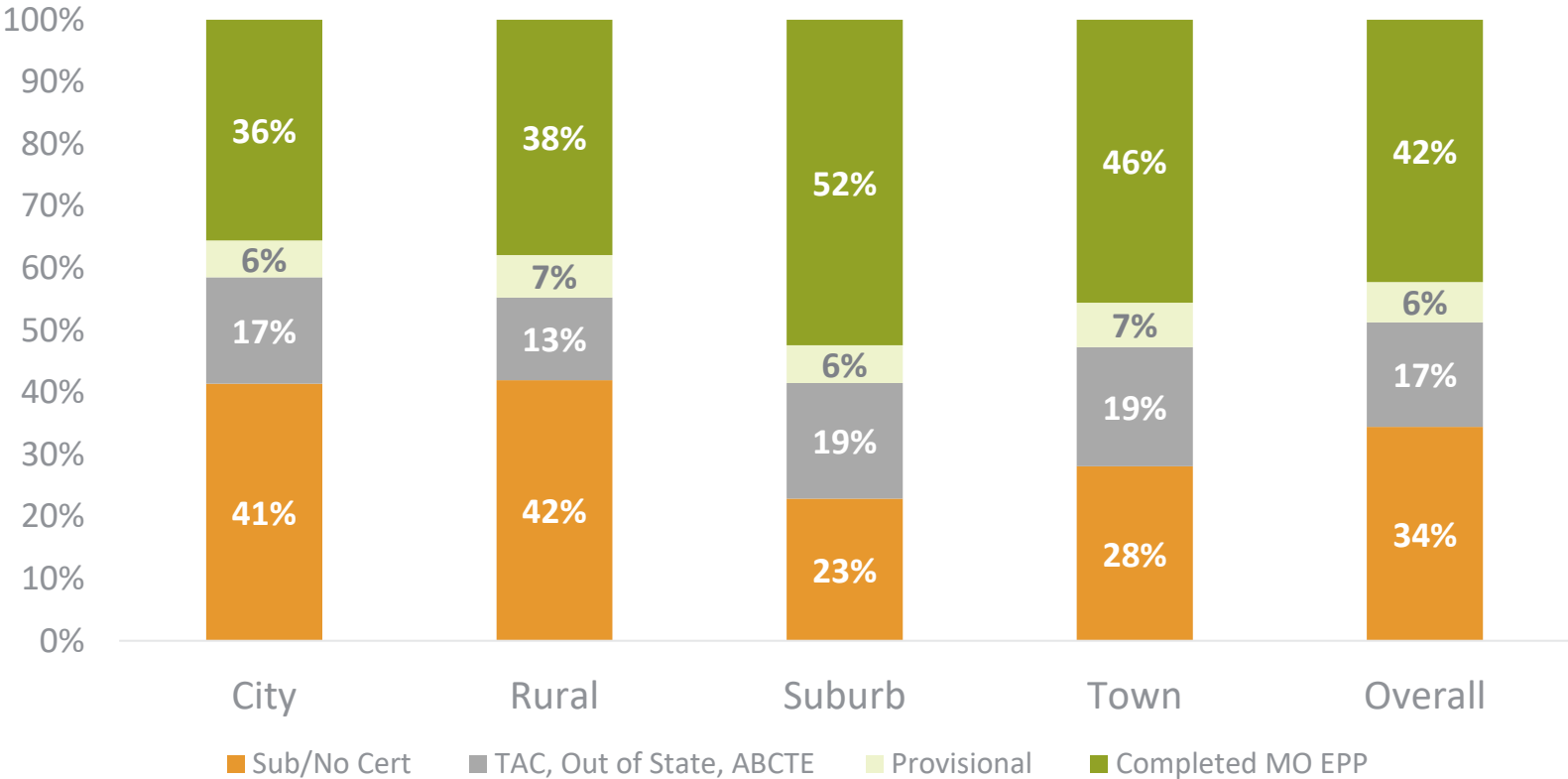
During the academic year of 2023-24, **24 percent** of first-year teachers had **substitute** certification while another **6 percent** had **no certification**. An additional **23 percent** of first-year teachers were certified through **alternative certification routes, ABCTE or out of state**.

Those with no certification or substitute certification have **not passed** Board-approved subject area content exams, and the State Board has less oversight of alternative certification rates and preparation experiences of those teachers originally certified out of state. Teachers who do not complete a comprehensive EPP program may be **more likely** to face challenges as a first-year teacher, which could potentially lead to lower retention rates than their comprehensively prepared peers.



# In 2023-24, over half of first-year teachers were not comprehensively prepared in a Missouri EPP

Certification Source by Type, First-Year Teachers  
2023–2024







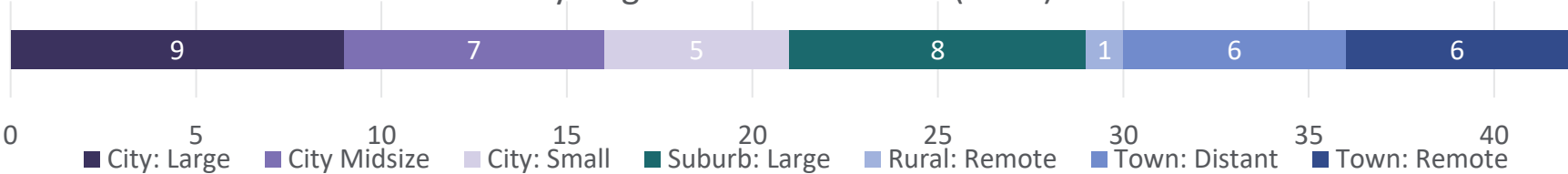
# EPP Recruitment

- **Who** becomes a teacher in Missouri, and **what factors**, including accessibility, influence that decision?
- What **recruitment** strategies have been most effective?

# 69% of Missouri EPPs are concentrated in cities and suburbs, leading to stronger teacher pipelines in non-rural areas

As of 2023, the **majority of Missouri EPPs are located in cities or suburbs**, and correspondingly these EPPs had more completers compared to their more rural peers. The **dearth of EPPs in rural communities**, such as central northern and much of southeastern Missouri, may be one of the factors influencing the comparatively higher percentage of teaching positions filled inappropriately in rural districts

EPPs by Degree of Urbanization (n=42)



Degree of Urbanization	General Characteristics	# EPPs	Completers
City: Large	Major metropolitan areas with populations exceeding 300,000 people.	9	266
City: Midsize	Cities with populations between 100,000 and 300,000 people.	7	876
City: Small	Small cities with populations ranging from 10,000 to 1000,000.	5	483
Suburb: Large	Areas normally directly connected to larger cities, with populations ranging from 50,000 to 100,000.	8	418
Rural: Remote	Characterized by low population densities, typically fewer than 1,000 people per square mile.	1	22
Town: Distant	Populations under 10,000. Often located over an hour away from midsize to larger cities and will serve as local hubs for surrounding cities.	6	529
Town: Remote	Like distant towns in population (under 10,000), further isolated from larger cities and services.	6	351

# Stakeholders shared that individuals in Missouri often become teachers because of a desire to give back to their community and support future generations

## Individuals who choose to teach often have an intrinsic and altruistic motivations

- When asked what motivated them to become teachers, interviewees and survey respondents shared a set of reasons, such as:
  - + Wanting to give back to the community they grew up in
  - + A commitment to contribute a greater good
  - + A desire to follow in the footsteps of family members who had been teachers
  - + A reflection on the type of legacy they want to leave

## Stakeholders also shared that the state's retirement benefits are a valuable asset

- While younger generations may be less enticed by benefits that take a longer time period to be realized, more veteran stakeholders across the field noted the strength of Missouri teacher retirement benefits.

*"I'll tell you again, most of the kids I have in class really have a passion to go back to where they came from. In general, they want to teach in the rural communities, [but it's also true for] the urban kids. I've got two kids from my spring class, they're from St. Louis area by golly! That's where they're going back."*

—EPP Leader

*"I think that [my desire to be a teacher] stems from my cousin, my parents, my grandparents, all of them being teachers and hearing about their experiences and just wanting to do that myself."*

—Current EPP Candidate

*"When I started, teacher retirement was a huge thing. Benefits, that was something that people went into planning to stay for the long haul because[teaching has] the best retirement . . . Now, though, I don't know that the workforce is looking for those same things."*

—State Leader

# However, the increasingly negative perception of the teaching profession is impeding the state's efforts to expand the teacher workforce

Despite the funding incentives, stakeholders noted the negative narrative that discourages people to become teachers

- Interviewees noted repeatedly that the narrative surrounding the profession communicates to aspiring educators that the **career is not financially sustainable or respected as a career choice**.
- Further, stakeholders mentioned that young people are hearing from **current teachers that they should avoid pursuing the education profession**. Students actively being discouraged by teachers will continue to push the negative narrative and contribute to pipeline shortages.

*"I have to say that one of the things that seems to have changed in the last five years, certainly the last three years, is that we're not seeing the encouragement from current teachers as much as we used to encourage those high school students, college students to pursue the career that they themselves have chosen."*

—Teacher Association Leader

*"There is this stress of entering a profession that is already overstressed . . . and then others telling [students] not to go into the profession because of a lack of appreciation and compensation. . . . There's a lot of negative stigma to education [as a career]."*

—EPP Leader

*"You hear a lot of negative things about school districts. It makes the news, and I understand that there's also a lot of incredible work that is being done."*

—DESE Leader

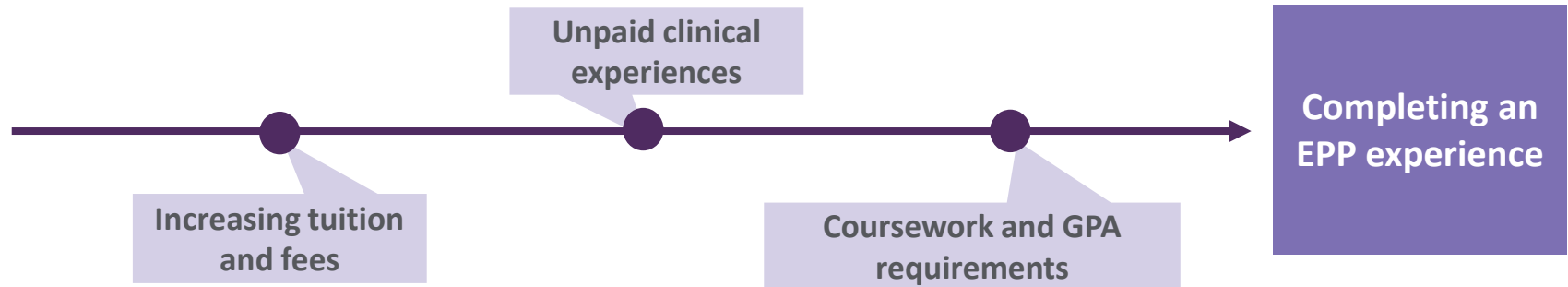


# Preparation

- What specific **challenges or barriers** impede the transition from EPP recruitment to workforce entry, and how do these "leaks" in the pipeline vary across different types of teacher preparation programs and target groups?
- How are **EPPs ensuring the effectiveness** of first-year teachers?

# Aspiring educators experience challenges that can lead them to exit the pipeline during their preparation experiences

## Potential Push Factors Throughout EPP Experiences



Throughout the EPP experience, candidates must navigate a number of challenges that can serve as push factors for potential “off-ramps” from the program

- Throughout a teacher candidates preparation experience, a number of other challenges- such as **financial burdens** from increasing tuition and fees as well as unpaid clinical experiences – can also serve to prompt students away from the teaching profession.
- **Coursework** and **GPA requirements** were noted by many as potential barriers to completion, particularly for subject areas that require difficult upper-level courses in STEM.
- Previously, programs required passing the MoGEA general exam for entrance into the program, an initial **barrier** that prohibited some who were interested in becoming teachers from gaining access to programs.

# Candidates surveyed shared a desire for more training to support stronger instructional practices and student engagement

Although data indicate that Missouri EPPs prepare students in classroom management, new teachers report struggling with managing challenging behaviors

- According to the most recent APR-EPP data, **across the state EPPs are meeting state standards when it comes to Standard 5: Classroom Environment**, which is focused on the way in which a teacher uses an understanding of motivation and behavior to create **a learning environment that encourages active engagement** in learning, positive social interaction and self-motivation.
- EPPs are evaluated on Standard 5 based on a combination of student's pedagogical/program GPA, Missouri Educator Evaluation System (MEES) scores, and first-year teacher and principal surveys scores. Across all EPPs, the state has an average weighted score of **9.3 out of 10 possible points** in this standard.
- While EPPs performance against standards is promising, stakeholders noted that new teachers are often **underprepared in classroom management and differentiating instruction** to meet diverse student needs.
- Research indicates that high standards for K12 learning can **increase the likelihood of students being engaged and connected to school**, underscoring the importance of stronger preparation for differentiating instruction.

*"I would have liked more in-depth classroom management courses, and multiple opportunities to implement it and practice with it."*

-Current Teacher

*"Managing behavior in high-needs areas. Many other new teachers who come into our district also struggle with managing behaviors in the classroom."*

-Current Teacher

*"It is very difficult to adjust to the students that we have now where they have trauma, they have anxiety, there's agitation, there are so many more mental health diagnoses now that our students have, that our teachers aren't necessarily equipped to deal in the classroom."*

-DESE Leader



# Retention In the Field

- What specific **challenges or barriers** impede the transition from EPP recruitment to workforce entry, and how do these "leaks" in the pipeline vary across different types of teacher preparation programs and target groups?
- What are the **reasons** for Missouri's teacher shortage and to what degree **is the shortage felt equally** across the state?
- What **enabling conditions** exist at the state level to support bolstering the teacher pipeline?



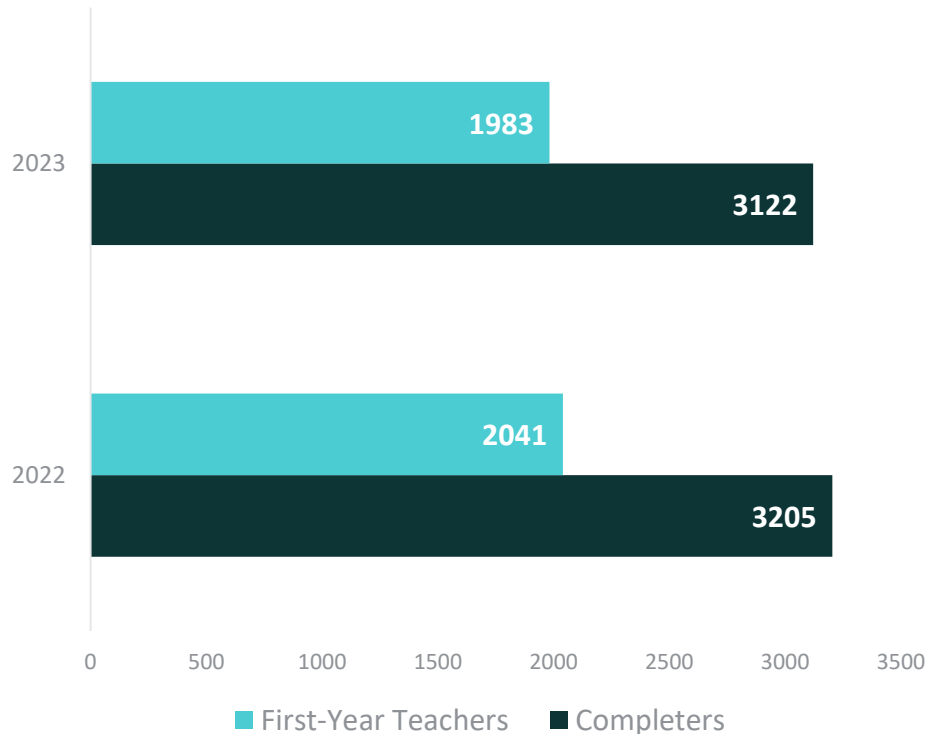
# In addition, only about 64% of EPP completers go on to become first-year teachers after completion of their EPP

When considering retention, it is important to consider **retention in the field rather** than just retention of those who enter as first-year teachers and then stay in the profession.

Over the past two years, only about **64%** of EPP completers go on to teach in a Missouri public school district the year following their program completion.

This **leakage between program completion and employment** contributes to the teacher shortage that the state is experiencing – ensuring that more completers transition into working in the classroom would help bolster the teacher workforce across the state.

Completers Compared to First-Year Teachers



# Districts that are closer to neighboring state borders tend to have higher median vacancies compared to their peers

Median Vacancies by District Distance from Border	
State	10
<i>Approx. Distance from Border</i>	<i>Median Vacancies</i>
0-24 miles	11
25-49 miles	11.5
50-74 miles	6.5
75-100+ miles	10

While the median number of vacancies for the state overall is 10, **districts that are within <50 miles of the border tend to have slightly higher median vacancies.**

Median Vacancies by District Neighboring State	
<i>Closet Neighboring State</i>	<i>Median Vacancies</i>
Illinois	15
Arkansas	11
Kansas	9
Kentucky	9
Nebraska	6
Iowa	5

Similarly, when analyzing vacancies based on the closest neighboring state, **districts that have Arkansas or Illinois as their closest neighbors have slightly higher vacancies** than those whose closest border state is Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky or Nebraska.

# Many neighboring states have programs to incentivize teachers of color to join their workforce

While Missouri has a **comparable starting** salary compared to some neighboring states, it currently does not offer any programs incentivizing teachers of color. As Missouri seeks to ensure that students are supported and that teachers are representative of the communities they serve, **programs that are focused on future teachers of color** may help increase recruitment and retention.

State	Average Teacher Starting Salary	Programs Incentivizing Teachers of Color
Missouri	\$40,000	No
Arkansas	\$50,000	Yes
Illinois	\$43,515	Yes
Iowa	\$39,986	No
Kansas	\$41,200	No
Kentucky	\$39,204	Yes
Oklahoma	\$38,192	Yes
Nebraska	\$37,797	No
Tennessee	\$42,164	Yes

*"I'm hearing in the south that people are crossing the border of Arkansas to get \$50,000, and we've all got to get aggressive at getting to \$50,000 for starting teacher pay, in my opinion."*

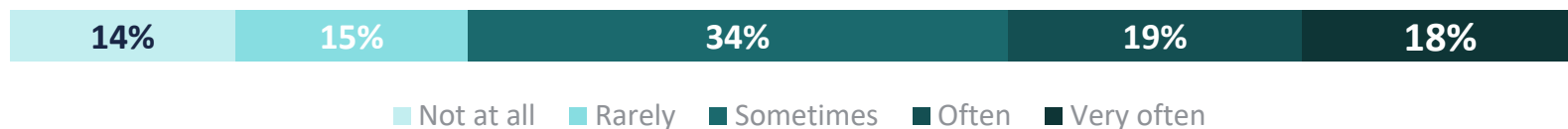
*—Human Capital Leader*

*"I definitely think bordering Illinois, bordering Arkansas, and also our current ecosystem...just all the things that people are doing in terms of compensation and trying to keep the best of the best."*

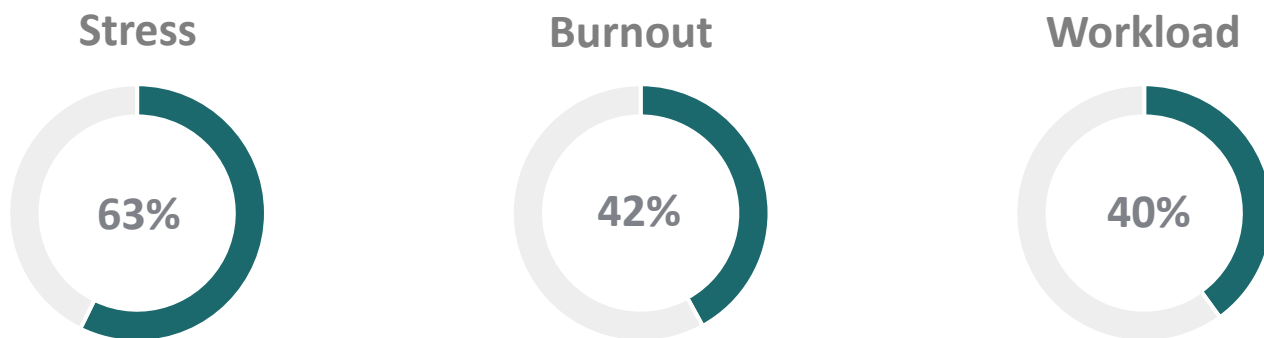
*—Charter School Leader*

# Stress and burnout are cited as motivating factors for why teachers leave the profession, with turnover disproportionately impacting students furthest from opportunity

*How often do you seriously consider leaving the profession?*



*Why do you consider leaving the profession?*



*"Burnout is already very high. Can a 20-year-old handle a high school classroom?"*

—EPP Leader

*"The more we bring those folks [underprepared teachers] in, the more stress is put on the existing teachers. The existing teachers are doing all the planning."*

—EPP Leader



What are your **reactions** to these findings?

Did you find anything **surprising**?

What **wonderings** do you have?



## 3 | Recommendations

# Based on our analysis, we have identified six key recommendations:

**1** Launch **targeted communications** campaigns that elevate the value proposition of becoming a teacher in MO and increase awareness about pathways into the profession.

**2** Define the essential components of **high-quality teacher preparation experiences** and work to ensure all first-year teachers have those experiences.

**3** Expand **financial strategies** to support candidates to and through preparation programs.

**4** Address **structural barriers** that prevent aspiring educators from accessing and persevering through teacher preparation programs.

**5** Improve how teachers experience the profession through increased focus on **effective leadership** and **professional learning**.

**6** Develop and implement **systems that provide transparent and accessible data** to inform actors across the educator ecosystem and build capacity for use of that data.

# Recommendation #1: Launch targeted communications campaigns that elevate the value proposition of becoming a teacher in Missouri and increase awareness about the pathways into the profession

1

## Findings

- Stakeholders highlighted that **communication** about the preparation experience can affect whether an aspiring educator enrolls in an EPP, and that communication can **vary widely**.
- The increasingly **negative perception** of the teaching profession is impeding the state's efforts to expand the teacher workforce.

## Challenge

- There is a need to **redefine the value proposition** for becoming a teacher in order to continue to attract individuals into the profession.
- Once individuals are interested, it is important for them to **understand** their pathway options

## Strategies

- Initiate a **targeted communications campaign** focused on elevating the value proposition of teaching.
- Clarify the **pathways into teaching** and how to pursue them, as well as the financial incentives available.



# National and state campaigns provide strong examples of communications strategies focused on teacher experiences and understanding pathways

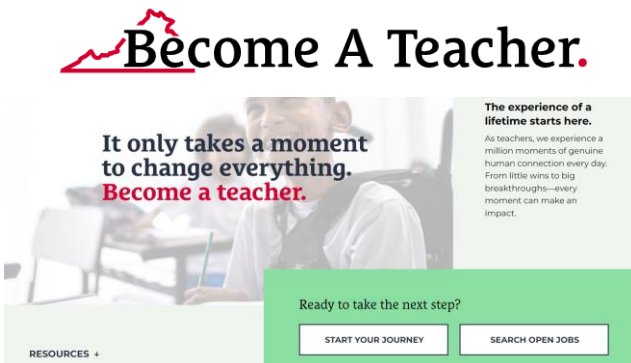
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The U.S. Department of Education, TEACH.ORG and One Million Teachers of Color partnered on a public service awareness campaign called **“Teachers: Leaders Shaping Lives”** that could serve as a model for a state-specific campaign. The PSA campaign celebrated the roles of teachers and sought to inspire talented people, particularly Black and Latino individuals, to become teachers. The PSA aired nationally on TV and radio and was paired with a digital and social media campaign.



The Virginia Department of Education launched the **Become a Teacher** campaign in 2022, which included a microsite that offered a simplified overview of the pathways to licensure as well as an interactive tool to help individuals understand what options best fit their context. The campaign also included paid media, such as ads on social media and Google. The site sees between 300-500 visitors per day.



## Recommendation #2: Define the essential components of high-quality teacher preparation experiences and work to ensure all first-year teachers have those experiences

2

### Findings

- While Missouri state standards are focused on essential areas (content, field experiences and quality), **educators still cite a need for stronger preparation experiences.**
- Stakeholders we heard from in our research noted that new teachers are often underprepared in **classroom management** and need more training to appropriately **differentiate instruction** to meet students' diverse needs.

### Challenge

- Missouri can benefit from additional efforts to ensure there is **shared vision and understanding of the components of high-quality teacher preparation** that are practice based, context based and make explicit connections between practice and coursework.

### Strategies

- Craft an **updated definition and framework** for high-quality teacher preparation in Missouri.
- Review current **teacher preparation program standards** and revise as necessary to align to the updated definition and framework.

# Arkansas recently revamped their state framework for teacher preparation

2

## ARKANSAS EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROVIDER STATE REVIEW FRAMEWORK AND STANDARDS MAP

STANDARD 1 RECRUITMENT & COMPLETION			
INDICATOR CRITERIA	1.1 Plans	1.2 Recruitment	1.3 Completion
	a. Programs have formal plans to meet the targets described in the state review framework (i.e., Standards 1-3) and show evidence of acting on their plans	a. Programs meet annual recruitment targets that align with their program size and Arkansas's workforce needs b. Programs recruit candidates for Arkansas certification shortage areas in proportion to the need	a. Candidates have high rates of completion
STANDARD 2 PREPARING CANDIDATES EFFECTIVELY			
INDICATOR CRITERIA	2.1 Coursework**	2.2 Clinical experiences**	2.3 Development**
	a. Candidates receive high-quality program coursework that is evidence-based b. Candidates' coursework supports their development as a teacher c. Candidates are provided with knowledgeable and effective course instructors	a. Candidates are provided clinical experiences that support their development as a teacher b. Candidates across the program are provided with an effective clinical internship c. Strong partnerships exist between the EPP and K12 schools & districts that facilitate the development of strong candidates	a. Candidates are successful with their program coursework b. Candidates are successful in their clinical internship
STANDARD 3 SUPPORTING WORKFORCE NEEDS			
INDICATOR CRITERIA	3.1 Licensure	3.2 Employment	3.3 Effectiveness
	a. A high proportion of program candidates obtain a standard license b. A high proportion of alternative route enrollees are provisionally licensed c. A high proportion of traditional program candidates pass the content exam in their area on the first try	a. A high proportion of completers are employed in Arkansas public schools b. A high proportion of completers work in high-priority Arkansas public school districts and subjects c. Program completers remain in the classroom for multiple years	a. School leaders rate program completers that they hire as effective classroom teachers b. Completers feel that their program prepared them well to be a teacher c. A high proportion of program completers have above average value-added scores

\*\*Criteria are evaluated with evidence submitted by EPPs through on-site review. All other criteria use data collected through the state-run collection process.



Arkansas recently revamped their **state framework** to set a shared vision for what high-quality educator preparation looks like in the state, with a focus on continuous improvement. Their new framework outlines key program experiences that align with the state's vision for high-quality preparation of teachers, including highlighting coursework and clinical experiences

# Recommendation #3: Expand financial strategies to support candidates to and through preparation programs

3

## Findings

- Teacher preparation program candidates face several **financial barriers**, such as the impact of increasing tuition and fees and unpaid clinical experiences.
- Certification requirements, such as **fingerprinting** and **background checks**, further increase costs for teacher candidates

## Challenge


- Although the state recently passed a notable increase in teacher salaries, particularly for beginning teachers, additional increases in overall compensation and a positive shift in the **value proposition** for teachers are needed to ensure the profession can attract high-quality candidates.
- **16 districts** in Missouri **currently provide incentives** such as stipends and reimbursements, but there is no statewide compensation policy

## Strategies


- Consider opportunities to **expand financial support** for candidates.
- Continue to support the provision of the **retirement benefit system** for teachers.

# Illinois's Teachers Loan Repayment Program could be one approach to financial incentives that Missouri could consider adopting

3



Illinois has appropriated \$975,000 in both FY 2024 and FY 2025 to support the [Illinois Teachers Loan Repayment Program](#). The program matches the federal [Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program](#) to provide up to an additional \$5000 to qualifying teachers to repay their student loan debt after five years of teaching in a low-income school.



Michigan offers a [state stipend](#) for student teaching. Candidates can receive up to \$9,600 per semester for their full-time required student teaching semester and that amount is not counted towards regular financial aid eligibility.

# Recommendation #4: Address structural barriers that prevent aspiring educators from accessing and persevering through teacher preparation programs

4

## Findings

- Programs like Grow Your Own and registered apprenticeships offer **flexible, accessible certification routes**, particularly for those who cannot take unpaid teaching roles.
- These programs **often provide support services**, such as test preparation and clinical training with mentor teachers, ensuring teacher candidates are better prepared to pass certification exams and succeed in the classroom

## Challenge

- Candidates in **rural areas face limited access to nearby teacher preparation programs**, making it difficult to find convenient and comprehensive preparation programs.
- Candidates **struggle to navigate the various pathways**, program requirements, and the best fit for their personal and professional needs without a well-defined support system.

## Strategies

- Continue to grow investment in **Grow Your Own** pathways.
- Build upon and scale up **registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship** opportunities, and enhance **opportunities for those already working in schools** to become certified teachers.
- Explore **partnerships with community colleges** as potential teacher preparation programs.
- Evaluate the feasibility of a **regional counselor** role.

# Tennessee is a national leader in Grow Your Own efforts, and Nebraska has recently made significant investments to support apprenticeships

4

The Nebraska legislature recently earmarked \$1 million toward developing a robust mechanism for preparing future teachers. Using this funding, the [Nebraska Department of Education's Nebraska Teacher Apprenticeship Program](#) launched in March 2024 to recruit and train teachers across the state. As part of this program, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Lincoln Public Schools have partnered to create a [year-long apprenticeship](#) that will allow paraeducators who already have a bachelor's degree to obtain an endorsement in special education.



UNIVERSITY of NEBRASKA  
LINCOLN



**Lincoln**  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



*Strengthening the educator pipeline*



Tennessee has made significant investments in apprenticeships and had [the largest number of teacher apprentices across all states in 2023](#) with 678 apprentices, and as part of their apprenticeship efforts launched the [Tennessee Grow Your Own Center](#) to lead apprenticeships across the state with a \$20 million investment.

# Recommendation #5: Improve how teachers experience the profession through increased focus on effective leadership and professional learning

5

## Findings

- Administrative support is one of the **strongest predictors** of whether a teacher stays in their position.
- Currently, Missouri implements multiple initiatives to increase support for teachers to **improve retention** including the Beginning Teacher Assistance Program and the Missouri Career Development and Teacher Excellence Plan.

## Challenge

- Alongside shortages, current teachers in Missouri cited stress, burnout and workload as **challenges** that make them more likely to leave the profession.
- The COVID-19 pandemic also increased the demands on teachers without commensurate increases in support.
- There is a **need to ensure professional learning and effective leadership** for teachers to promote retention.


## Strategies

- Expand **leadership pathways and strategic staffing** to improve teacher retention and instructional quality.
- Enhance **preparation and development** programs for school leaders.
- Provide targeted support for **rural and high-poverty** districts.




# There are efforts across the country at both the state and district level to implement strategic school staffing models

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BEST NC helps champion Advanced Teaching Roles (ATR), a model that extends teacher reach to serve more students and creates differentiated compensation models so that educators receive additional pay for increasing their reach, leadership and overall responsibilities. Often, ATR takes the form of Public Impact's Opportunity Culture. A report measuring the ATR pilot program schools indicated a positive impact for students and teachers. 68 percent of ATR schools had higher School Performance Grades after one year compared to 46 percent of comparison schools.



In Louisiana, the Content Leaders and Mentor Teachers programs are being used to implement strategic staffing models in education. Content Leaders are local educators trained to provide curriculum-specific professional development, support fellow teachers, and create leadership pathways. Mentor Teachers receive specialized training to further develop the skills necessary to mentor and support new and developing teachers. These programs aim to enhance instructional quality and build a leadership pipeline within the education system.

# Recommendation #6: Develop systems that provide transparent and accessible data to inform actors across the educator ecosystem and build capacity

6

## Findings

- The **distribution of teacher vacancies and inappropriately filled positions** across the state point to inequities in student access to appropriately certified teachers.
- Districts with a **higher number of inappropriately filled positions** often serve more students of color, more low-income communities and have larger class sizes overall.

## Challenge

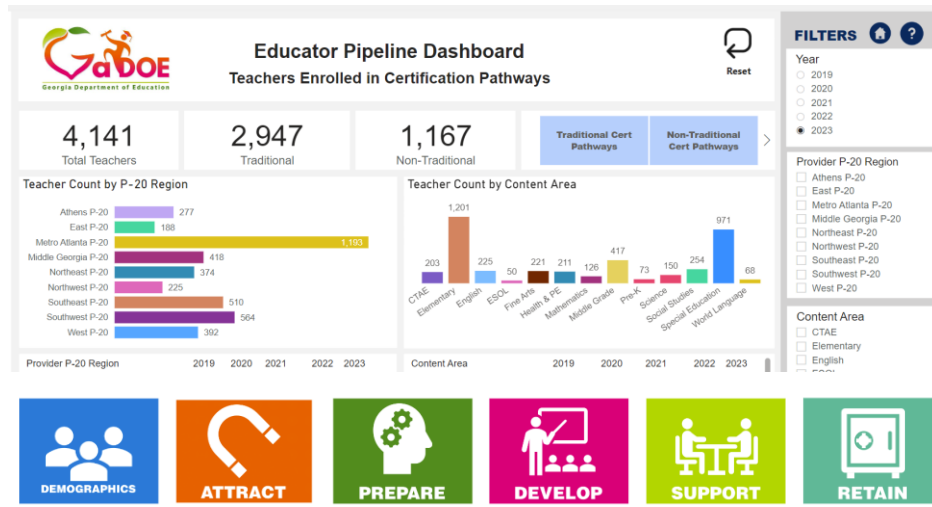
- There is **no singular system** linking preparation program data systems to teacher licensure and K12 data systems. Existing data sources are not easily accessible for all decision makers.
- In part because of this lack of data, solutions to address teacher vacancies and teacher shortages **tend to lack the specificity needed** to address our nuanced teacher vacancy and shortage challenges.

## Strategies

- Invest in the development of systems that provide **transparent and accessible** educator preparation enrollment data, state licensure data and K12 workforce data across the state.
- Provide **support and resources** to district and teacher preparation program leaders to **promote deeper understanding of trends from the data** and foster collaboration on key pipeline and data strategies.

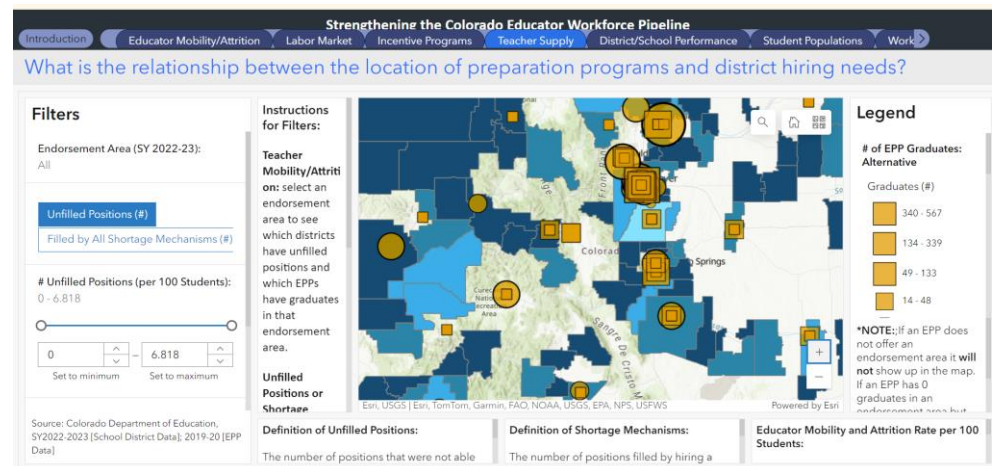
# Georgia and Colorado are two examples of interactive dashboards that include a range of teacher pipeline data

6



The Georgia Department of Education's [Educator Pipeline Dashboard](#) includes a series of interactive reports on the teacher pipeline that can be used by stakeholders at the state, regional and district levels to understand pipeline trends and inform practices.

Colorado's interactive [Graphic Information System maps](#) provide clear, district-level visualizations of district teacher shortages, EPP enrollment and completion, educator demographics and other contextual data.



# Q&A



What are your **reactions** to these recommendations?

Did you find anything **surprising**?

What **wonderings** do you have?

# Now, we're going to move into our first round of breakouts

## Discussion Questions

- Are there any findings or insights that **surprised** you, or that might influence **how you approach future** funding in this area?
- How do the results **connect** with or **support** your organization's current strategies or priorities in education or teacher pipeline efforts?
- What **additional data or evidence** would be helpful as you consider your organization's goals and strategies, or as you advocate for pipeline strategies within your own networks?
- What, if any, **additional questions or reflections** do you have about the recommendations presented?

# As you leave this conversation today, we welcome you to identify what next steps could look like for you



If you have any **additional questions** about the report, please reach out to Celena Siprajim at [csiprajim@education-first.com](mailto:csiprajim@education-first.com)



If you are **interested in partnering** to support implementation of these recommendations, reach out to Evan Rhinesmith at [erhinesmith@wppg.org](mailto:erhinesmith@wppg.org)

Thank You!