

Alabama Teacher Shortage Task Force

REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2019

Alabama State Department of Education · Dr. Eric G. Mackey, Superintendent
P.O. Box 302101 · Montgomery, AL 36130-2101 · www.alsde.edu



“I currently have one certified math teacher in the entire system.”

John Heard,

Superintendent,
Perry County
Schools

Alabama Teacher Shortage Task Force

- 18 member task force established to explore the reasons for the teacher shortage in Alabama and to make recommendations to increase the quantity and quality of applicants for Alabama public schools
- Comprised of local superintendents from across the state as well as representatives from education associations
- Superintendents represented small, large, rural and urban school systems, as well as each of Alabama's eight school board districts

Alabama Teacher Shortage Task Force

- Chuck Marcum – Roanoke City Schools Superintendent - Chairman
- Karen DeLano – Auburn City Schools Superintendent
- Mark Dixon, President and Caroline Novak, Retired President - A+ Education Partnership
- Pamela Fossett – Education Policy and Professional Practice Manager, Alabama Education Association
- Jeff Goodwin – Oxford City Schools Superintendent
- John Heard – Perry County Schools Superintendent
- Lisa Herring – Birmingham City Schools Superintendent
- Ryan Hollingsworth – Executive Director, School Superintendents of Alabama
- Suzanne Lacey – Talladega County Schools Superintendent
- Jeff Langham – Chief of Staff, ALSDE
- Amy Marlowe – Interim Executive Director, Alabama Education Association
- Matt Massey – Madison County Schools Superintendent
- Susan McKim – Professional Learning, ALSDE
- Nick Moore – Governor’s Office
- Sally Smith – Executive Director, Alabama Association of School Boards
- Ted Watson – Andalusia Schools Superintendent
- Ann West – Marion County Schools Superintendent
- Vic Wilson – Executive Director, Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools

Mission Statement

To develop short-term and long-term recommendations to increase the quantity and quality of teacher applicants in our state

TEACHER SHORTAGE

- Math
- Science
- Foreign Language
- English Language Learners
- Special Education

Meeting Dates and Topics

January 30, 2019	Teacher certification requirements and practices
February 20, 2019	Teacher recruitment and retention
March 21, 2019	College/University Deans panel discussion, educator prep programs
April 24, 2019	Education Commission of the States
May 24, 2019	Dr. Joan Lord, SREB - using a roundtable approach to develop educator workforce strategies
June 26, 2019	Teacher and Personnel Director's panel - Certification and Preparation Issues
July 24, 2019	<i>iteach</i> with Dr. Diann Huber
August 8, 2019	Presentation to Alabama State Board of Education on the work of the Alabama Teacher Shortage Task Force
September 19, 2019	Stephen Kostyo, Policy Advisor, Learning Policy Institute

Consider This:

- Nearly every district in Alabama has turned to hiring teachers on emergency or provisional certificates, indicating that shortages are being broadly experienced across the state (123 of 138 districts).
- Every year since the 2004-2005 school year, Alabama has reported to the U.S. Department of Education shortages in foreign languages, mathematics, science and special education, indicating longstanding shortages in these subject areas.
- 30% of all classrooms are being taught by teachers teaching out of field, having neither a major nor a minor in the field.



Recommendations by Task Force

The task force recommendations are grouped around the strategies of improving efforts to recruit individuals to the teaching profession and measures to keep educators working in education for their entire career.



Recommendation Accomplished

**Extend Emergency Certificate from 12 months to 24 months.
Recommendation was approved by the legislature during 2019 session and signed into law by Governor Ivey.**

Recruitment Recommendations

Twenty-three recommendations were made regarding teacher recruitment and some of them are:

- Pilot project *iteach* for science, math and special education teachers. (*iteach* is a competency-based educator preparation program that combines the convenience of online learning with the support of face-to-face mentorship. edTPA will not be a requirement.)
- Increase teacher salaries to a level comparable to other professionals requiring similar credentials.
- Develop a sliding scale for different areas of certification on Praxis assessment. Obtained scores will determine subject areas that could or could not be taught.

Recruitment Recommendations

- Create a pathway for students to graduate with an “Educational Studies Degree” that does not require a qualifying Praxis score. These students would be employable under an emergency certificate where they can continue the certification process. (Athens State has a current program for this.)
- Create scholarships and maintain loan forgiveness programs to encourage students to choose a career in education.
- Allow individuals to begin the process for provisional certification without a superintendent’s recommendation.
- Extend provisional certificates from one year to two years and continue to allow an individual to obtain three provisional certificates.

Recruitment Recommendations

- Allow work experience to be used in lieu of course work for critical needs academic subjects (i.e., applying career tech model for engineer pursuing certification in math.).
- Support the continued growth of Teach for America in Alabama as one pipeline to recruit the best and the brightest to become teachers in hard-to-staff districts. Provide additional state funding to help school districts with local funds
- Provide significant incentives for certified teachers to teach in high need areas and hard to staff areas.
- Create and promote dual enrollment programs for high school students who are potential teacher candidates.

Recruitment Recommendations

- Create a multifaceted public relations strategy to promote teaching as a career in Alabama.
- Promote Future Teachers of Alabama (FTA) throughout Alabama's high schools.
- In order to streamline Alabama's teacher certification process, fully review the process at the ALSDE to identify opportunities to create efficiencies, increase capacity where needed, and put the entire process online.
- Develop a statewide data dashboard to provide real-time data to higher education, ALSDE and LEAs on educator pipeline (i.e., North Carolina model).
- Create a P-6 special education certificate, combining early and elementary education where allowable.

Recruitment Recommendations

- Establish absolute reciprocity with other states.
- Reconsider the requirement of edTPA for teacher certification, pending evaluation of its effectiveness.
- Provide incentives to entice retired teachers to return to work.
- Utilize veteran teachers in recruiting the next generation of Alabama teachers.
- Allow certified teachers to pass the Praxis for additional field certification without having taught two years at the particular grade level.

Recruitment Recommendations

- Explore creating a pre-apprenticeship program and an industry-recognized apprenticeship program (IRAP), recognized by the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship and sponsored by a consortium of education stakeholder groups, to facilitate accelerated completion of an educator preparation through dual enrollment and shadowing mentor in-service teachers.

Retention Recommendations

Ten recommendations regarding teacher retention were presented and they include:

- Create a Tier III retirement plan as an option to replace Tier II in order to recruit and retain teachers and all education employees.
- Review structure of the existing salary matrix to increase salary at different stages in a teacher's career.
- Make National Board Certification bonus equivalent to the amount received for a master's degree on the state salary matrix.

Retention Recommendations

- Pilot the Professional Pathways program recommended by the Governor's Commission on Quality Teaching to create career pathways that incentivize our best teachers to remain in the classroom.
- Provide opportunities for high quality induction, mentoring and professional development.
- Develop strategies to deal with mental health issues of students.
- Strive to adopt culture, climate, and benefit models to better align with the Millennial's lifestyle.

Retention Recommendations

- Create a task force of teacher leaders to develop recommendations on how to improve school culture/working conditions.
- Promote loan forgiveness for teachers in areas of critical need.
- Expand the existing Alabama teacher mentoring program to include two years of mentoring for every new teacher and require high quality training of mentors in order to receive funding for the \$1000 mentor stipend.

Continued Efforts

- The work of the Alabama Teacher Shortage Task Force has led to the creation of the Teacher Quantity and Quality (TQ2) Roundtable.
- Improved education for the students of Alabama will ultimately improve the quality of life for residents of our state.