



The South Carolina Education Association Recommendations to Recruit & Retain Teachers as a Result of Proviso 1.92

This proviso directs education stakeholder organizations to examine and make recommendations building teacher recruitment, alternative certification, financial incentives; induction and mentorship, evaluation and feedback and teacher leadership.

Overview

The South Carolina Education Association (The SCEA) is pleased to submit recommendations to recruit and retain teachers as a result of Proviso 1.92. This proviso directs education stakeholder organizations to examine and make recommendations building teacher recruitment, alternative certification, financial incentives; induction and mentorship, evaluation and feedback and teacher leadership.

With the increasing numbers of educators leaving the profession annually, South Carolina must do all that it can to recruit and retain qualified and experienced teachers in the classroom. According to a supply and demand study conducted by the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement (CERRA) approximately **6,500** teachers left their positions in 2016-17. While some moved to different districts, more than **4,800** left South Carolina school districts. In addition, fewer students are graduating as teachers, only **1,900** in 2015-16. The state's teacher shortage is increasing every year! Our recommendations that are included in this proposal are designed to effectively address the recruitment and retention gap in our state.

The SCEA has a well-deserved reputation for defending and protecting children, as well as public education in our state. With over 135 years of service, the organization is a part of the National Education Association (NEA), the nation's largest professional employee organization. The NEA's 3 million members work at every level of education with affiliate organizations in every state and in more than 14,000 communities across the United States.

According to the Learning Policy Institute, there are five major factors that influence teachers' decisions to enter, stay in or leave the teaching profession. They include:

- Salaries and compensation
- Preparation and costs to entry
- Hiring and personnel management
- Induction and support for new teachers
- Working conditions, including school leadership, professional collaboration and shared decision-making, accountability systems, and resources for teaching and learning.

The SCEA utilized Tiffany Cain, Senior Policy Analysts at the NEA to assist in developing these recommendations.



Recommendation #1

Raise the minimum salary base in South Carolina to be competitive regionally and nationally.

Attracting and retaining qualified and caring teachers in South Carolina's public schools requires treating them as professionals – and paying them a professional wage. We believe an educator's starting salary must be comparable to that of other college graduates who have similar education, training, and responsibilities. The SCEA realizes that we are not just competing with other states for teachers, but South Carolina school districts are also competing against **other** in-state employers who are willing to pay more to college-educated graduates. By all standards, South Carolina's salaries are not competitive.

Based on the salary schedules contained in the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) FY 2015-2016 DMSS report, the average starting salary for teachers with a BS degree in SC is **\$32,367**. According to data in Salary.com, the average starting salary for workers with a BS degree in SC is **\$34,716**, a \$2,000 variance. For young people starting their careers, who probably also have loan debt - \$2,000 will make a difference. According to The Hamilton Project, a 2012 study conducted by the Brookings Institution, elementary education majors will need approximately **18%** of their first year income to repay student loans. This study also indicated that the typical debt load for education majors was between \$24,000 to \$27,000.

For the 2015-16 school year (data for 2016-17 is not yet available), South Carolina's entry level teacher salaries are lower on a national and regional basis.

- South Carolina average starting bachelor's teacher salary ranked **47th** out of 50 nationally. It is also worth noting that in the three years that the National Education Association has conducted this analysis, **South Carolina's starting salary has dropped nationally from 39th in 2014, to 45th in 2015, to 47th in 2016.**
- South Carolina's average starting salary ranks **last** in the Southeast region (defined as Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia¹)
- South Carolina's average maximum bachelor's degree ranks **9th** out of 12th in comparison to other states in the Southeast region and 30th nationally.

According to a report recently released by the Economic Policy Institute, on a national basis, teachers' earnings are, on average, 17 percent less than comparable professionals (data is from

¹ These states were identified by The SCEA to use in prior analyses.

2015) In South Carolina, the “teaching penalty” was 21% in 2015, up from 18% five years before. (Allegretto and Mishel, 2016)².

Recommendation #2

Develop creative incentive programs that will attract and retain teachers in the state to include the following:

- **Student loan forgiveness with a specified commitment to the district**
- **Tuition reimbursement towards acquisition of advanced degrees**
- **Service bonuses for years of service to school districts**
- **Home down payment assistance with a specified commitment to the school district**
- **Duty free lunch**
- **Lift the \$10,000 salary cap for retirees**
- **Compensation for working beyond the 190 day contract year**

Policy recommendations from researchers Leib Satcher, Linda Darling-Hammond and Desiree Carver-Thomas recommend that recruitment and retention policies for teachers should focus on:

- Creating competitive, equitable compensation packages that allow teachers to make a reasonable living across all kinds of communities
- Enhance the supply of qualified teachers for high-needs fields and locations through targeted training subsidies and high-retention pathways
- Create productive school environments, including supportive working conditions, administrative supports, and time for teachers’ collaborative planning and professional development-all of which help attract and keep teachers in schools.

Recommendation #3

Incorporate comprehensive, induction and support programs to include the following:

- **National Board Certification to include state and local stipends with a specified commitment to school districts**
- **New Teacher Mentoring Programs**
- **Teacher Residency Programs for hard to staff districts to recruit and retain talented and diverse candidates in high-need schools**
- **Increase in classroom support funding**

²Allegretto, Sylvia A and Lawrence Mishel (2016). The teacher pay gap is wider than ever. Washington, D.C.: Economic Policy Institute. (This is the most recent data available).

Learning Policy Institute, Research Brief September 2016, Ann Podolsky, Tara Kini, Joseph Bishop, Linda Darling-Hammond

- **Strengthen principal training programs and district leaders who can create productive teaching and learning environments, which have a major impact on teachers' decisions to stay or leave the classroom**
- **Professional development stipends that increase based on years of service**

According to the New Teacher Center, school climate measures have been shown to be directly associated with students' opportunity to learn and educators' opportunity to maximize their impact in the classroom. Teachers working in more supportive professional environment improve their effectiveness more over time than teachers working in less supportive contexts.

On average, teachers working in schools at the 75% percentile of professional environment ratings improved 38% more than teachers in schools at the 25% percentile after ten years.

Further, teachers who work in supportive contexts stay in the classroom longer and improve at faster rates, than their peers in less-supportive environments.