

<u>Contributes to</u> Teacher Shortages,	in place to encourage people t
Study Warns," Nov. 4, 1998, which discusses	About This Series Part 1: March 10, 1999
how geography plays a role in classroom staffing shortages.	 Schools will need to hire more than 2 million teachers in the next decade, experts predict. But such demand doesn't mean teachers are in short supply across the board. Technology can help streamline the teacher recruiting process.
	Part 2: March 17, 1999
"Amid Fundin <u>g,</u> Teacher Shortages, Urban Educators Find Hope," Oct. 28, 1998.	• The teaching profession is notorious for turnover, which threatens to undermine schools' best efforts to fill their classrooms with qualified teachers. California, though, is investing heavily to keep beginning educators.
	Part 3: March 24, 1999
"New Teachers Are Hot Commodity," Sept. 9, 1998.	 While the shortage of teachers for most subjects is being felt in pockets across the country, the scarcity of special education teachers is nearly universal. One of the nation's fastest growing districts is cultivating its own supply of special education teachers by paying paraprofessionals' tuition and salaries while they go to school. A Virginia college offers long-distance learning to train teachers for special education. Part 4: March 31, 1999 Otherwise qualified teachers are routinely assigned to teach subjects for which they have little or no academic preparation, a practice under fire nationwide.
	Part 5: April 7, 1999
	• As standards for students go up, schools are under pressure to reduce the number of people without professional training who are hired to teach.

ge people to enter the profession."

According to a report released last fall by the National Association of State Boards of Education, such incentives might include: loan-forgiveness programs to encourage people to teach particular subjects or in hard-to-staff schools; recruitment and publicawareness campaigns; special preparation programs with business and the military to attract early retirees and career-changers to teaching; and efforts to help paraprofessionals gain teaching licenses.

Connecticut, Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin consistently produce many more teachers than their schools hire, although some urban districts in those states suffer persistent problems finding qualified teachers. Conversely, California, Florida, Nevada, and Texas generally are straining to hire teachers across the board.

In Wisconsin, a study from last fall showed that only 32 percent of the 3,986 education students who received licenses in 1996-97 were working full time as teachers in public schools in the state by the 1997-98 school year. New York licensed 21,500 teachers in 1996-97, but only 5,900 were hired. Still, New York schools employed 9,000 unlicensed teachers that year, the vast majority in New York City.

Part of the problem in New York is that suburban districts pay veteran teachers as much as 20 percent a year more than New York City, creating a drain on the city's labor pool. Ms. Darling-Hammond and others have called on states to follow Connecticut's example by providing money for districts to

equalize teacher salaries.

Many people point the finger at education schools--often called "cash cows" for universities--for training teachers in fields of abundant supply, most often elementary education.

But the NASBE study blamed state accrediting agencies for allowing the practice to continue, particularly when districts are "desperate for specialists in shortage fields."

States that continue to accredit programs and certify unneeded teachers, the report said, are "failing to be accountable for providing districts with the tools they need to bring students to high standards."

Pay and Benefits

Increasingly, states are mulling policies to help alleviate problems of teacher distribution.

• In Oklahoma, for example, where the SREB recently completed a detailed study of teacher supply and demand, the problem isn't a lack of mathematics teachers. It's that people certified to teach math--one of the fields in biggest demand nationally--aren't working in schools.

Only 54 percent of college graduates trained between 1994 and 1996 to teach math actually were teaching that subject by 1996, the SREB study found.

The state also has more than 700 certified math teachers who aren't teaching the subject. A likely reason: Starting teachers earn just \$24,060, while math majors can earn \$40,000 to \$50,000 in the computer field fresh out of college.

Oklahoma's regents for higher education are proposing that all teachers' salaries be raised and that teachers of high-demand subjects or working in hard-to-staff schools be paid even more. The regents also want the state to create a loan-forgiveness program to channel teachers into those subjects and geographic areas.

Meanwhile, districts in neighboring Texas--some of which pay signing bonuses to new teachers--are snapping up Oklahoma teachers.

• In Nevada, the state Senate is considering a bill that would offer teachers an extra year of retirement credit for every five years they taught in schools classified as "needing improvement." Another measure would allow teachers in rural schools to convert their unused sick leave into up to one year of retirement credit.

And to give Nevada districts a leg up on hiring experienced teachers from other states, a third bill would require the districts to give new hires full credit for their years of experience elsewhere. Most districts now credit teachers with just five years, no matter how long they've been teaching.

But because each change would cost money, and Nevada's budget isn't keeping up with school growth, observers expect the bills simply to permit districts to take such steps.

"Other states are competing with us for teachers," said H. Pepper

Sturm, a research analyst for the Nevada legislature. "How are we going to compete?"

• As part of a comprehensive teacher-quality initiative, Gov. Gary Locke of Washington is proposing conditional scholarships of up to \$3,000 annually for 200 outstanding teacher-candidates in such shortage areas as math, science, and special education. Recipients would have to maintain a 3.0 or better grade point average and commit to two years of teaching in a public school for every \$3,000 received.

• Massachusetts recruiters traveled the nation to drum up 50 outstanding candidates to become public school teachers and earn \$20,000 signing bonuses. The state had 5,000 requests for information and expects to process about 600 completed applications.

• Mississippi offers scholarships, special home loans, low-cost rental housing, and moving expenses for people willing to teach in areas of the state, such as the impoverished Mississippi Delta region, that attract few applicants of any teaching specialty.

"Each state wants to hang on to their best teacher education graduates, but it's going to be a real free-market situation," said Ernest Rose, the dean of education and human services at Montana State University-Billings. "States and districts that have a lighter salary scale are going to end up probably getting people who aren't mobile or aren't the strongest candidates in the pool."



Mr. Rose estimates that this year, 15 percent to 20 percent of his school's graduates will take their first jobs out of state, where they can earn up to \$10,000 more than in Montana and make a good dent in repaying their student loans.

Already, districts in Nevada, Oregon, and Washington state have arranged for Montana State students to do their practice teaching out of state and stay on after graduation.

In Colorado, meanwhile, a booming economy--which is providing high-paying jobs for people who might otherwise teach math or science--hasn't depleted the labor pool for districts with top-notch reputations. The 40,000-student Cherry Creek district has 3,000 applicants on file and between 100 and 200 qualified teachers for every one job, said Gwen Sonnenberg, the district's director of human resources.

Pension Portability

For the most part, teaching remains a parochial field in which many new teachers aspire to work where they grew up. But even teachers ready, willing, and able to relocate face financial and logistical hassles. As the Nevada bill illustrates, many teachers moving from one district to another don't get credit for all their experience and so are forced to take pay cuts. Teachers' pensions aren't portable, as are those in higher education. And states don't recognize one another's licenses, often requiring veteran teachers to jump through numerous hoops to get fully licensed.

U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley, in an address last month focused on teacher recruitment and quality, urged state leaders to reexamine long-standing rules governing those issues. "The current maze of disconnected state laws has become a significant drawback to keeping good teachers in the profession in our increasingly mobile society," Mr. Riley said.

In Missouri, one of the states working in partnership with the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, the state is helping St. Louis address its recruitment problems. One barrier is that city teachers have a different pension system from those in surrounding suburban districts, said Celeste Ferguson, the state's assistant commissioner for urban and teacher education.

The state education department is asking the legislature to allow retired master teachers to teach for two years in St. Louis without adverse effect on their pensions. Teachers would qualify for full pension credit and salaries during those two years.

The Missouri department also is asking the legislature to create a loanforgiveness program and incentive pay for teachers in urban and rural districts.

In a recent opinion column in *The Washington Post*, Christopher T. Cross, the president of the Council for Basic Education and a former assistant U.S. secretary of education in the Bush administration, proposed a change in national Social Security policy to ease teacher recruitment. Mr. Cross called for Congress to waive the cap on retirement earnings for anyone involved in teaching or school administration, arguing that many newly relocated teacher retirees in Arizona, California, Florida, and Texas would welcome the chance to get back into the classroom.

Eric Hirsch, a senior policy analyst for the National Conference of State Legislatures in Denver, calls the portability of both teachers' experience and their pensions a "huge issue" for teacher recruitment.

Though states are taking steps to recognize one another's licensing requirements and are increasingly giving licenses to teachers certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, few make it easy for the best teachers to move back and forth.

Too few states have an accurate picture of their own teacher supply and demand, said Mr. Hirsch, who is working on such a study for Colorado. Questions of school governance complicate the picture, he noted, because states accredit teacher education programs, but teachers are

hired locally.

Teacher quality is "absolutely, if not the top issue, then one of the top issues in virtually all of the states," he said. "States really need to know what their own long-term needs are. States that haven't been gathering that data are going into making policy blind."

On the Web

Some states are trying new ways of certifying teachers in order to fill slots faster. But this study from the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, <u>"Is Alternative Certification a Viable Way to Increase the Pool of Minority Teachers?,"</u> explains there just isn't enough information yet about these programs to find out how well they work.

Teachers.Net offers a <u>Career Center</u>, including a jobs board to post and view available teaching positions.

In a 1998 report, the Columbia Group--a consortium of southeastern states--took a look at quality standards and incentives for teachers and reported "troubling findings." The full text of the report, <u>"Quality Standards and Incentives for Teachers,"</u> is available for free.

New teachers who work in designated shortage areas may be eligible for student loan <u>deferments</u>, as explained by USA Group.

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