



To: Senate Committee on Education

From: Jay Nichols , Executive Director

Date: January 25, 2023

Subject: Teach in Vermont Campaign

For the record, Jay Nichols, Executive Director of the Vermont Principals' Association. Good afternoon, I appreciate this opportunity to discuss the Teach in Vermont Campaign that the VPA has been discussing internally the last couple of years and ways in which the legislature might be able to champion this cause.

First of all is essentially what I would call a Problem Statement that we need to examine in order to address effectively. The two-prong-problem is that fewer people are going into teaching nationally and Vermont is no exception and fewer people are staying in the profession. This is leading to a pipeline of less qualified candidates applying for many educator positions and in some cases really no qualified candidates applying. Any superintendent or principal who has been around for a while can attest to this fact. Especially critical to note, the students in our more rural less resourced communities are most hard hit by this decreasing educator pipeline phenomenon.

Nationally, almost half of teachers leave the profession in their first five years. Hiring is one end of the conundrum we must address and retention is the other. More than half of the current teaching force has indicated that they plan to leave the profession sooner than they had intended because of the myriad of issues in the education field.

<https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/survey-alarming-number-educators-may-soon-leave-profession>

Different databases and research reports have traditionally been clear that a very high percentage of teachers turnover. This has been an immense problem for decades. However, with a healthy pool of new teachers coming into the field, until more recently, that problem hasn't gained critical national or statewide attention. Now all states are aware of it and many are trying to take action to improve the pipeline on the front end and take policy actions to stop the ever increasing flow of qualified educators from leaving the field early. The short news article on PBS explains some of the problem.

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/why-teachers-in-america-are-leaving-the-profession-in-droves>

And for a little historical perspective on this issue around less education candidates. In 1970-71 the number of Bachelor's Degrees in Education from postsecondary institutions was 176,307. In 2019-20 the number had declined to 85,057. (Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics). That is a 48% deduction in the number of individuals obtaining Bachelor's Degrees to become teachers!

At the VPA, we try very hard to be action oriented. After all, we represent principals and they are in the middle of all important school action every single day.

And here is the Press Release from 11/4/22 that we put out citing the report from the Department of Labor and the McClure Foundation to announce Vermont's Highest-Demand Promising Jobs. In that report the number 1 promising job in Vermont is teacher and it is not even particularly close.

[VPA Statement on Educator Workforce Shortages 11/4/22](#)

Here are some concrete steps we believe the legislature and administration should consider enacting in part or wholly to address the issues around educator workforce shortages:

- Establish a website Teach for Vermont campaign. Fund the website. AOE/DOL with responsibility:
 - Examples:
 - Licensing support for teachers seeking to move to Vermont
 - Clearing house for anything we think new educators to Vermont need for resources
 - Marketing pushed across social media
 - Sell Vermont as a great place to teach and learn
- AOE position that focuses on H.R. Expertise (part of licensing division?)
 - Recruitment, Retention, Access
 - Simplify, Simplify, Simplify
 - Coordinate Teacher preparation programs in Vermont. Guide and incentivize these future teachers to teach and stay in Vermont
 - Look at international and national recruitment efforts to push the campaign

- As well as internal pipeline issues - grease the licensing process for everyone instead of districts trying to troubleshoot on their own
- Move or expand the remote employee incentive program to educators from out of state:
 - 5 years of service (retention bonus from the state)
- Continue to support the bill allowing educators to come out of retirement to staff hard to staff positions without being penalized
- Provide college loan forgiveness for graduates of Vermont's educational preparatory programs when a Vermont educated college student agrees to take a position in the field of education in Vermont for a specific period of time - perhaps increase the amount of loan forgiveness for those willing to work in more rural and/or poorer areas of the state
- Support new and new to Vermont teachers in paying for housing - loosen borrowing requirements etc. for people that teach and want to buy homes. This makes them more likely to stay in VT.

The VPA is glad to work with anyone to address these issues and potential solutions.