



WSPTA recognizes that preparing students for career, college, and life are dependent on an excellent, engaged teacher in every classroom. Currently, Washington has an estimated shortage of 3500 certificated teachers, especially in STEM, special education, ELL, early education (birth – grade 3), and elementary (k-8).¹

Background

- In school year 2016-17, 85% of principals could not find fully-certificated teachers to fill all their teacher openings.¹
- 97% of human resource directors say they are struggling or in crisis, and 74% said it is getting worse.¹
- Washington's teacher workforce is less diverse (10% non-white) than students (41% non-white.) Diversifying the teacher workforce is one effective strategy to narrow Washington's opportunity gap.^{2,3}

Factors Causing the Shortage¹

- Implementation of state-funding for **full-day kindergarten**
- Continued phase-in of **K-3 class size reduction** funding
- An increase in school district **hiring** of teachers since the "Great Recession"
- Increased **retirements** of the "baby-boomer" generation
- Student enrollment **growth**
- A **smaller number of individuals completing teacher preparation programs**
- **New teachers leaving** the profession (20-25% attrition rate)²
- **Limited reciprocity** – Washington only accepts certification from three other states
- **Availability and costs** of alternative routes to certification

Proposed Solutions

The Washington State PTA supports legislation or policies that improve the teacher pipeline, to recruit and retain effective educators, especially in high demand, hard to fill positions, in remote locations, or high-poverty schools through several means:

1. **Funding of intentional recruitment and conditional scholarship programs**, particularly for teachers of color who reflect the communities in which they work, and in the endorsement shortage areas.
2. **Expansion of alternative routes to certification** that have been approved by the Professional Educator Standards Board.
3. **Address the barrier of limited reciprocity.** Washington only accepts transfer of second-tier certification from three other states. **E2SHB 1341 (2017)**³ made changes to second-tier professional certification requirements, necessitating a re-evaluation of Washington's reciprocity rules.
4. **Expansion of programs that improve teacher retention rates** through phased-in expansion of Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST)⁴ grants to all schools.

For More Information

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Citations

1. OSPI (2017) Teacher and Substitute Shortages in Washington State. Retrieved from <http://www.k12.wa.us/LegisGov/TeacherShortage.aspx>
2. Plecki, M., Elfers, A. and Van Windenkens, A. (2016) Understanding Teacher Retention and Mobility in Washington State. Center for Study of Teaching and Policy, University of Washington.
3. E2SHB 1341 (2017). Retrieved from <http://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1341&Year=2017>
4. OSPI (2017) Beginning Educator Support Team. Retrieved from <http://www.k12.wa.us/BEST/>

**For more information on the WSPTA advocacy program, please visit our website (www.wastatepta.org)*