# State of \* Education

National survey findings highlight teachers' perspectives on attracting and retaining educators.

REPORT BY TPT

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## About This Report

The State of Education Report is a research series by TPT that takes the pulse of educators and the profession. Each edition focuses on challenges educators are facing and shares the promising practices educators are implementing to address them. You can find past volumes <a href="https://example.com/here/">here</a>.

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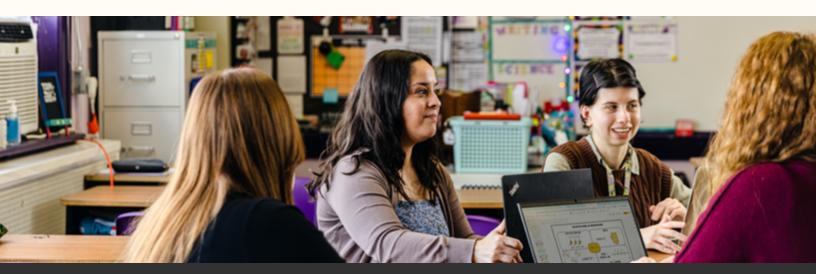
## Introduction

For any school or district leader, finding and keeping good teachers is one of the top priorities on their to-do list. But with schools across the nation grappling with record high vacancy rates, this has become especially important. So, what can leaders do to motivate teachers to join their schools and keep them there?

To dig into this question, TPT surveyed over 1,200 educators across the U.S. to understand how schools and districts can recruit and retain good teachers. Some of the answers to these questions seem like common sense; others, however, are more surprising.

The good news is that there are solutions to these challenges, and they will require strong leadership to provide meaningful support to new teachers.

In this report, we'll explore what teachers recommend school leaders do to recruit more people into the profession and keep them motivated. One thing is loud and clear: leadership matters. The way school leaders invest their resources — and how they differentiate their support for teachers at various stages of their career — can make a major difference in attracting and retaining educators.



#### **KEY FINDINGS**

### The State of Education

A thriving education system relies on many factors. One of them is experienced educators serving as mentors and models for the next generation of teachers. When current educators would not recommend the profession to incoming student-teachers, we have a system in crisis. Right now, educators' views on the profession still remain low. However, the data shows a slight improvement in teachers' outlooks since March.

# On a scale of 0-to-10, how likely is it that you would recommend teaching as a profession to someone considering joining the profession?



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When asked to reflect on the role of teaching, the survey data revealed trends that could be influencing how teachers are feeling about the profession overall.

Autonomy	Respect
<b>40%</b> reported having less autonomy over the last two years (vs. 18% who reported having more).	<b>65%</b> reported there is less respect for teaching now than two years ago (vs. 11% who reported there is more).

Despite the challenges that have led some to consider leaving the profession, the passion that many have to help children and work in their own classrooms still remains. For teachers returning this year, here's what they are and aren't looking forward to:

Excited for	Concerned About
Getting to know their students (99%)  Designing lessons for class (96%)  Setting up their classrooms (94%)	Reduced or short staffing (74%) School budget cuts (61%) Inadequate classroom resources (50%)

As administrators consider the question of how to motivate prospective and current teachers, survey participants resoundingly said that having school leaders who are invested in them — and who provide them with tangible support — are a key part of the equation.



#### KFY FINDINGS

## Attracting & Retaining Educators: It's Not a One Size Fits All Approach

Attracting and retaining good teachers is one of the most important factors of a well-functioning education system. If there's anything to take away from this survey data, it's that strong leadership is especially important. Teachers are drawn to and stay at — schools and districts where leaders are taking meaningful action to support their needs. That, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to finding and keeping educators.

Based on the data, it's clear that a teacher's experience level is a good indicator of what support they'll need to keep them in the classroom and what they believe will attract new teachers to the profession. As school leaders work to create a healthy education system where teachers can thrive, they should target some of their approaches based on where individual teachers are in their careers.

#### What attracts teachers to the profession?

Broadly speaking, when asked what would attract people to the profession, teachers of all experience levels point to the opportunity to make a difference in their community, one student at a time. This suggests that, over time, most teachers are not disillusioned by the mission of teaching or vocation itself, but rather the external pressures and working conditions that come along with it. Another top attractor was the possibility of working with an inspiring and supportive school leader, underlining the importance of school and district leadership as a key driver in recruitment and retention.



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STATE OF EDUCATION **TPT REPORT** 06 Interestingly, however, there were distinct differences between brand new teachers and more experienced teachers¹ around what incentives they believe might attract new teachers to join the teaching profession. It's clear newer teachers need opportunities to grow and develop their skills over time. Offering ongoing learning opportunities is a strategic investment that school leaders can consider.

What will attract prospective teachers to the profession?<sup>2</sup>

#### **Experienced Teachers**

• Competitive compensation (19% vs. 10% of new teachers)

#### **All Teachers**

- Making a difference in the community (64%)
- Working with an inspiring school leader (48%)
  - Working with children (66%)

#### **Brand New Teachers**

- Meaningful professional development
   (42% vs. 20% of experienced teachers)
- Mentorship opportunities (48% vs. 22% of experienced teachers)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> We defined "experienced teachers" as those with 10+ years of experience in the classroom and "brand new teachers" as those preparing to enter their first year in the classroom in the fall of 2022.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> In the survey, we asked teachers, "How likely are each of the following to attract people to join the teaching profession?" Percentages refer to the percent of teachers who responded "very likely."

#### What keeps teachers in the profession

With almost half (44%) of teachers considering a job-related change, what can be done to increase the odds that teachers will stay in the profession? And what will make current teachers feel more respected, valued, and supported than they currently feel? Similar to the above, we see that the support teachers need from their school leaders to stay motivated changes across the span of their careers.

When asked about what would keep teachers in the profession, there were some differences between brand new teachers and their more experienced counterparts. Again, the data in the chart below<sup>3</sup> indicates there are two big factors that administrators need to consider when thinking about what new teachers need to be effective and to ultimately stay in the profession: mentorship and ongoing learning opportunities in the early years.

New Teachers	vs.	Experienced Teachers
74%	More chances to collaborate with teachers in their school	51%
68%	More professional development	48%

Additionally, brand new teachers also tended to find the following to be more influential to them in terms of feeling respected, valued, and supported:

New Teachers	vs.	Experienced Teachers
65%	Regular feedback from my school leader	51%
61%	Opportunities for meaningful professional development	44%

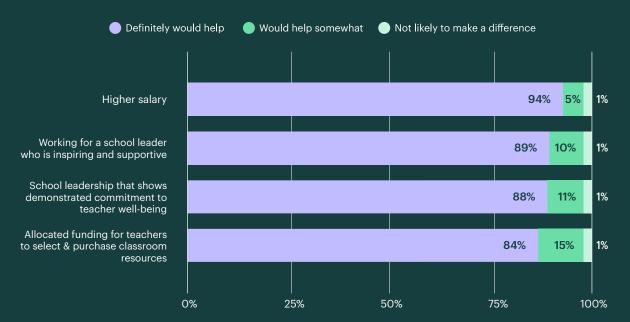
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> We asked teachers "How much would each of the following help to keep teachers like you working in the teaching profession?" Percentages refer to the percent of teachers who responded "definitely would help."



For teachers of all experience levels, there were a few common threads to take note of. The most frequent response to the question, "What would keep teachers in the profession," was a higher salary (94%). In addition, all teachers largely agreed that working for a supportive and inspiring school leader (89%) and having allocated funding for teachers to select and purchase resources (84%) would definitely help.

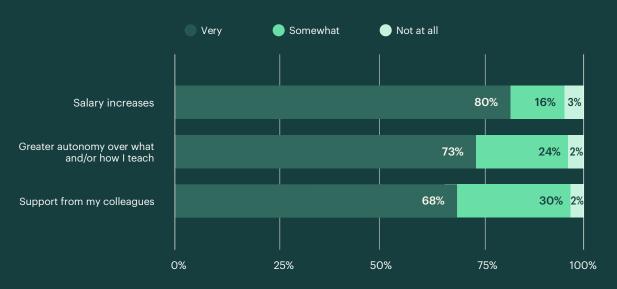
## How much would each of the following help to keep teachers like you working in the teaching profession?





In addition, when asked, "What makes teachers feel very respected or valued," the findings were markedly similar across all experience levels. Along with salary increases, teachers said greater autonomy over what and/or how they teach (73%) and support from their colleagues (68%) would also make them feel more valued.

## How much do each of the following make you feel respected or valued as a teacher?



Overall, this suggests that competitive salaries are vitally important and that there are additional factors that also contribute to keeping teachers in the classroom. If school leaders can demonstrate tangible support for their teachers and commitment to their well-being, they can expect to retain them. In the next section, we'll surface specific recommendations from teachers, for school leaders, on how to make this happen.

#### PROMISING LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

## Attracting & Retaining Educators: What School Leaders Can Do

With some strategic investments and supportive actions, school and district leaders can create "destination districts" where teachers want to spend their careers and where both new and experienced teachers can thrive. If teachers know that their leaders are actively creating a place where they will be appreciated and supported in their work, not only will experienced teachers want to stay, but prospective teachers will gravitate toward it.

#### What teachers wish administrators knew<sup>4</sup>

#### 0-2 years

- Create and support mentorship programs. "Assign a mentor to new teachers for the first year so they have someone to go to for help and advice."
- Offer professional development and training on classroom management.
   "Provide relevant training on school policies and procedures before they join."
- Establish regular check-ins. "Check in with new teachers daily, offering ideas, suggestions, and feedback. Just asking what they need isn't helpful because they often don't know what they need."

#### 3-9 years

- Give constructive feedback to school staff and teachers. "First, watch, observe, and listen. Second, provide feedback as needed — whether it's making a positive statement or offering a suggestion for improvement."
- Schedule planning and collaboration time. "Give teachers a dedicated planning period where they can meet with their team to plan units and talk about what's working, not working, and how to change it up."
- Allow for teacher participation in decision making. "Ask the teachers what
  would benefit them most in their classrooms. Obviously not everything can be
  done, but having that teacher's input makes them feel heard and seen."

#### 10+ years

- Provide compensation for mentorship. "Provide time for teachers to work with an inexperienced teacher while being compensated."
- Allow for autonomy. "Recognize that teachers are professionals and give them
  academic freedom to do their jobs. Don't micromanage them. Let them do the
  job of teaching."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Teachers' responses are from the questions, "What advice would you give a new school leader on how to support the <u>teachers in their school?" and</u> "What is a promising practice that is working well in education?"

## Survey Methodology

TPT sent the State of Education survey to a sample of active TPT teacher users via email on July 5, 2022, to gather teachers' opinions in advance of the 2022-23 school year.

Specifically, we surveyed teachers and asked about their recommendations for attracting and retaining teachers and how to support new teachers as they head into the classroom. The survey also included questions regarding teachers' general classroom experiences and feelings around the profession that TPT asks each quarter as part of the State of Education series.

The survey was completed by 1,270 teachers across U.S. schools. The margin of error is +/-3 percentage points. Characteristics for the schools where the respondents teach are displayed to the right.

Full list of survey questions and sample sizes

Years of Teaching Experience		
5 or fewer years	23%	
6-10 years	19%	
11-15 years	15%	
16-20 years	15%	
Over 20 years	28%	
Region		
West	18%	
Midwest	25%	
Northeast	19%	
South	37%	
School Type		
Traditional Public School	80%	
Private or Parochial School	13%	
Charter School	5%	
School Locale		
Urban	21%	
Suburban	53%	
Rural	26%	
Student Grades  Respondents chose all that apply, percentages may not add to 100%.		
Early Childhood and Pre-K	11%	
Early Elementary (K-2)	43%	
Upper Elementary (3-5)	35%	
Middle School (6-8)	21%	
High School (9-12)	15%	

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