

# STRENGTHENING TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN MISSOURI

*Blue Ribbon Commission Report  
to the State Board of Education*



Teachers are the [most important school-based factor](#) for student growth and achievement. Yet, for years, enrollment in the nation's schools of education has [been in decline](#), and local education agencies (LEAs) have [struggled to retain teachers](#). In many places, the stresses of the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated these issues, requiring states to consider not only how they can fill vacancies, but also re-build a stronger and more diverse teacher pipeline moving forward.

Missouri has not been immune to these challenges, with [close to eight percent](#) of its available full-time teaching positions in the 2020-21 school year either vacant or filled by individuals who were not fully qualified. Additionally, as the state's minimum starting salary is set by law at \$25,000 and [thousands of educators](#) were receiving less than \$35,000 in annual pay during the 2020-21 school year, the state's average starting teacher salary of \$32,970 [ranks 50<sup>th</sup> in the country](#). In fact, since the 2009-10 school year, the average annual teacher salary overall has decreased by [6.3 percent](#). This all impacts the recruitment and retention of high-quality educators, and while the state has [taken recent steps to address this](#), more action is needed.

To address the state's teacher shortage, the Missouri State Board of Education (State Board) formed the [Teacher Recruitment and Retention Blue Ribbon Commission](#) to:

- Develop a set of recommendations and clear action steps that address teacher recruitment and retention solutions, incorporating feedback and perspective from a wide range of stakeholders and Missouri citizens.
  - Develop strategies for addressing long-term and sustainable funding for increased teacher compensation.
  - Establish processes and strategies to attract the next generation of promising Missouri students to pursue a career in education, working to improve lives through education in their home state.
  - Investigate the climate and culture inside and outside the classroom impacting the well-being of our teachers and the respect for the profession as a whole.
  - Provide guidance on processes and timelines, as well as the communication tactics and community engagement needed to meet the State Board's goals of increasing teacher pay and improving retention.
- Assist the State Board in garnering support for the group's teacher recruitment and retention priorities. This includes guidance on navigating perception challenges from legislators and Missouri citizens, while clearly communicating the impact teacher recruitment and retention improvements could have on Missouri students, the future of public education, and overall economic development in our state.
- Develop a set of measurable benchmarks for Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the commission's work.
- Work on aggressive timeline to provide an actionable set of recommendations to the State Board by October 1, 2022.

The members of the Blue Ribbon Commission can be found in [Appendix A](#).

This report outlines the Commission's recommendations to the State Board for addressing teacher recruitment and retention and strengthening the teaching profession in Missouri overall. These recommendations are informed by feedback provided through:

- A **public hearing** for educators to provide feedback that took place in-person on **August 3, 2022** at the Governor Office Building, 200 Madison Street, Jefferson City. The [hearing was live-streamed and recorded](#). All individuals who wished to speak were able to do so;



the order was chosen randomly and speakers were asked to provide no more than three minutes of remarks in response to the following prompt: *Please share specific policy and practice shifts to improve the educator experience that you would like to see in the Commission's recommendations to the State Board.*

■ **Online surveys** that were distributed to Missouri teachers, principals, and district leaders; the surveys were open from **August 1 to August 5, 2022** and the survey findings were presented to the Commission during their virtual meeting on August 15. Below are the number of replies received and the corresponding response rate:

SURVEY	RESPONSES	RESPONSE RATE
Teacher	15,169	21.48%
Principal	916	41.00%
District Leaders	357	49.79%

[Survey Results – Summary/Review](#)

[Survey Results – Complete Information](#)

## THE IMPORTANCE OF MISSOURI TEACHERS

The strength of Missouri’s teacher workforce has a direct impact on the strength of Missouri’s economic development and quality of life. Research continues to find that teachers are the most important school-based factor in student success; however, the impact of this crucial role is not just limited to test scores. As determined by the growth in a student’s cognitive skills during the school year, the most effective teachers were found in a [2010 study](#) to increase the overall lifetime earnings of a class of 30 students by close to **\$1 million**.

Specifically in Missouri, a 200-point increase in SAT scores (which is [equivalent](#) to a five to six point increase in ACT scores) would inject the economy with billions of dollars in additional revenue. A [2020 analysis](#) used results from a National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) study to determine that:

■ Improving the math skills of Missouri workers in fields related to science, technology, engineering, and/or math would lead to the following increase in wages.

Time Period	Wage Increase	
	Individual	Missouri
1 Year	\$18,267	\$3,729,000,000
20 Years	\$432,230	\$74,586,000,000

■ Improving the literacy skills across all workers in Missouri would lead to the following increase in wages.

Time Period	Wage Increase	
	Individual	Missouri
1 Year	\$10,410	\$7,555,000,000
20 Years	\$208,208	\$151,105,000,000



Recruiting and retaining a high-quality teacher workforce is the key to improving the lives of citizens across Missouri. Everyone has a story of a teacher that impacted them, and evidence bears out the truth that a highly effective teacher can change the trajectory of a child's future:

- When determining the most important school-related factors for student performance on reading and math tests, teachers have been found to have an impact that is two to three times greater than any other aspect of schooling, including services, facilities, and school leadership.
- Students who are assigned to a highly effective teacher are more likely to attend college, earn higher salaries, and are less likely to have children as teenagers.
- Students who learn from teachers who focus on improving behavior and other employability skills demonstrate higher rates of graduating high school, taking the SAT, and expressing intentions to attend college.
- Teachers of color provide specific and unique advantages for all students, and are particularly important for supporting the success of students of color:
  - Students of all races and ethnicities report feeling the benefits of learning from a teacher of color, including being academically challenged and cared for.
  - Students of color who learn from teachers of color demonstrate improved reading and mathematics test scores, decreased high school dropout rates, and increased rates of college enrollment.
  - Black teachers have higher expectations for Black students and are less likely to perceive Black students as disruptive, inattentive, or unable to do homework.

This wealth of evidence makes it clear that investing in teachers is an investment in Missouri.

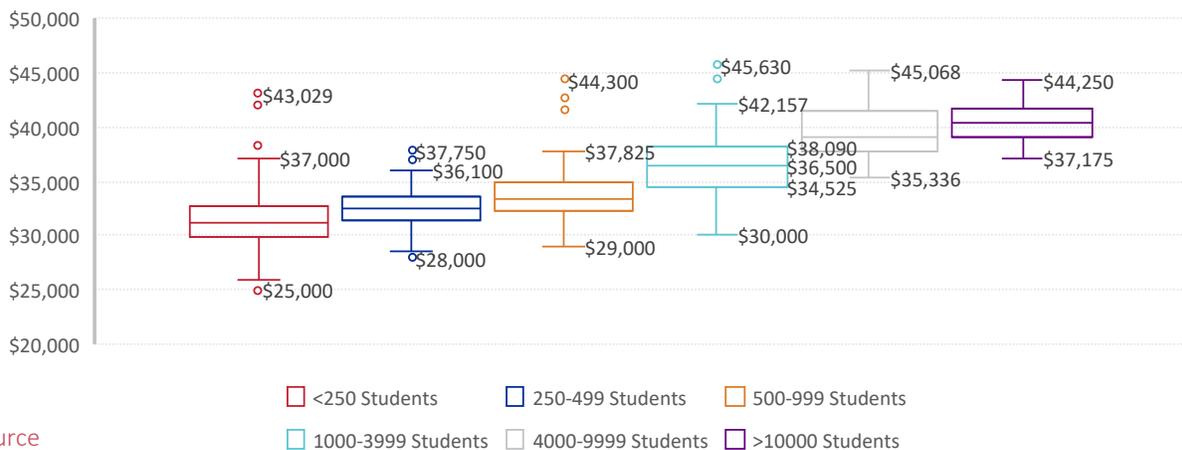


## THE CURRENT STATE OF THE MISSOURI TEACHER WORKFORCE

The overall number of teachers in Missouri has increased slowly over the past 10 years, growing roughly 3.7 percent since 2011. However, despite this subtle overall increase, the state continues to face teacher shortages in elementary, early childhood, and special education, as well as specific subject areas and in high-need schools. In addition, at 93 percent of the workforce, white female teachers are overrepresented. Thirty percent of Missouri's student population are students of color and 51 percent are male.

Teacher salaries vary widely across districts, largely aligning with district size. Beginning teachers in districts with less than 250 students earn around \$9,000 less per year, on average, than beginning teachers in districts with over 10,000 students.

### MINIMUM STARTING SALARY BY DISTRICT SIZE | 2021-22



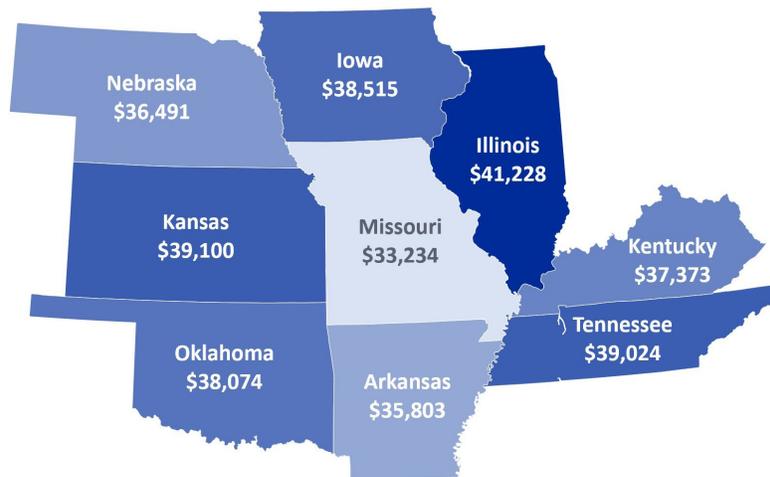
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DISTRICT SIZE	# OF DISTRICTS	LOWEST AVAILABLE	HIGHEST AVAILABLE	AVERAGE	MEDIAN
<250 Students	148	\$25,000	\$43,029	\$31,336	\$31,157
250-499 Students	93	\$28,000	\$38,000	\$32,548	\$32,500
500-999 Students	111	\$29,000	\$42,600	\$33,653	\$33,300
1000-3999 Students	112	\$30,000	\$45,630	\$36,444	\$36,500
4000-9999 Students	36	\$35,336	\$45,068	\$39,728	\$39,126
>10000 Students	18	\$37,175	\$44,250	\$40,381	\$40,413



## AVERAGE STARTING TEACHER SALARY, REGIONAL COMPARISON | 2020-21

Missouri also offers a [lower](#) average starting salary than any of its neighboring states.

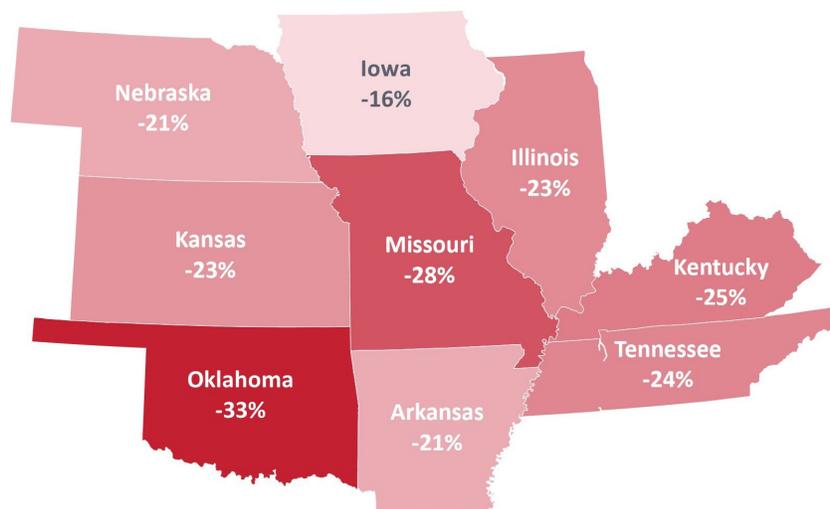


Missouri teachers who earn \$35,000 or less make [comparable salaries](#) to Missouri workers in the following occupations:

- Animal caretakers – Average of \$28,300 per year
- Bartenders – Average of \$29,290 per year
- Housekeepers – Average of \$29,580 per year
- Retail salespersons – Average of \$31,220 per year
- Shuttle drivers – Average of \$32,570 per year

Additionally, research around the [education wage gap](#), defined as the gap in salary paid to teachers versus their peers with comparable backgrounds and level of education in other fields, shows that Missouri teachers are earning **28 percent less** than their peers. When compared with surrounding states, this is the second largest wage gap in the region after Oklahoma.

## EDUCATION WAGE GAP, REGIONAL COMPARISON | 2021



Other occupations that require a postsecondary degree (associates or bachelor's) and professional license earn the following [average salaries](#) in Missouri:

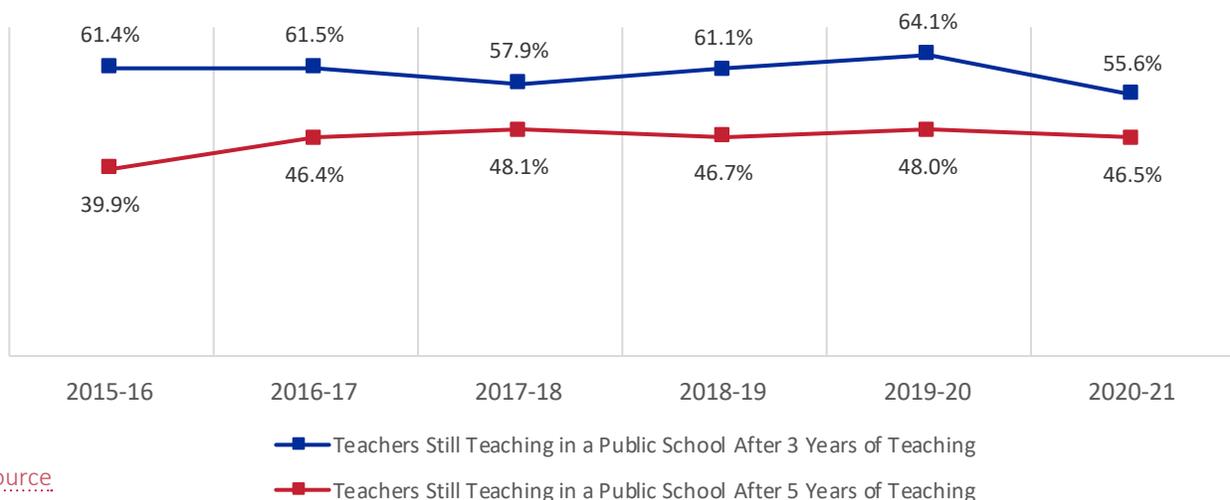
- Physical Therapists – Average of \$84,230 per year
- Architects – Average of \$83,780 per year
- Dental Hygienists – Average of \$74,230 per year
- Embalmers – Average of \$70,540 per year

Criticisms that teachers only work a nine-month contract per year and, therefore, their salaries cannot be compared to other professions have largely been [invalidated](#). Teachers spend at least some of their time during summer breaks preparing for the next school year, engaging in professional development, and participating in other activities related to their role. This work is generally uncompensated and, in some cases, involves a [required cost](#).

While this gap is partially addressed through the relatively attractive benefits packages that teachers receive, including pensions and health insurance, benefits [do not completely cover](#) the pay disparity. Nationally, public school teachers receive a wage that is 19.2 percent lower, on average, than the wage earned by their peers. Additionally, public school teachers receive a benefits package that, on average, offsets their lower relative wages by nine percent; therefore, while the inclusion of benefits reduces the national education wage gap, teachers still earn a compensation package that is valued at 10.2 percent lower than the compensation received by their peers.

Generally, beginning teachers leave the profession at higher rates than teachers who have been in the classroom for longer than five years; [national research](#) has found that new teachers leave at rates of somewhere between 19 and 30 percent over their first five years of teaching. In Missouri, [44 percent](#) of newly-hired teachers leave in their first three years in the classroom and about [54 percent](#) leave within the first five years. Missouri saw a noticeable decrease in the percentage of beginning teachers still in the classroom after three years between the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, suggesting that less-experienced teachers were more severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and related school disruptions.

### MISSOURI BEGINNING TEACHER RETENTION RATE | 2015 - 2021



[Source](#)



The rate of beginning teachers leaving the classroom also varies – mirroring [national trends](#), teachers in low-income schools and schools that serve primarily students of color are more likely to leave than those in affluent schools. This causes students of color and those from low-income areas to be taught by newer and/or uncertified teachers who are less effective and less equipped to meet their needs.

	SCHOOL TYPE				
	Predominantly Students of Color	Highest Rate of Students on Free/Reduced-Price Lunch	Title-I Schools*	Non-Title I Schools	Lowest Rate of Students on Free/Reduced-Price Lunch
<i>Teacher Retention Rate after 1 Year</i>	73.8%	77%	79.4%	81.7%	80.6%
<i>Teacher Retention Rate after 3 Years</i>	42%	47.3%	54.2%	57.7%	57.4%
<i>Percent of Teachers in their First Year</i>	9.5%	8.1%	6.4%	4.6%	3.7%
<i>Percent of Teachers with Less than 3 Years of Experience</i>	18.4%	16.9%	13%	9.7%	7.7%
<i>Percent of Less than Fully Qualified Teachers</i>	15.1%	15.5%	11%	11.8%	4.1%
<i>Percent of Teachers Teaching Out-of-Field</i>	13.7%	14.2%	9.9%	10.8%	3.8%
<i>Percent of Teachers in Their First Year Who Indicated Their Preparation was Good or Very Good</i>	76.2%	75.1%	81.7%	82.5%	87.5%

\*Title I funding is provided by the federal government to schools with at least 40 percent of their student population living in poverty.

[Source](#)

In addition to positions left open by beginning teacher attrition, there also must be a consideration for projected vacancies due to teachers retiring from the profession. Missouri teachers are [eligible](#) for their pension at 60 years of age with five years of service or at any age with at least 30 years of service; during the 2020-21 school year, [2,755 teachers](#) were over the age of 60 and an additional [11,442](#) were between the ages of 50 and 59. When considering overall tenure, [14,903](#) teachers had been in the classroom for 21 years or more.



Nationally, educators [report](#) a broad spectrum of issues impacting morale and job satisfaction. In addition to general stress and burnout associated with the pandemic, educators across the country report low pay, additional duties due to work shortages, student behavior, lack of parental/public support, and other school management issues as major stressors. While an analysis of federal data found that almost [20 percent](#) of teachers hold second jobs during the school year, one national survey of teachers conducted in 2021 found that [82 percent](#) of respondents currently or previously worked multiple jobs to make ends meet as a teacher.

[Results](#) from surveys and polling of Missouri’s teachers are aligned with these national findings; according to the [2021 Missouri Educator Wellness Survey](#) conducted by the Missouri State Teachers Association, 51 percent of Missouri teachers consider leaving the profession often or very often.

However, Missouri has an opportunity to transform teaching and send a clear message that education is a priority. The following recommendations are backed by research, best practices, and input from stakeholders across Missouri and are presented as a next step towards strengthening teacher recruitment and retention and the future success of all Missourians.



## RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN MISSOURI

The following recommendations are organized by the length of time that the Commission believes it will take to implement each strategy. Categories include Immediate Priorities, Short-Term Priorities, and Long-Term Priorities.

### IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES

#### ! 01. Increase the Starting Teacher Salary

The Commission recommends that the legislature amend [Missouri Statute 163.172](#) to raise the minimum starting teacher salary to at least \$38,000 and to require an annual review by the Joint Committee on Education to ensure teacher salaries remain appropriate and competitive. The Commission also recommends continued funding to support the Teacher Baseline Salary Grant program.

The average starting public school teacher salary in Missouri is \$32,970, ranking the state [50th in the country](#). On average, public school teachers in Missouri made [\\$51,444 during the 2020-21 school year](#). According to Missouri state law, the required minimum annual salary is \$25,000 for a beginning teacher and \$33,000 for a full-time teacher with a master's degree and at least ten years public teaching experience, which is below the Missouri average living wage of [\\$33,883.20](#) for one adult without any children.

In the [educator survey](#) conducted by DESE in August 2022, 58 percent of teachers and 61 percent of district leaders indicated that an increase to teachers' base salary is **essential**.

Acknowledging that there are many factors that impact retention and recruitment, the Commission believes an important first step is to increase the starting salary.

*Cost estimate: Based on 2021-22 teacher salary data, nearly 8,000 teachers are below \$38,000. To raise them to \$38,000, an estimated total of **\$29.5 million** is needed (including related benefit costs). This figure does not address salary schedule compression issues that may be created. The FY2023 budget includes \$21.7 million in grant funds to support this approach as an option, with the local district providing 30 percent of the funds and the related benefits.*

#### ! 02. Prioritize Annual Funding of the Career Ladder Program

The Commission recommends that the legislature prioritize an annual appropriation to fund the Career Ladder Program and that funding is provided to districts based on the income level of the communities served by that district's schools (i.e., the local tax base).

A [2011 study](#) found evidence suggesting that a school district's participation in the [Missouri Career Ladder Program](#) tended to increase retention in the district and the profession, especially for mid-career teachers, and that related salary increases had a positive effect on teacher well-being. [Another study](#) found that program participants "noted that the Career Ladder payment covers work or activities that teachers were already performing" while others "noted that an additional incentive was the opportunity to perform work that they previously wanted to perform but were reluctant to undertake because of a lack of compensation." Beginning in 2012, the requirement that the General Assembly make an annual appropriation to fund the career ladder program was removed, and the allocation of state payments to districts to support the program became a year-

to-year decision. As a result, until the Missouri budget was passed in early May 2022, this program had not been funded since 2010.

- The “Missouri Career Development and Teacher Excellence Plan” is a matching fund program that allows local school districts to adopt a career ladder plan for teachers. Districts are required to apply for funding.
- The Career Ladder program in Missouri allows districts to choose to supplement teacher salaries based on hours spent outside of contracted time on activities directly related to the improvement of student programs and services, including professional development. Activities include providing students with additional instruction, including enhanced learning experiences, remedial assistance, and various extended day/year activities, and participation in professional growth activities, including college classes, workshops, and professional organizations.
- The following positions are eligible to apply for admission to their district’s career plans after teaching in public schools for **a minimum of two years**: classroom teachers, librarians, school counselors and certificated teachers who hold positions as school psychological examiners, Parents as Teachers educators, school psychologists, special education diagnosticians, and speech pathologists, all of whom are required to be on the district salary schedule.
- Districts that serve primarily high-income communities will be required to contribute 40 percent of the program cost to supplement the state’s funding. This split will then shift on a sliding scale with the districts demonstrating the highest need (as determined by the level of education funding allowed by the local tax base) receiving 100 percent of the program cost from the state.

*Cost estimate: The FY2023 appropriation for Career Ladder is \$37.4 million, which is based on 2010 participation data. The corresponding statute has been modified to increase the state match from 40 percent to 60 percent, which increases the projected costs to **\$56.2 million**. The Career Ladder statute has also been modified to lower years of service from five years to two for teacher eligibility, which **may increase the cost by \$20 million** depending upon participation (more than 10,000 teachers are in years three to five). The current statute does not have a provision to prioritize funding based on local income characteristics – a similar provision was removed years ago. Legislative action would be required to implement this recommendation and, depending on the structure, could increase the cost of the program.*

### ! 03. Establish Sustainable Funding for Grow Your Own Programs

The Commission recommends that the legislature expand on the 2021 grants provided by relief funds to establish sustainable state funding to a grant program for LEA Grow Your Own programs geared towards paraprofessionals/adults and/or middle and high school CTE programs.

Grow Your Own programs recruit teachers from members of the community and can work to identify potential teaching candidates as early as middle school or to recruit existing paraprofessionals and career changers to become certified teachers. These programs serve to increase a state or district’s local pipeline of future teachers and can also support the increased diversity of the local educator workforce. There is also evidence to show that teachers hired from within low-resourced communities tend to teach long-term in the communities that originally hired them. According to data provided by DESE, prior to the 2021 grants being made available to support grow your own efforts, 115 districts had a program in place. After the grants were allocated, that number grew to 470.



- This program would create sustainable funding for \$10,000 grants to all districts to establish or expand a Grow Your Own program.
- LEAs would be required to regularly report on the results of their Grow Your Own program(s) and the local funding allocated to support them.

*Cost estimate: To establish a competitive grant program for higher education institutions based on funding the most effective GYO efforts:*

*Community colleges (5 grants per year X \$10,000) = \$50,000*

*Educator Preparation Programs (15 grants per year X \$20,000) = \$300,000*

*Additional funds for LEAs with active GYO programs (470 active programs X \$10,000) = \$4,700,000*

*Total Cost = **\$5,050,000***

#### **! 04. Encourage LEAs to Implement Team-Based Teaching Models**

**The Commission recommends that DESE and MSBA work with LEAs to encourage the use of the Innovation Waivers established in [Senate Bill 681](#) towards implementing a team-based teaching model (i.e. [Opportunity Culture](#), [Next Education Workforce](#), etc.).**

Team-based models are a collaborative approach to instruction that create systems of support for beginning and more novice teachers, and opportunities for leadership and mentoring for high-quality experienced teachers. These models typically aim to redesign the school day without adding an additional cost to state, district, and school budgets; for example, the principles of [Opportunity Culture](#) include:

01. Reach more students with excellent teachers and their teams
02. Pay teachers more for extending their reach
03. Fund pay within regular budgets
04. Provide protected in-school time and clarity about how to use it for planning, collaboration, and development
05. Match authority and accountability to each person's responsibilities

As teachers in team-based models have [demonstrated](#) increased effectiveness and [reported](#) higher job satisfaction, supporting LEAs in adopting these innovative models would address educators feedback in the [survey](#) that increased flexibility during school hours, including more time to develop lessons and content, to collaborate with other teachers, to receive feedback and coaching, and to engage in professional learning, would professionalize teaching as a career.

- Senate Bill 681 allows a school intervention team to submit a request for a waiver to the State Board of Education for reasons including the improvement of the recruitment, retention, training, preparation, or professional development of teachers.
- While any waiver granted is effective for no longer than three school years, school innovation waivers may be renewed.
- To support the implementation of the team-based teaching model, waivers could be requested around:
  - Teacher contracts
  - Last day of school

- Length of school day
  - Class size
  - Certain purchasing and contract requirements
  - DESE and MSBA would collaborate to create an annual report to elevate feedback and best practices.
- Cost estimate: *No cost to the state.*

## SHORT-TERM PRIORITIES

### ! 05. Establish a Fund to Support LEAs In Providing Increased Salaries

**The Commission recommends the legislature establish a state fund to support LEAs in paying for both the increased minimum starting salary and for more competitive salaries overall.**

Missouri gives LEAs the authority to set pay scales, eliminating barriers such as state salary schedules that control how LEAs pay teachers, creating inequities between the salaries offered in smaller LEAs and those in larger LEAs. The [average salary](#) in LEAs with less than 250 students is around \$9,000 less than the average salary in LEAs with more than 10,000 students. Legislation establishing this state fund would create a process to set the target average salary to ensure that LEAs are supported to provide all teachers with appropriate and attractive salaries. Sample legislation can be found in Arkansas in their [Teacher Salary Equalization Fund](#) and includes these components:

- Every two years, the House and Senate Education Committees would work together to establish a target average salary for teachers across the state.
- Districts who are not able to achieve this target through local tax dollars would receive supplemental dollars from the state fund. *Districts would be required to submit documentation showing that the local tax base and/or revenue allocated to education is unable to cover the cost of teacher salaries in order to receive supplemental dollars.*
- On or before October 31 of each year, DESE would determine if a school district is eligible to receive teacher salary equalization funds by reviewing certified salary data submitted by the school district for the immediately preceding fiscal year.
- Once implemented, this fund would replace the Teacher Baseline Salary Grant program that the first recommendation asks to continue in the interim.

*Cost estimate: For reference, it will require an additional **\$81.2 million** to raise the average teacher salary by each \$1,000 increment (70,000 teachers X \$1,000 X 1.16 for related benefits). This figure does not include other increased costs that may be connected to the teacher salary schedule (e.g. extra-duty contracts). Also not included are certified staff serving in non-classroom roles and are compensated through the teacher salary schedule.*

### ! 06. Increase Support for Teacher Mental Health

**The Commission recommends that DESE partner with the Missouri School Boards Association (MSBA), the Missouri State Teachers Association (MSTA), and the Missouri National Education Association (MNEA) to assist LEAs in providing proper overall mental wellness resources and supports to teachers, school leaders, and non-instructional staff.**

Sixty-two percent of the teachers who responded to the Blue Ribbon Commission [educator survey](#) indicated that expansion of healthcare benefits should be a high or essential priority. Additionally, 72.4 percent of respondents indicated they would use paid time off for wellness

days if they were provided, and 71.2 percent believe that increasing support for teachers' mental health would professionalize teaching as a career.

- DESE and MSBA would collaborate to develop and periodically update a model policy and procedure to prevent and address stress among school-based staff, including teachers, school leaders, and non-instructional staff.
- The model policy would include the following:
  - A commitment to support mental health in schools
  - Promotion of a positive workplace climate
  - Allocation of paid time off as multipurpose days, as opposed to defined sick days, with an explicit allowance for these days to be used for wellness.
  - Inclusion of mental health coverage in all healthcare policies.
  - Establishment of a district-wide workforce mental health committee with the following functions:
    - ▶ Ensure that resources and supports related to traumatic stress, stress management, and other mental health needs are available, accessible, and proactively shared through DESE and local district channels.
    - ▶ Ensure that school-based staff are able to access a stress self-assessment tool and associated resources.
    - ▶ Regularly assess district and school-level implementation of the model policy and procedures, including gathering input and feedback from school-based staff.
    - ▶ Work with the local school board to ensure that schools and staff receive the appropriate resources and training for continuous improvement.
    - ▶ Annually report a summary of activities to the local school board.
- The model policy would be created, shared directly with local school board members, and publicly posted on the MSBA website by a date to be determined by DESE and MSBA.
- MSBA would work directly with local school board members to encourage every school district to adopt a policy that incorporates the above elements, as well as a requirement for regular review to determine whether updates are needed.
- Sample legislation can be found in Washington in their 2021 law around [K-12 Workforce Secondary Traumatic Stress – Model Policy and Procedure](#).
- DESE and MSBA would also work directly with local school board members to determine whether districts can offer additional mental health supports, such as a flexible paid “wellness days” for school staff each academic year and expanded coverage for mental healthcare in healthcare plans.

*Cost estimate: No cost to the state. Additional paid wellness days would require additional use of substitute teachers. To provide two additional days for every teacher, the LEA cost would equal the number of teachers and support staff X the provided number of wellness days X estimated sub costs.*

## ! 07. Tuition Assistance

**The Commission recommends that the state fully fund the Urban Flight and Rural Needs Scholarship Program Fund established in [Missouri Statute 173.232](#) with slight adjustments.**

[Research](#) has shown that loan forgiveness and service scholarship programs can successfully recruit and retain high-quality teachers into classrooms and communities where they are most needed. Additionally, over 50 percent of teachers who responded to

the educator survey and around 90 percent of principal and superintendent respondents indicated that they or their teachers would take advantage of student loan forgiveness if it was available. Student loan forgiveness has also been found to be particularly effective in recruiting teachers of color. As Missouri’s teacher workforce is currently 93 percent white, this is a crucial consideration.

- This scholarship covers the full cost of tuition and fees for attending a four-year educator preparation program in Missouri.
- Candidates must sign an agreement with DESE to teach in a Missouri public school that includes a higher-than-average "at-risk student population."
- Candidates must teach in an eligible school for two years for every one year the recipient received the Urban Flight and Rural Needs Scholarship (a total of eight years for the full scholarship).

The Commission recommends the following adjustments to the existing program design:

- Allow individuals to participate in the program in one of the following two scenarios:
  - Up to eight undergraduate semesters at a Missouri institution of higher education in pursuit of a bachelor’s degree plus teaching certification.
  - Up to four graduate semesters at a Missouri institution of higher education, in pursuit of a master’s degree plus teaching certification.
- Remove the cap of 100 scholarships and require the legislature to determine the amount of scholarships available each year based on appropriations.

*Estimated cost: Average cost of tuition in Missouri was \$14,564 in the 2020-2021 academic year.*

*Estimating an award of 100 new per year, it would cost **\$5,825,600 million** (100 X \$14,564 X 4 years).*

## LONG-TERM PRIORITIES

### ! 08. Salary Supplements for Filling High-Needs Positions

**The Commission recommends that the State Board of Education work with stakeholders to explore an amendment of the four articles of the Missouri Constitution and the provisions of the Missouri Teacher Tenure Act that are currently preventing the state from providing salary supplements and bonuses to teachers.**

When implemented in conjunction with a sufficient base salary, differentiated pay based on teaching in a subject shortage area and/or at a high-needs school has been found to reduce teacher turnover and improve retention. In particular, research has found that:

- When Georgia implemented bonuses for math and science teachers, teacher turnover decreased by 10 percent.
- Hawaii cut the number of special education teaching positions that were either vacant or filled with unlicensed educators in half by offering a \$10,000 pay raise.
- In Florida, teacher turnover was reduced by nearly a third when teachers with satisfactory performance ratings in shortage subjects received a bonus of \$1,200 (close to \$2,000 in today’s dollars).
- When teachers in seven districts were offered a bonus to teach in under-performing schools for two years, 93 percent were still in their positions at the end of the two-year period (compared to 70 percent of teachers who were still in their positions generally).

As of 2019, [29 states](#) required or explicitly encouraged additional pay for teachers working in subject shortage areas and/or high-needs schools; since then, this approach has [increased](#) in popularity as a strategy to address concerns around teacher turnover related to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, Missouri courts and attorneys general have repeatedly interpreted the state constitutional language to prohibit grants of bonuses and specifically teacher salary bonuses.

- The specific provisions that would have to be modified to allow for teacher bonuses appear to be as follows:
  - Article III, § 38(a) of the Missouri Constitution
  - Article III, § 39(3) of the Missouri Constitution
  - Article VI, § 23 of the Missouri Constitution
  - Article VI, § 25 of the Missouri Constitution
  - Missouri Teacher Tenure Act, §§ 168.104-168.103, RSMo, particularly in § 168.110, RSMo (contract modifications and provisions for fixing the amount of annual compensation for the salary schedule, but other additions, such as in the definition section – § 168.104, RSMo – would likely be advisable)
- Amending these provisions would allow the state and/or districts to provide a salary supplement for teachers working in high-needs areas, including subject shortage areas and high-needs schools.
- The positions eligible for the state salary supplement would be determined annually by DESE.

*Cost impact: Costs for premium salaries will **vary significantly** depending upon the level of state support and/or school interest in utilizing.*

### ! **09. Salary Supplements for Teachers with National Board Certification**

**The Commission recommends that the legislature provide partial funding for teachers to become certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and establish salary supplements for teachers who have been certified for at least three years.**

Multiple studies have found that that National Board Certified teachers are more effective and more likely to stay in the classroom than other teachers. [Findings](#) from state- and district-specific research include:

#### ■ **Mississippi**

- Kindergarten students taught by a National Board Certified teacher are [31 percent](#) more likely to achieve a proficient score on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment than other students.
- Third grade students taught by a National Board Certified teacher perform at a [significantly higher](#) level on literacy assessments than peers on average.

#### ■ **Washington**

- A [multi-year study](#) found that “[Board-] certified teachers are more effective than non-certified teachers with similar experience,” producing gains of up to 1.5 months of additional learning.

### ■ South Carolina

- Attrition among National Board Certified teachers is three times lower than teacher attrition statewide.

### ■ Los Angeles Unified School District

- Students of National Board Certified teachers gained roughly the equivalent of two months of additional instruction in Math and one month in English Language Arts. Among math teachers, this contrasts with a lack of a significant impact on teachers who held only advanced degrees.

### ■ Gwinnett County, Georgia

- National Board Certified teachers outperformed their peers with the same levels of experience.

As Missouri aims to be regionally competitive, it is also important to note that the following surrounding states provide financial incentives to National Board Certified teachers:

### ■ Illinois

- \$3,000 one-time stipend for teachers in designated rural and remote areas
- Eligible teachers can receive a subsidy from the state to cover initial certification, retake, and ongoing maintenance costs

### ■ Iowa

- \$2,500 annual stipend
- First-time candidates are subsidized for up to one-half of the fee for certification

### ■ Kentucky

- \$2,000 annual stipend

### ■ Oklahoma

- Up to an additional \$1,000 per year
- Scholarships of \$1,300 towards the cost of certification plus an additional \$500 for other expenses

### ■ Kansas

- \$1,000 annual stipend
- First-time candidates are subsidized for up to \$950 to cover the cost of certification
- Renewal candidates receive a subsidy of \$500

### ■ Arkansas

- \$2,500 annual stipend for teachers not in a high-poverty school
- \$5,000 annual stipend for teachers in a high-poverty school that is not located in a high-poverty district
- \$10,000 annual stipend for teachers in a high-poverty school located in a high-poverty district
- First-time candidates may be reimbursed for the cost of one component (\$475) if funds are available

There are currently 96 districts in Missouri that offer certification stipends of varying amounts.



- Teachers would be able to apply for a scholarship from the state to help fund the cost of certification from the [National Board for Professional Teaching Standards](#).
- Beginning in the third year after achieving certification, eligible teachers would receive an additional \$3,000 per year from the state.

*Cost estimate: The total cost of certification is \$1,900 per candidate.*

*A representative supplement of \$3,000 would require **\$3.48 million for every 1,000 National Board Certified teachers** (1,000 X \$3,000 X 1.16 for related benefits).*

## EVALUATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As Missouri works to implement these recommendations, there is a need to build in mechanisms that provide accountability to maintain buy-in and to ensure that teachers are supported with allocated dollars. **For purposes of evaluation and to monitor the effectiveness of these compensation changes, the Commission would recommend that DESE expand the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Annual Report to include the following data:**

- Salary data for each LEA
- The starting and average salary for each LEA adjusted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) [Comparable Wage Index for Teachers](#) (CWIFT)
- Teacher turnover disaggregated by student achievement data (state and local)
- Teacher turnover disaggregated by race (state and local)
- Openings that have been posted over the past year and the number of applications each opening received
- The grade-level and subject focus of teacher candidates compared to the current openings in the state
- A comparison of Missouri starting and average salaries with surrounding states

## COMMUNICATIONS AND BUY-IN

The Commission recognizes the importance of community and stakeholder understanding and buy-in of these recommendations. To that end, the Commission recommends:

### **REGIONAL TOWN HALL MEETINGS**

The Commission members will hold town hall meetings in their districts during the fall of 2022 to share these recommendations and answer questions from educators, families, and other community members.

### **MEETING WITH EDUCATORS**

To ensure that teachers and school leaders have a full understanding of each of these recommendations, members of the Commission and DESE will work to hold conversations that provide an overview of the report and the related implications, to hear feedback and provide clarification as needed, and to answer any questions.

### **MEETING WITH SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS**

In recognition of their role as local policymakers and the crucial work they will need to do to adopt many of these recommendations, members of the Commission and DESE will collaborate with MSBA to educate school board members on what these recommendations entail, their role in their adoption and implementation, and to answer any questions.

### **TEACH MISSOURI**

While tangible support to teachers across the state is crucial, there is also a need to address the negative and discouraging messaging around the teaching profession. In order to recruit new candidates and provide comprehensive support to current teachers, stakeholders across the state of Missouri should engage in communicating the value of teachers and their role. Of particular importance is a platform for teachers to share their stories; the Commission recommends that DESE expand the TEACH Missouri campaign to share teacher stories of why they love teaching. [TEACH Missouri](#) is a statewide initiative committed to improving the perception of the teaching profession and developing a statewide teacher recruitment and retention system to attract the next generation of Missouri teachers.

### **AREAS OF FUTURE WORK**

The Commission suggests that the State Board establish future workgroups to examine the following areas that are either outside of the scope of this Commission's work or are unable to be fully explored in the allotted timeline.

#### **CULTURE AND CLIMATE**

As [studies](#) have shown that school culture is a primary factor in why teachers decide to leave the classroom, the Commission believes that this is a crucial focus for the next phase of their work. Teachers have [cited](#) a lack of support from school leadership, student behavior issues, and limited autonomy as ongoing issues and these have only been [exacerbated](#) by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on schools, teaching, and students. Along with adequate compensation, it is crucial that the state ensure that teachers have access to a positive school climate in order to experience job satisfaction and best support student learning.

#### **THE STATE EDUCATION FUNDING FORMULA**

In order to provide adequate funding for these recommendations and education in Missouri as a whole, the Commission recommends that future work focus on evaluating the funding formula. Missouri relies heavily on local funding for education; in fact, when [compared nationally](#), Missouri ranks 50th in the percentage of education funding that is allocated from the state level. A 2018 [report](#) from the State Auditor also found that 68 percent of Missouri districts had seen an increase in the proportion of funding they were required to contribute over the past 10 years. This heavy reliance on local tax dollars to fund education creates inequities in the available resources and supports available to schools, teachers, and students, as those who need the most receive the least. While this shows up in the disparities in teacher salaries offered between districts, it is a larger issue that deserves dedicated focus.

#### **TEACHER EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Studies have shown that teachers are one of the [most important](#) school-based factors related to student success. Students who have access to a high-quality teacher [not only](#) achieve higher academic outcomes but are also more likely to enroll in a postsecondary program and earn higher salaries. As Missouri works to ensure that every student has access to a high-quality teacher, it is essential to ensure that the evaluation and accountability system is recognizing the impact of effective teachers and supporting the growth of those who need development.

## CONCLUSION

These recommendations are submitted to the State Board with the full support\* of the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Blue Ribbon Commission. Based on research, best practices, and feedback from educators across the state, the implementation of these strategies will provide a strong support for current teachers and create opportunities and pathways for recruiting future teachers into the workforce. The members of the Commission are committed to supporting the State Board and DESE in garnering support for these recommendations and look forward to engaging with stakeholders from the public and private sectors to emphasize the importance of investing in teachers to ensure the future success of all Missouri citizens.

*\*Representative Brad Pollitt expressed concerns around the recommendation addressing tuition assistance.*

*As a representative of the Governor's Office, Jamie Birch abstained from voting on the recommendations.*

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## APPENDIX A

### MISSOURI TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION MEMBERS

#### **Chair**

- **7th Congressional District:** Mark Walker | Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, TransLand

#### **Business**

- **1st Congressional District:** Kathy Osborne | Executive Director, St. Louis Regional Business Council
- **1st Congressional District:** Maxine Clark | Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder, Clark-Fox Family Foundation
- **3rd Congressional District:** Amy Estes | Heartland Regional Manager, Ayusa International
- **4th Congressional District:** Keith Pritchard | Chairman, Security Bank of Pulaski County
- **5th Congressional District:** Dred Scott | President, The Civic Council of Greater Kansas City
- **5th Congressional District:** Ruth Stricklen Pullins | Chief Human Resources Officer, University Health
- **6th Congressional District:** Bob Wollenman | Owner and General Manager, Deluxe Truck Stop
- **7th Congressional District:** Kurt Hellweg | Chairman of the Board, American Dehydrated Foods, Inc.
- **8th Congressional District:** Aaron Decker | Vice President and Retail Lending Officer, Southern Bank

### ***State Board of Education***

- **3rd Congressional District:** Don Claycomb | President Emeritus, State Technical College of Missouri
- **4th Congressional District:** Kim Bailey | Licensed Mental Health Professional and Trauma Specialist
- **8th Congressional District:** Mary Schrag | Owner and Chief Executive Operator, Physical Therapy Specialists Clinic, Inc.

### ***Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education***

- **3rd Congressional District:** Paul Katnik | Assistant Commissioner, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

### ***Teachers***

- **2nd Congressional District:** Darrion Cockrell | 2021 Missouri Teacher of the Year and Physical Education Teacher, Crestwood Elementary (Lindbergh School District)
- **7th Congressional District:** Misty Grandel | 2020 Missouri Teacher of the Year and Language Arts Teacher, Fordland High School (Fordland R-III School District)

### ***School Board***

- **6th Congressional District:** Rhonda Gilstrap | At-Large Representative, Blue Springs School District Board of Education

### ***The Office of the Governor***

- Jamie Birch | Deputy Policy Director, Office of the Governor

### ***Members of the General Assembly***

- Senator Lauren Arthur | District 17
- Senator Cindy O’Laughlin | District 18
- Representative Ingrid Burnett | District 19
- Representative Brad Pollitt | District 52



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