



# Strengthening the Texas Teacher Workforce

TEXAS 2036

The classroom teacher is the most important in-school factor impacting student growth, but too few Texas students have effective educators. With increased teacher turnover and an inadequate supply of trained and certified teachers, districts are increasingly relying on **unequipped and underprepared** teachers. Strategic adjustments to state policy can strengthen the teacher pipeline, reversing these trends and supporting student success

## Texas students need a stronger teacher workforce to thrive.

Over half of first-time, full-time newly hired teachers in the 2023-2024 school year were uncertified.<sup>1</sup> The increasing reliance on untrained and uncertified teachers in Texas, especially in rural districts, is a critical issue in the state's education system. This trend is driven by high teacher turnover and an inadequate supply of certified, trained teachers. Uncertified teachers are often underprepared to meet the diverse needs of students, leading to significant learning losses. These uncertified teachers are also more likely to leave the profession, slowing student learning and imposing significant financial and personnel burdens on school districts.

## Policy Recommendations

As policymakers seek to support the teacher workforce pipeline, it is crucial to **prioritize comprehensive policies that support the recruitment, preparation, and retention of high-quality educators** while avoiding proposals that might decrease the rigor of educator preparation or undermine the profession. To ensure Texas has a robust, skilled teacher workforce, the following actions are critical:

1

### Pay Texas' Best Teachers More

Strategically increase compensation for effective educators through expansion of the Teacher Incentive Allotment to reward and retain the best teachers.

2

### Increase Support for Classroom Teachers

Develop and scale teacher mentorship programs and the Mentor Program Allotment. Offer opportunities and technical assistance to establish and enhance teacher leadership roles.

3

### Support and Incentivize Rigorous Pathways for Teachers to Become Certified

Prioritize high-quality certification routes, such as residencies, apprenticeships, and grow-your-own models. Support comprehensive, hands-on training through a **residency allotment that funds stipends for resident teachers.**

4

### Increase High Quality Resources and Materials Available to Teachers

Increase investment in high-quality instructional materials and resources to ensure every teacher has the tools necessary to provide rigorous grade-level instruction.



# The Texas Teacher Workforce At A Glance <sup>2</sup>

## Texas has



**5.5M**  
Public School  
Students



**1200+**  
School  
Systems



**384K+**  
Teachers



**110+**  
Educator Prep  
Program



**17-20K+**  
Teachers  
Prepared  
Each Year



**480K**  
Students Served  
by First-Year  
Teachers

## The Reality of the Workforce Today

Texas has a **12.2% teacher attrition rate**<sup>3</sup>

## Some Perspective

This is higher than traditional levels, which normally fluctuate between 10-11%. This percentage **peaked in SY 22-23 at 13.4%**.

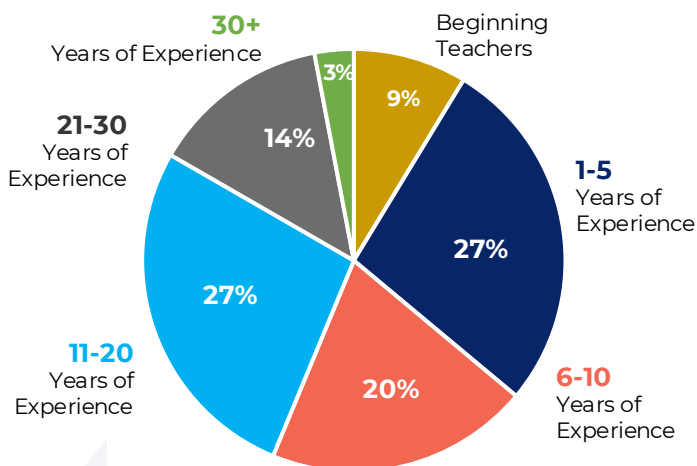
Texas has a **14.7 : 1 student to teacher ratio**<sup>4</sup>

The student to teacher ratio is below the national average of 15.4:1. Statewide, Texas is **employing more teachers than ever**, though districts still struggle to hire and retain effective educators in certain subjects and regions.

Texas has **26,989 teachers** designated as high performing under the <sup>5</sup>Teacher Incentive Allotment

These teachers **represent 597 districts, 55% of which are rural**. This number of teachers has been growing exponentially and is **expected to continue to grow**.

## Breakdown of Teacher Workforce by Years of Experience <sup>6</sup>



## The average teacher salary in Texas is \$62,474 <sup>7</sup>

This number can vary greatly by district and by years of experience.

### Average Teacher Salary by Years of Experience


Beginning Teachers	\$54,272
1-5 Years of Experience	\$58,185
6-10 Years of Experience	\$61,494
11-20 Years of Experience	\$65,219
21-30 Years of Experience	\$69,723
Over 30 Years of Experience	\$75,014

36% percent of Texas teachers have 5 or less years of experience. These novice teachers traditionally achieve less academic growth for students than their more experienced peers


# Texas is increasingly relying on underprepared and uncertified teachers to fill vacancies, impacting student achievement

An insufficient supply of quality teachers is a major barrier to improving student outcomes. Following stagnant and declining STAAR results this year, **with roughly half of students meeting grade-level expectations in reading, and even fewer in math**, it is imperative that the Texas prioritize policies that expand access to clear, high-quality preparation at multiple entry points leading to certification and create pathways towards high-quality certification at multiple entry points.

**For the 23-24 school year<sup>8</sup>**



**56% of first-time teachers were uncertified**



**75% of new rural teachers were uncertified**

Each certification pathway has varying degrees of rigor and quality across three critical areas of teacher support and preparation: Classroom Practice, Content Knowledge, and Mentoring and Coaching. To ensure Texas has the highest quality teacher workforce, the state and districts must prioritize comprehensive preparation models that emphasize all three critical areas. As the demand for teachers grows, investing in scalable models like residencies and improving mentoring systems across all pathways can ensure better outcomes for educators and their students.

## Preparation pathways have varying levels of rigor and quality<sup>9</sup>

Quality of Best Practice: Strong [●●●●] – Weak [○○○○]

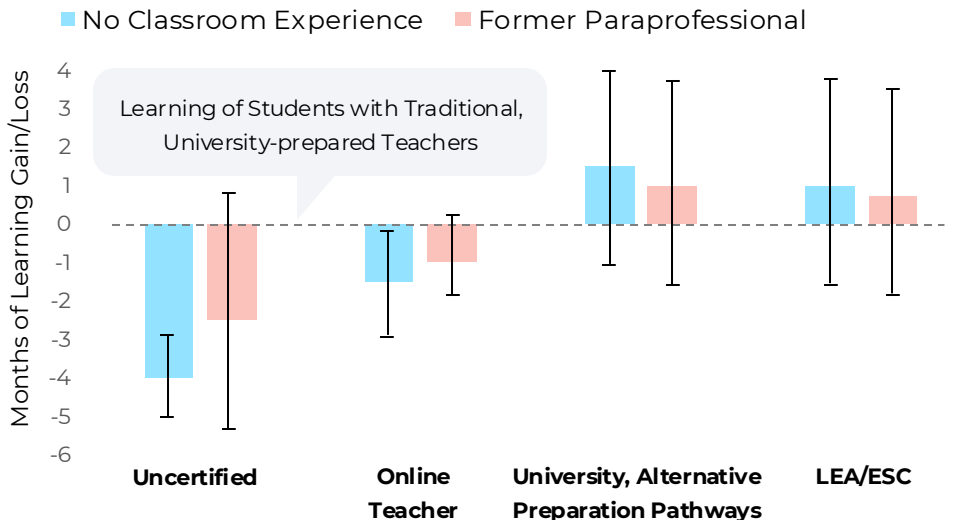
	Residency	Traditional Undergraduate University	Alt Cert Internship	Alt Cert Late Hire Internship	Uncertified
Classroom Practice	●●●●	●●●○	●○○○	○○○○	○○○○
Content Knowledge	●●●○	●●○○	●●○○	●●○○	○○○○
Mentoring and Coaching	●●●●	●●○○	●●○○	●●○○	●○○○

## Certification and Classroom Experience Impact Student Outcomes<sup>10</sup>

Research suggests that the certification pathway that a classroom teacher pursues impacts classroom outcomes. **Uncertified and online certified teachers on average have a negative impact on student learning, equal to multiple months of lost learning** when compared to the traditionally certified teacher. Prior classroom experience for these teachers significantly increases the level of student achievement.

## Effects of Teacher Preparation Pathways on Reading Achievement.

Having Previous Classroom Experience is a Distinguishing Factor



8. Kirksey, Ph.D., Texas Tech University, Policy Brief No.1 Summer 2024; James P. Van Overschelde and Mirinda Lopez, Uncertified teachers now dominate new teacher hires in rural Texas schools, May 6, 2024, TEA 2024 Annual Report.  
 9. Texas Education Agency, November 2024 Superintendent Call  
 10. Amid Rising Number of Uncertified Teachers, Previous Classroom Experience Proves Vital in Texas (TTU)



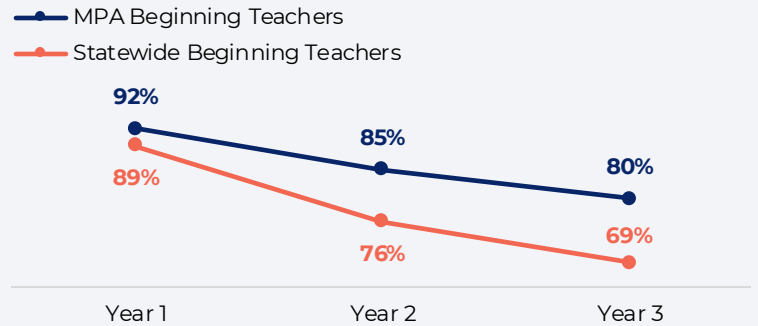
# Texas can strengthen the teacher workforce by scaling effective policies.

Texas has begun implementing policies that have been shown to keep our best teachers in the classroom longer. By keeping these effective professional in the classroom, students will benefit from more effective instruction and achieve better outcomes.

## Mentor Program Allotment <sup>11</sup>

Since its inception in House Bill 3 (2019) the Mentor Program Allotment (MPA) has shown promising results in retaining teachers, beating the statewide retention rate by roughly 11 percentage points after the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of teaching. This program, despite its success, is currently capped by appropriation and only provide minimal stipends to mentor teachers.

MPA vs. Statewide Retention Rate of Beginning Teachers (Cycle 1)



Retention Group	Non-TIA Designated Teachers	TIA *Designated Teachers)	Difference
In district in a teacher role	80.4%	88.5%	+8.1%
In the district	83.8%	90.1%	+7.3%
In a teaching role	87.9%	92.8%	+4.9%

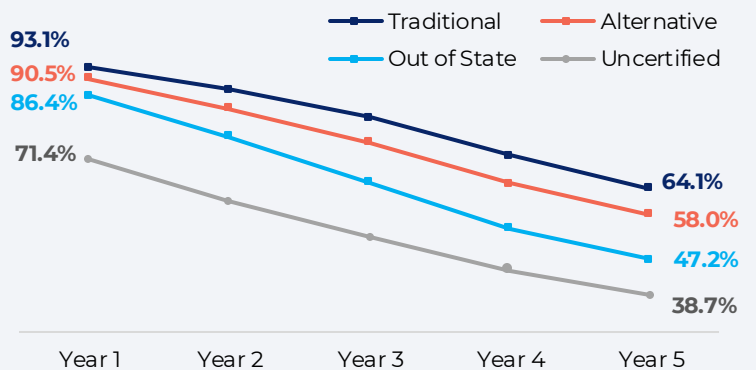
## Teacher Incentive Allotment <sup>12</sup>

Also the product of House Bill 3 (2019), the Teacher Incentive allotment (TIA) provides teachers, particularly in low income and rural schools, a pathway to earn a six-figure salary. These highly effective TIA designated teachers are retained at higher rates than non-TIA designated teacher. By keeping the best teachers in the classroom longer, Texas can raise the quality of education, create opportunities for teachers to have greater impact and improve student outcomes.

## Quality Certification Pathways <sup>13</sup>

Retention rates are not consistent across preparation pathways. The steep decline in retention among non-certified teachers, even in just the first year, underscores the challenges faced by less-prepared educators in staying in the profession. In contrast, traditional and certified pathways show comparatively stronger retention rates over time.

Percent of Teachers Retained in the Public Education Workforce



## Conclusion

To ensure all Texas students have access to high-quality educators, Texas has the opportunity to invest in and strengthen its teacher workforce. The state should prioritize policies that address both demand and supply issues in the teacher workforce, focusing on the development and retention of well-prepared, effective teachers and avoid measures that undermine quality. Implementing these strategies will create a sustainable pipeline of educators equipped to drive student success.