



Quality Teaching

Issue Definition

High-quality teaching has long been touted as the most important in-school factor that can improve student achievement. Studies reveal that student performance is correlated with the quality of a student’s teachers. Students exposed to consistent high-quality teaching are more likely to attend college, are less likely to become teenage parents, and have higher earnings in adulthood. However, student performance lags when children are taught by low-quality teachers – an effect that compounds over time. Given the critical importance of teacher quality, it is essential that states have policies in place that attract and retain the highest quality teachers possible.

Elements of an Effective System

High-performing states and education systems have processes designed to ensure high-quality teaching throughout by focusing on attracting talented students committed to the profession. Those students are subjected to rigorous preparation and induction systems, and they are provided work environments and career pathways that support teacher learning and professional development. Each of these supports represents a commitment to professionalize teaching as an occupation.

Internationally, high-performing countries follow a few keys steps to create an abundant supply of highly qualified teachers:

- They recruit teachers from the top ranks of high school graduating classes, primarily from among the top 1/3 to top 1/4.
- They have highly selective teacher training programs with admission rates ranging from 10 to 15%.
- They develop rigorous requirements for subject mastery.
- Top performers require at least one year of supervised teaching (either during teacher preparation programs or during the first year of teaching), with new teachers serving as apprentices to Master Teachers.
- They require teacher preparation programs to use research methods that enable teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of their own work in implementing and improving curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- They set beginning compensation at about the same level as beginning engineers.
- Top performers provide aggressive career ladders that include increased compensation, responsibility, authority, and autonomy.
- They focus on professional development and professional learning.

Georgia Quality Teaching Data – By the Numbers

**GEORGIA COMPARED TO SOUTHERN NEIGHBORS:
OVERALL POLICY GRADE FROM THE NATIONAL
COUNCIL ON TEACHER QUALITY STATE, 2015**

State	Grade	National Rank
Florida	B+	1
Louisiana	B	3
Tennessee	B	5
Georgia	B-	9
Virginia	C+	18
Kentucky	C	21
Mississippi	C	21
South Carolina	C	23
Alabama	D+	35

44% of new teachers leave the field within the first 5 years
\$33,424 Starting salary of a new teacher, based on state salary schedule
28th Georgia’s national rank for new teacher starting salaries

PERCENTAGE OF FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS

7.7% highest poverty schools vs. **4.4%** lowest poverty schools
9.2% highest minority schools vs. **3.5%** lowest minority schools

Opportunities

As Georgia continues to strengthen the recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers, there are two policy opportunities that are ready to be implemented and supported. The first opportunity is to implement the 12 recommendations proposed by the subcommittee on teacher recruitment, retention, and compensation of Governor Nathan Deal's Education Reform Commission. The second area is the state plan developed under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). That plan calls for the development of broad state strategies that allow district flexibility to address:

- Formalized recruitment strategy
- Preparation pathways
- Leadership and opportunities for advancement
- Ongoing mentoring and coaching

ALERT!
POLICY
MISSING OR
NEEDS
IMMEDIATE
ACTION

Recognize teachers as professionals to attract and retain talent.

- Support ongoing professional development and mentoring.
- Respect planning time and instructional practices.

Examine teacher compensation.

- Increase the base salary.
- Provide research and best practice models for alternative compensation models.

Address teacher equity.

- Ensure equitable access to highly qualified teachers for all students.
- Expand and support the state equity plan.

YIELD!
PROCEED
WITH
CAUTION,
MORE WORK
TO BE DONE

Teacher Preparation – Refine the performance measure for teacher preparation programs.

- Georgia needs an alternative student growth measure to gauge the impact of teacher preparation on student performance.

Teacher Preparation – Strengthen induction programs.

- Through P-20 collaboratives, expand support provided to regional partnerships between local school systems and teacher training programs.
- Have all teacher training programs transition to a full-year clinical model for student teaching.
- Expand the professional development and compensation of mentor teachers.

Teacher Evaluation – Allow time to evaluate the teacher effectiveness system.

- Continue to examine the teacher effectiveness system to ensure it adequately distinguishes between good teachers, great teachers, and ineffective teachers.
- Study options to measure student growth for non-tested subjects to ensure comparability across districts.

GO!
KEEP MOVING
FORWARD:
STRONG
POLICIES IN
PLACE

Teacher Preparation – Continue the rigorous teacher preparation program requirements.

Career Ladder – Continue the tiered certification ladder.

- Professional certificates allow teachers to further their careers and stay in the classroom.
- The Georgia Department of Education's Every Student Succeeds Act plan includes continued focus on career pathways that encourage teacher professionalism and leadership growth.