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# EDUCATION POLICY NEWS

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Teacher Quality and Preparation</i>	1
<i>Teacher Shortages in Arkansas</i>	1
<i>Are Arkansas Teachers Over- or Underpaid?</i>	2
<i>Statistical Snapshot</i>	6
<i>Spotlight: Youth Opportunities Unlimited</i>	7
<i>Practitioner's Corner: Teachers Respond</i>	8
<i>Practitioner's Corner: AEA Representative</i>	9
<i>If Educators Were Like Physicians &amp; Attorneys...</i>	9
<i>Alternative Paths to Teacher Certification</i>	10
<i>In the News...</i>	11
<i>The Editor's Notes</i>	12

### Special Points of Interest:

- Arkansas does not seem to have a blanket teacher shortage. Rather, the state has shortages in particular subject areas and levels.
- Teacher salaries appear to be relatively adequate compared to those of similar professionals; however, equity between districts and states appears to be a bigger issue.
- Alternative certification programs like Teach for America provide Arkansas and other states with many high-quality teachers.

## TEACHER QUALITY AND PREPARATION

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act mandates that states require all teachers to earn full certification and demonstrate competency in the subject area in which they teach. But do these requirements really produce *effective* teachers, teachers who actually improve student learning and achievement? The existing research is decidedly mixed, highly politicized, and often just plain confusing. Some experts maintain that teachers' *pedagogical* knowledge shows even stronger relationships to teaching effectiveness than their *subject matter*

knowledge; others insist that teachers' expertise in their content area is a far better predictor of student achievement.

Shortly after the implementation of NCLB, the U.S. Department of Education issued its first annual report, *Meeting the Highly Qualified Teachers Challenge*, in an attempt to make sense of the conflicting research findings. The report concluded that "there is little evidence that pedagogical course work

(Continued on page 4)

## TEACHER SHORTAGES IN ARKANSAS

Over the past decade, we've heard time and again the dire warning that a major teacher shortage is imminent in our public schools. But is this really the case? Teacher education programs actually produce enough teachers each year to compensate for those who retire. Rather, some researchers suggest that we have focused too much on *teacher shortages* (the inability to recruit enough teachers) and not enough on *teacher attrition* (losing teachers already in the field).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) latest School and Staffing Survey (SASS), about one-third of teachers quit during their first three years, and almost half leave within five years. Turnover is highest in poor, predominantly minority schools. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) has characterized this problem as a "revolving door," in which many good teachers keep coming in, but then go right back out again.

It appears that we are also facing a *sorting*—or distribution—problem, more than a shortage problem. In other words, teachers are highly concentrated in some areas, while there remains a dearth of teachers (much less, "highly qualified" teachers) in other areas, particularly low-income, high-minority schools and certain fields, such as math and science. In fact, sorting, migration (teachers moving from one school to another), and out-of-field teaching affect teacher shortages more than overall attrition or initial supply.

Due to sorting problems and uneven distribution, many teachers must be assigned to teach "out-of-field," or subjects outside of their training and certification (i.e., the baseball coach teaching Algebra II). More than half of the nation's middle school students and a quarter of its high school students are learning core academic subjects from teachers who lack certification in those

(Continued on page 5)

## ARE ARKANSAS TEACHERS OVER- OR UNDERPAID?

The pay rate for a teacher is typically influenced by a number of variables (e.g., the size of the district, the amount of students in the district, the number of schools in the district); consequently, teachers' salaries often shift with changing social, economic, and political climates. The current teacher salary debate seems to be two-fold, focusing on both adequacy and equity. Adequacy is measured by comparing the pay of teachers to that of other professionals. Equity is measured by examining differences in teacher pay across school districts and states.

### ***One Perspective on Adequacy of Salaries: Teachers Are Underpaid***

Some research suggests that the earnings gap between teachers and other college graduates is substantial and has widened over the last few years. In 1994, teachers with bachelor's degrees earned over \$11,000 less per year than non-teachers with bachelor's degrees; however, by 1998, this gap had increased to over \$18,000 per year. A similar gap was found for teachers and non-teachers with master's degrees.

A report by the Educational Research Service (ERS) found that teachers are not paid well even in comparison to other education employees. According to the ERS 2003-2004 *National Survey of Salaries and Wages in Public Schools* report, teachers are the only public education employees whose salary increase over the last ten years fell below the consumer price index (inflation). From 1993 to 2003, the consumer price index increased by 27.3 percent. Over this same time period, teachers' salaries rose by only 25.0 percent, while central office administrators' salaries rose by 36.5 percent, principals' salaries and assistant principals' salaries increased by 31.3 percent, support personnel's salaries increased by 32.2 percent, and auxiliary personnel's salaries gained 28.6 percent. While teacher salaries have increased more slowly than the salaries of other professionals, it is not necessarily the case that teachers are underpaid.

### ***Another Perspective: Teachers Are Paid Fairly***

According to the American Federation of Teachers' *Survey and Analysis of Teacher Salary Trends 2002*, teacher salaries lie in the middle of the career salary spectrum. Teachers are paid more than the general public and many individuals, but less than selected professionals (e.g. accountants, professors).

For example, in 1991, the average salary for teachers was 21 percent higher than the average salary for all

full-time workers in the United States. However, by 2002, the salary for teachers was only 8 percent higher than the salary of all full-time workers. Additionally, despite an 18 percent teacher pay increase from 1996 to 2002, teachers lost ground to some professions: salaries went up 26 percent for engineers, 29 percent for computer systems analysts, and 32 percent for attorneys. Teachers do, however, earn more than the average salary for all other workers. In 1999-00, the average teacher salary was \$41,544, compared to the average income for all workers at \$38,074.

The AFT report also noted that part of the pay differential between teachers and other professionals is likely due to the shorter work year for teachers, which averages about 190 days compared to about 225 days for other workers. In spite of the shorter work year, the debate over whether teachers are paid adequately seems to depend more on with whom they are compared. When compared to accountants, engineers, and attorneys, teachers do earn substantially less. However, when compared to all workers, social services workers, and other public employees, teachers seem to earn substantially more. As states and districts continue to adopt new salary schedules and try to recruit new and better teachers, the debate over teacher salaries and other professionals' salaries is likely to remain controversial.

### ***Equity: Comparing Teachers to Teachers***

According to the 2001-02 AFT survey, beginning and average teacher salaries increased, yet a disparity remains between teachers' salaries across regions. For example, public school employees generally receive higher salaries in the Western and Mid-Atlantic regions than they do in the South and Mid-West. Similar results emerge when the average teacher salary is examined. According to the 2001-02 AFT annual survey, teachers in California earned the highest average salaries at \$54,348, while teachers in South Dakota received the lowest average annual salary at \$31,383. Similar disparities are found within states. For example, in Arkansas, the highest average K-12 full time equivalency (FTE) salary was \$44,959, while the lowest average FTE salary was \$25,359. In reaction to the disparities among average teacher salaries, several state legislatures recently made changes to their states' teacher salary schedules.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## ARE ARKANSAS TEACHERS OVER OR UNDER PAID? (CONT.)

(Continued from page 2)

### Arkansas' Teachers

While the average teachers' salaries in Arkansas are higher than the salaries in several surrounding states, Arkansas' teacher salaries remain well below the national average and have been there for at least the past decade (see Table 1). In fact, in 2002-03, Arkansas ranked 44<sup>th</sup> of 51 states in terms of average teacher salary. Of course, some of this difference is due to the fact that the cost of living throughout the state of Arkansas is lower than throughout the nation as a whole. After controlling for cost of living differences, Arkansas' ranking improved to 35<sup>th</sup>, according to the 2001-02 AFT report.

Regionally, Arkansas teacher salaries appear equitable in relation to the six border states' teacher salaries. Of the seven states, Arkansas ranked fourth in 1991, 1997, 2003, and fifth in 2002; however, when the salaries were adjusted for cost of living, Arkansas ranked third in 2002.

While the salary comparisons alone provide insight into how teachers are paid in different states and localities, one of the biggest controversies over teacher salaries is based on the expected effects. If states where teachers are receiving lower pay increased the salary schedule, could these state policymakers expect to see more qualified applicants and more gifted students going into the teaching profession? Intuitively, increasing pay and expecting better applicants makes sense. However, the research does not clearly support the correlation between increased teacher pay and student performance.

Several scholars who have examined global teacher salary increases find them to be ineffective for attracting and retaining teachers. Many such researchers contend that merit-based and other targeted increases would be more effective, yet they do recognize that salary increases affect the decisions teachers make. While the exact influence of increased salaries remains unknown, many scholars do agree that policies dedicated to attracting high-quality teachers should include changes to starting salaries and salary structures.

### Conclusion

Teacher salaries remain central to debates in education reform, particularly as NCLB mandates that classrooms be staffed with highly qualified teachers. If salary represents a policy lever that can be manipulated to recruit and retain highly qualified individuals in the profession, what does the research indicate? The answer, unfortunately, is not clear.

Most teachers are hired into lock-step salary schedules, and there are arguments made both that these salaries are too low, and also, that they are too high. Recently, states are experimenting with targeted salary increases aimed at areas of need and shortage (see article on teacher shortages on page 1 of this issue). Perhaps in an area in which the research does not provide clear guidance, systematic experimentation with alternative strategies is a wise idea.

To read the complete text of this policy brief, including citations and references, visit the OEP website at <http://www.uark.edu/ua/oep/Briefs.htm>

**Table 1: Selected Average Teacher Salary Comparisons 1990 - 2003**

State	Average Salary '90-'91	Average Salary '96-'97	Average Salary '01-'02	Adjusted Average Salary '01-'02	Average Salary '02-'03
Arkansas	\$27,168	\$30,987	\$36,026	\$40,733	\$37,536
Louisiana	\$26,411	\$28,347	\$36,328	\$40,390	\$37,116
Mississippi	\$24,368	\$27,662	\$33,295	\$38,025	\$35,135
Missouri	\$28,923	\$33,143	\$36,053	\$40,040	\$37,641
Oklahoma	\$26,514	\$30,187	\$32,870	\$37,646	\$33,277
Tennessee	\$28,621	\$34,267	\$38,515	\$43,172	\$39,186
Texas	\$29,719	\$32,426	\$39,230	\$44,110	\$39,972
US Average	\$34,213	\$38,436	\$44,367	\$44,367	\$45,771
AR Diff. From US Avg.	-\$7,045	-\$7,449	-\$8,341	-\$3,634	-\$8,235
<b>AR Rank of 51 (high=1)</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>44</b>

## TEACHER QUALITY AND PREPARATION (CONT.)

(Continued from page 1)

leads to improved student achievement,” adding that “virtually all” of the studies linking certification to student achievement are “not scientifically rigorous.” The Department’s conclusions were based in large part upon a literature review written by Kate Walsh for the Abell Foundation in 2001, which claimed that there is “no credible research that supports using the teacher certification process as a regulatory barrier to teaching.”

Two more recent reviews of the research literature on teacher effectiveness seem to suggest that a mixture of both pedagogical skill and subject-area expertise is ideal. In *Teacher Quality: Understanding the Effectiveness of Teacher Attributes* (Economic Policy Institute, 2003), Jennifer Rice King examined the empirical research on teacher quality and performance from peer-reviewed journals over the past three decades. Another extensive literature review was released by the Education Commission of the States (ECS) last year. While each study found a variety of outcomes (many conflicting), a few stood out:

### Teacher Experience:

- Experience matters. Not surprisingly, the longer a teacher has been in the classroom, the more effective he or she becomes at increasing student achievement.

### Teacher Preparation Programs and Degrees:

- The selectivity or prestige of the college a teacher attended is positively correlated with student achievement, particularly for middle and high school students.
- Teachers with advanced degrees in math and science are more likely to raise high school students’ math and science achievement scores; however, the effect of advanced degrees at the elementary level is mixed.

### Teacher Certification:

- Teachers’ certification in math can enhance high school students’ math achievement. This subject-specific teacher certification is less obvious in other high school subject areas, and the effect is zero or even negative in elementary-level math and reading.

- There is little difference in math or science performance between students with teachers who acquired standard certification and teachers who took emergency or alternative routes into the classroom.

### Teacher Coursework:

- Coursework in both pedagogy and subject areas have a positive impact on student achievement.
- However, it is less clear *how much* coursework is important for teaching specific courses and grade levels.

### Teacher Test Scores:

- Tests that assess teachers’ literacy or verbal ability (such as the ACT) are related to higher student achievement.
- However, the National Teachers Examination (NTE) and other state-mandated tests of basic skills and/or teaching abilities are not necessarily consistent predictors of teacher performance.

The authors both note that there were many methodological weaknesses in the hundreds of studies that they reviewed. For example, they found that there is relatively little research on teacher preparation that looks directly at the *outcomes* in which most policy-makers and parents are interested: the actual measured achievement of students. Secondly, the research overwhelmingly uses aggregated data to measure teacher characteristics and teaching effectiveness, rather than data linking information about individual teachers to the actual performance of their students. Furthermore, measures of “impact” or “effectiveness” vary greatly from study to study, ranging from teacher retention and attrition to teachers’ beliefs and instructional practices, performance on examinations, supervisors’ ratings of instructional practice, and students’ performance on various kinds of tests. If there is one conclusion that the research strongly supports, it is that more rigorous research is needed in order to determine what really makes a highly-effective teacher.

To read the complete text of this policy brief, including citations and references, visit the OEP website at <http://www.uark.edu/ua/oep/Briefs.htm>

## TEACHER SHORTAGES IN ARKANSAS (CONT.)

*(Continued from page 1)*

subjects and did not major in them in college. The problem is even worse for high-poverty schools. For example, in high-poverty secondary schools, 32 % of students take a class with a teacher who lacks even a minor in the subject. These chronic staffing problems may make it even more difficult for many schools to meet the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirement that each classroom has a “highly-qualified” teacher by 2006.

### Staffing Problems for Arkansas’ Schools

In Arkansas, the situation is much the same. There was a 19% decline in the number of education degrees awarded between 1993 to 2002. Moreover, only approximately half of the new degree holders will enter the classroom. According to the New Teacher Project, roughly 60% of students who graduate with education degrees receive an Arkansas teaching license, and fewer than half of those teachers actually begin teaching in Arkansas. In 2002, it was reported that more than 27,000 licensed teachers in Arkansas were not teaching in the schools.

Besides having trouble recruiting and retaining new teachers, Arkansas also has major problems with teacher sorting and out-of-field teaching. The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) has described the state’s teacher problem as a “teacher availability dilemma.” That is, the state has a sufficient number of certified teachers overall, but most of these teachers are located in the urban areas of the state, rather than in rural areas. Many of these certified teachers also are missing in some of the most important classroom subjects: the State Board of Education has identified all foreign languages, secondary mathematics, secondary science, special education, and English as a Second Language (ESL) as areas that have shortages.

Faced with these shortage and sorting problems, the ADE has had little choice but to allow more and more teachers to teach out-of-field. In the 2004-05 school year, the Department received out-of-field waiver requests from 249 teachers in 69 districts. More than half (139) of these requests can be viewed as academically problematic. We classified waiver requests as problematic” if teachers of core subjects (e.g., math, science, language, social studies) were not trained in those areas. Similarly problematic were

situations in which teachers in “special” areas such as ESL, gifted and talented, special education, foreign languages, or counseling were not trained in that field.

### Solving the Shortage & Sorting Problem

To decrease the teacher shortage nationally, Congress has increased the amount of federal student-loan forgiveness from \$5,000 to \$17,500 for teachers in science, math, and special education, who work in high-poverty schools for at least 5 years. Also, Arkansas has developed solutions to decrease teacher shortages. For example, the Non-Traditional Licensure Program allows applicants from out-of-state to teach in Arkansas and allows candidates with a bachelor’s degree to pursue their teaching credentials on Saturdays and over the summer. Arkansas has also created alternative routes to certification.

In addition to alternative routes to certification, Arkansas has recently developed a new scholarship program for the state called State Teacher Assistance Resource (STAR) designed to recruit future teachers into pursuing a license in certain subject areas such as math, special education, science, or foreign languages. This scholarship also is given to teachers who will agree to teach in geographic areas that have teacher shortages. Each scholarship is worth \$3,000 per year, and a student can agree to both stipulations and receive \$6,000 per year. So far, 264 have applied, and among those about half applied to both stipulations of the program.

### Recommendations

Teacher shortages are distributed unevenly across school districts, the number of students graduating with education degrees is declining, and a number of teachers are teaching out-of-field. As a result, policymakers need to target a comprehensive solution to this ongoing problem. Some states have instituted bonuses as part of their recruitment and retention efforts, while others have tried professional development as an opportunity for teachers who are uncertified to upgrade their education levels, improve their skills, and receive certification. Superintendents in Arkansas suggested recruiting nationwide, using a “grow your own” model to attract young people in high school to the teaching profession, and substantially raising teacher salaries so Arkansas salaries are competitive with those in surrounding states.

*To read the complete text of this policy brief, including citations and references, visit the OEP website at <http://www.uark.edu/ua/oep/Briefs.htm>*

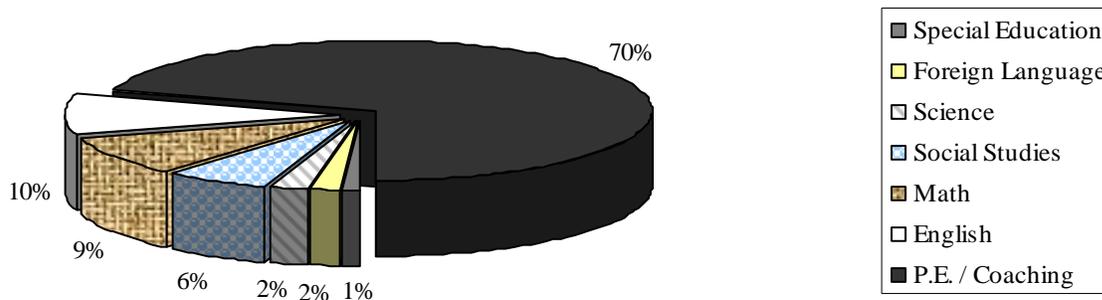
## STATISTICAL SNAPSHOT

### More Science Teachers, Please!

Each year the Arkansas State Department of Education issues approximately 200 specialty certifications or endorsements to teachers who have met the state competency requirements for a given subject area. The pie graph below illustrates a clear imbalance in the

specializations chosen. In 2003, 70% of the specialty certifications were issued to teachers specializing in physical education and/or coaching, while the other areas received significantly fewer certifications. The 2003 data also seems to be consistent with previous years as indicated by the table, which shows that little has changed since 1995.

**2003 Teacher Certification by Subject Area**



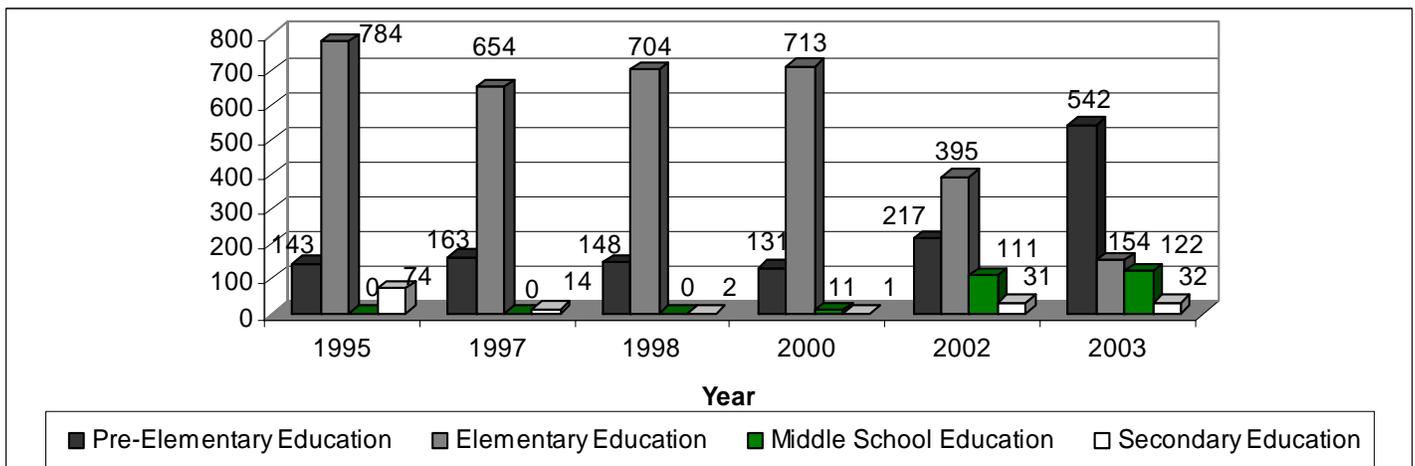
Year	English	Math	Science	Social Studies	Foreign Language	P.E./Coaching	Special Education	Total
1995	73	36	3	26	1	272	80	491
2002	55	31	3	42	1	231	37	400

### Who will teach in high school?

Among those seeking general certification, students seem to be shifting from elementary education to pre-elementary education, where pre-elementary education attracted 64% of all those who entered the profession in 2003. Similarly, no students were certified in middle school education until 2000. However, by 2003, 122 students received their certification in middle school

education. While pre-elementary and middle school education have seen increases, fewer teachers are becoming certified in elementary education each year, reducing from 784 in 1995 to 154 in 2003. The fewest certifications, however, in 2003, were in high schools, which have had few certifications in comparison to pre-elementary and elementary schools over the last decade.

**Number of Teacher Certifications in Selected Years, 1995-2003**



## SPOTLIGHT: YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES UNLIMITED

Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU) is a statewide comprehensive summer program designed to encourage 14- and 15-year-old at-risk students to remain in school. The students have the opportunity to develop basic educational and vocational skills in a university based program with academic and work experience components. A wide range of support services are provided, including health care, counseling, and enrichment activities. Participating universities host up to 50 students each, balanced equitably with respect to age, gender, and race.

Participants are given the opportunity to master basic skills in the areas of reading, mathematics, and language arts. Curricula approved by certified teachers and Arkansas Department of Education allow students to receive high school credit for the summer work. While Job Club provides instruction in pre-employability/work maturity skills, practical application comes through 20 hours per week of on-campus employment. Evening hours are devoted to tutoring sessions, enrichment courses, counseling sessions, and physical education activities. Upon successful completion of the 46-day summer program, students are eligible for college scholarships. The program includes four years of follow-up through monthly newsletters, telephone calls, or personal visits. School attendance records and grades are monitored also. **Follow-up data show 96% of YOU participants are still in school or have graduated.**

Funding for YOU involves a federal-state partnership. Additional YOU partners include the Arkansas Office of Oral Health, providing free dental screenings to all participants; the pediatric staff at UAMS, providing physical exams and referrals to Children's Hospital; the US Dept of Agriculture Summer Food Grant, enabling host campuses to teach nutrition and provide healthy meals; and the Governor of Arkansas, hosting an annual YOU Governor's Day in Little Rock that features a personal visit and speech from the governor.

### Quick Facts:

**Facilitator:** Arkansas Department of Higher Education

**Purpose:** Motivates at-risk students to graduate from high school and attend college

**Total Number of Students Served:** 5,000+

**Number of Students Served Annually:** 150-300

**Web address:** [http://www.arkansashighered.com/student\\_site/youth.html](http://www.arkansashighered.com/student_site/youth.html)

### YOU Host Universities:

- Arkansas State University
- Henderson State University
- Southern Arkansas University
- University of Central Arkansas
- University of Arkansas / Fayetteville
- University of Arkansas / Monticello
- University of Arkansas / Pine Bluff

### Workforce Partners of the YOU Program:

- The Arkansas Transitional Employment Board
- Central Arkansas Development Council/
- Central Arkansas Planning & Development District, Inc.
- Workforce, Inc., West Memphis
- Employment & Training Services, Inc., Jonesboro
- Arkansas Workforce Center at Little Rock
- North Central Arkansas Development Council, Inc.
- Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District
- Southeast Arkansas Economic Development District, Inc.
- Southwest Arkansas Workforce Investment Board,
- West Central Arkansas Planning & Development District, Inc
- Western Arkansas Employment Development Agency

*Tony attended UAPB using a YOU scholarship, graduated, and went on to complete a master's degree. He says he considered himself a throw-away kid from a small delta town with no ambition or chance for success, but the YOU summer camp experience changed his life and gave him a reason for staying in school.*

## PRACTITIONER'S CORNER: TEACHERS RESPOND

*In our effort to continually foster communication between policymakers and educators, we surveyed several Arkansas teachers regarding some of the important issues facing both policymakers and teachers, such as teacher salaries and teacher preparation programs. Solicited responses from a variety of teachers are presented here.*

### Teacher Pay:

When asked how they thought their salaries compared with those of other Arkansas employees who possess similar education and experience levels, most teachers indicated they were satisfied with their salaries, although several noted the differences across districts:

- *It's not fair to compare us to other employees because we get more holidays off and have contracts.*
- *My salary is comparable to others in my region, but higher than others across the state.*
- *If I moved to a different district, I could make \$10,000 - \$15,000 more than I do now.*
- *More continues to be asked of teachers in the classroom, all without adequate compensation.*
- *We, in Arkansas, are second to lowest in salary but cost of living may not be as high as in other states.*

**“Teaching has changed over the past 10 years, and I don’t believe it is today what I expected it would be in the early 1990s.”**

### Teacher Expectations and Preparation:

Another set of questions asked teachers if teaching has been what they expected and how prepared they felt upon entering the classroom. Teachers seemed to be prepared for lesson planning, but unprepared for the non-academic portions of teaching:

- *Nothing in my college courses/field experience could have prepared me for the responsibilities of real-world teaching.*
- *I feel I am more of a clerk than a teacher.*
- *I was prepared for planning and implementing the lessons, but I was not prepared to deal with parents and the other outside obstacles students deal with today.*

- *I was unprepared for the lack of administrator support and dealing with the behavioral issues.*
- *I was not prepared for disciplining students, dealing with parents, meeting each individual's need, and balancing a personal and professional life!*

### Why Teach:

Teachers were also asked why they went into the field and what other careers they considered. They said:

- *I loved school and felt successful there, so I wanted to work with children and have them feel the same way I did.*
- *I went into teaching so that my schedule would match that of my children.*
- *Ever since I was a child, I wanted to be in classroom teaching.*
- *I come from a family of educators, and I developed a passion for teaching.*
- *I wanted to make a difference in children's lives.*

### Effective Teachers:

When asked what qualities characterize effective teachers, the most common responses included caring for students and being knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and flexible. Specific comments include these:

- *Have a genuine love and passion for the students, not a degree or lots of professional development!*
- *You must have a teacher's 'heart,' not necessarily what is taught or learned in college.*
- *To be effective, teachers need to be student-oriented where the lessons are adjusted to meet the students in each class.*
- *Must be a well-rounded person, available to meet the needs of all children.*
- *Good teachers are patient, innovative, and energetic.*

## PRACTITIONER'S CORNER: VIEWS FROM AN AEA REPRESENTATIVE

*In addition to gauging teachers' opinions on issues facing the State of Arkansas, we obtained the views of an Arkansas Education Association representative.*

**Q. To what degree are Arkansas teachers satisfied with their current salaries? Do they perceive their salaries to be fair as compared to professionals with similar backgrounds?**

I don't believe salaries are the number one issue for educators, even though it is probably true that more folks would go into the profession if the salaries were higher. No, they do not consider themselves as receiving a *fair* salary either. That's because they must do lots of extra work just to be able to teach the next day. They also see superintendents getting hefty raises while their raises are always nominal.

**Q. What effect has No Child Left Behind had on Arkansas' teachers?**

They are already swamped in the classroom without more paperwork and time requirements being placed on *them*.

**Q. How do teachers across the state view the link between salary and the "highly-qualified teacher" requirements in No Child Left Behind?**

The requirements in NCLB are challenging. A goal must be achievable, and, as it is presently structured, NCLB is not achievable. It creates more frustration for teachers.

**Q. How will the new teacher salary bonuses and annual increases passed by the Arkansas legislature recruit and retain more and "better" teachers for Arkansas' schools?**

In most of the schools I work with, the teachers did *not* get any more than they would ordinarily have gotten if one excludes the five extra days they are getting paid to work. That is because there was no requirement placed in the bill to force it to go to teachers salaries. On the other hand, in my zone, there were lots of additional administrators hired. In short, I don't believe it will produce more and "better" teachers until districts are required to use the tax monies as they were supposed to – in teacher salaries.

## IF EDUCATORS WERE LIKE PHYSICIANS AND ATTORNEYS...

Periodically the suggestion is made that public-school teachers ought to enjoy the same professional status as medical doctors or lawyers. The claim prompts some interesting points to ponder...

- An increasingly-popular argument holds that the way to solve the nation's teacher shortage is to lower admission standards, offer "alternative" routes to teacher licensure, and shorten the training period required. We also have a nationwide shortage of physicians in many areas and specialties. How would public opinion react to a suggestion that we lower admission standards to medical schools, institute an abbreviated residency and internship, and otherwise discard the allegedly "rigid" and "burdensome" demands now made on prospective physicians entering training?
- Society recognizes that a true, high-status "professional" exhibits mastery over an extensive body of knowledge as well as technical skills inaccessible to ordinary lay people. A professional undergoes a lengthy, complex period of academic training. Do people agree in general that teaching is

something only specially trained teachers can do successfully? Does competent teaching require lengthy specialized training?

- Healing, it is often observed, is both a science and an art. Patient treatment outcomes have improved dramatically over the course of the last century. But the practice of medicine has advanced not because physicians are more artful. It is because their practice is better grounded scientifically.
- Attorneys are professionals because they understand and can apply the law. Legal training requires several years beyond the bachelor's degree. Could the same be made true of teachers? Could teachers' professional status be enhanced by extending their training prior to licensure?

*This piece, which highlights the complexities involved in training, recruiting, and retaining teachers was contributed by Christopher J. Lucas, professor in Educational Leadership, Counseling, & Foundations. To read the full version of this essay, visit the OEP website at <http://www.uark.edu/ua/oep/Briefs.htm>*

## ALTERNATIVE PATHS TO TEACHER CERTIFICATION

The term “alternative certification” has been utilized to describe programs ranging from immediate issuance of emergency certification to well-developed, highly-professional training programs designed to bring new people into the profession. Because of the mandate to place highly-qualified teachers in every classroom, the issue of alternative certification has become even more prominent, and there is now more consistency in the academic rigor of alternative certification programs across the nation. In this state, *TeachArkansas* serves as a clearinghouse for the various programs that enable an individual who did not set out to be a teacher to become certified (see [www.teacharkansas.org](http://www.teacharkansas.org)).

To obtain alternative certification in Arkansas, the applicant must have previously completed a bachelor’s degree and participate in formal instruction in the theory and practice of teaching, working closely with a mentoring teacher. The program is restricted to participants who can meet current needs (shortages) in particular grade levels and/or subject areas. The Non-Traditional Licensure Program (NTLP), administered by the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), seeks to attract and train well-qualified recent college graduates and/or mid-career professionals who do not hold a bachelor’s degree in education, but are interested in becoming classroom teachers. Completion of the NTLP involves a two-year process of assessment, in-depth training, and classroom teaching experience, aug-

mented by weekly meetings with a mentoring teacher (see Table 1 for a description of the Arkansas NTLP requirements).

Additionally, Arkansas participates in two national programs that promote alternative certification: Teach for America and Troops to Teachers. Teach for America (TFA) seeks to eliminate educational inequality by recruiting outstanding college seniors and recent graduates who are willing to commit two years to classroom teaching in low-income rural and urban communities. Because the program is affiliated with AmeriCorps, participants also receive an AmeriCorps education stipend of \$4,725 for each year of service completed. Four Arkansas counties in the Mississippi Delta area have Teach for America sites; these include seven districts in Chicot, Lee, Phillips, and St. Francis counties. In 2004, Teach for America placed 134 teachers in the Delta region, 43% at the elementary level and 57% at the secondary level. In the 13 years that Teach for America has operated in the Delta region, approximately 50% of participants have completed the alternative certification within two years. (See <http://www.teachforamerica.org/delta.html>.)

The Troops to Teachers (TTT) program is designed by the U.S. Department of Defense to assist personnel leaving military service to consider a second career as a teacher. The program attempts to connect participants

**Table 1: Arkansas’ Non-Traditional Licensure Program Requirements**

Arkansas Non-Traditional Licensure Program (NTLP) Admission Requirements:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of a bachelor’s degree with a 2.5 GPA or better; and</li> <li>• Passing scores on Praxis I (basic skills) and Praxis II (content area) teacher examinations.</li> </ul>
Arkansas Non-Traditional Licensure Program (NTLP) Completion Requirements:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful completion of two years of teaching experience (for which a two-year provisional license is issued) and a teaching portfolio;</li> <li>• Successful completion of two years of summer intensive and weekend (one Saturday a month) teacher preparation modules; completion of all modules is required for certification;</li> <li>• Successful completion of a two-year teaching mentorship program, facilitated by a site-based certified mentor teacher, who provides weekly consultation, support, and guidance; and</li> <li>• Successful completion of college coursework in teaching reading skills and/or Arkansas history is required for certification in some subject areas and/or grade levels.</li> </ul>
Arkansas Non-Traditional Licensure Program (NTLP) Certification Requirements:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Initial Arkansas License is issued to participants who complete all program requirements.</li> <li>• A Standard Arkansas License is issued to participants who successfully complete the Praxis III assessment in addition to all other requirements.</li> </ul>

## IN THE NEWS...

### Report on Arkansas Facilities Funding

On November 30, 2004, the long-awaited cost estimates for improving Arkansas' school facilities were presented to the Arkansas State Legislature's Joint Committee on Educational Facilities. The statewide report and a district by district breakdown is posted at <http://www.arkansasfacilities.com>.

### New Research Supports National Certification

Three recent studies have found that National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) increase student achievement better than do their non-board certified peers. The latest study, issued by the non-profit CNA Corporation, reports that high school students who had NBCTs performed significantly better on statewide math assessment. This supports the findings of two previous studies focused on reading and math achievement at the elementary level: one published by *Educational Policy Analysis Archives* and another by the Urban Institute. For links to all three studies, visit The Southeast Center for Teaching Quality's website at <http://www.teachingquality.org/resources/html/CavaluzzoNBCT.htm>

### Qualified Middle School Teachers Needed

According to a recent article in *Education Week*, middle schools are struggling to find enough "highly qualified" teachers for every classroom by 2006, as mandated by the federal No Child Left Behind legislation. For example, many fear that experienced teachers with elementary certification will leave the classroom rather than jump through the new hoops. To read the article, visit <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2004/11/03/10teach.h24.html>

### Middle School Math Not Based on Evidence

In other middle school news, the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) has found that only a fraction of the nation's middle school mathematics curricula have scientific evidence of effectiveness. A review of more than 800 studies of math programs in grades six through nine identified 11 evaluations that met the Department's new standards of evidence. Of the programs studied, only two had scientific evidence of effectiveness. For more information, visit <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2004/11/11172004.html>

## ALTERNATIVE PATH TO TEACHER CERTIFICATION (CONT.)

*(Continued from page 10)*

with mentors who have completed the TTT program. In Arkansas, the Troops to Teachers program partnered with *TeachArkansas* and participants may pursue certification through the NTLP (see [www.teacharkansas.org](http://www.teacharkansas.org)).

Georgia has a particularly interesting alternative certification program for those interested in early childhood education (pre-K through primary grades) in urban, high-need schools. Georgia State University admits a new cohort of participants each May with an immersion into teaching theory, followed by an internship with close supervision in an urban elementary summer school program. During the school year that follows, participants teach full-time while completing graduate level course work and a mentoring program. This culminates in initial certification. Participants who complete the second year of the program will earn a graduate degree in early childhood education and can apply for full teacher certification.

In comparison with those of neighboring states, Arkansas' alternative certification program is as rigorous as most, and more rigorous than some. Eight nearby states have similar programs (AL, KY, MS, SC, FL, GA, LA, MS), while six have tailored programs that involve review of an applicant's transcript and resume and an individualized plan for attaining required competencies (GA, KS, KY, LA, MO, OK). Some states offer both options. Since 2001 (the inception of the No Child Left Behind Act), Arkansas has issued more than 300 alternative certificates. By comparison, neighboring states have issued the following numbers of alternative certificates: Mississippi, 756; Louisiana, 612; Oklahoma, 1256; and Missouri, 180.

*To read the complete text of this policy brief, including citations and references, visit the OEP website at <http://www.uark.edu/ua/oep/Briefs.htm>*

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NEXT  
ISSUE...

*The next Office for  
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newsletter will be  
published in Spring  
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*The Office for Education Policy seeks  
to be a resource that aids state policymakers, educators,  
administrators, and other leaders in thoughtful decision-making  
concerning K-12 education in the State of Arkansas.*

## THE EDITOR'S NOTES

Dear Readers,

In this newsletter, we turn our attention to issues involving teachers including preparation, qualifications, salaries, and expectations. We have reviewed these topics with an eye to practices both in Arkansas and in other states. Additionally, we have polled area teachers and included their views about salaries, professional expectations, and preparation.

As we work to continue to keep you informed about education policy issues, and as we prepare for the upcoming legislative session, we are eager to respond

to the needs of our readers. For that reason, we have prepared policy briefs that parallel the topics covered in this newsletter, and those are now posted on our website, [www.uark.edu/ua/oepecavem/](http://www.uark.edu/ua/oepecavem/). Please continue to let us know how we can serve you most effectively.

Also, please stay tuned to our site for frequent updates on the education news from the 2005 legislative session.

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**

Respectfully,  
Gary Ritter



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