

NEW RESOURCE SHOWS HOW REIMAGINING THE TEACHING ROLE CAN HELP ADDRESS LOW TEACHER SATISFACTION AND LAGGING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

States and districts can improve teacher hiring and retention and better meet students' needs with innovative staffing models

Washington, D.C. – A new interactive resource from the National Council on Teacher Quality calls into question the efficacy of the traditional classroom model, underscoring how it isn't structured to help teachers succeed. The resource, [Reimagining the Teaching Role: How Strategic Staffing Can Attract and Retain Effective Teachers](#), illustrates how more modern teacher staffing strategies like team teaching, paying an expert teacher more to take on larger classes, and creating new teacher-leadership roles, can improve teacher retention, alleviate hiring challenges, and ultimately give more students access to high-quality teachers.

Today, in any given classroom, students arrive with varying degrees of knowledge and skill. Teachers are often unrealistically expected to meet the individual academic needs for each child all by themselves, with little support. They largely work alone and without opportunity to advance their careers. In fact, only 26% of teachers agree that the teaching profession is dynamic, meaning that it has role flexibility and opportunities for growth and leadership. (Sources: [Learning Policy Institute](#) & [Educators for Excellence](#))

As a result, teachers experience high levels of work-related stress, which leads to declining job satisfaction and higher turnover rates. During the 2022–23 school year, just over 40% of public schools in low-income areas and those with mostly students of color were fully staffed. Additionally, teachers don't stay in the profession as long as they used to. If you polled teachers on their years of experience in 1988, you would have found "15 years" to be the most common response. By 2016, the most common response was "one to three" years of experience. (Source: Ingersoll, R. M., Merrill, E., Stuckey, D., & Collins, G. (2018). *Seven trends: The transformation of the teaching force*).

Reimagining the teaching role offers a bold solution through innovative strategic staffing structures that make the profession more attractive and sustainable for teachers--and can ultimately boost student learning outcomes.

"Just as the Ford Model T doesn't serve today's transportation needs, the traditional model of teaching from the same era isn't working well for many students and teachers," said NCTQ President Heather Peske. "States need to take action to catalyze innovative staffing models and districts must capitalize on these opportunities to attract and retain teachers who are going to help our students succeed."

The new NCTQ resource highlights how state policies have the potential to either help or hinder a district's ability to implement a better approach to staffing classrooms. While the analysis found that state policy is not a barrier in many cases, there are four key policy areas where states can do more to support innovations:

1. Class size

- Class size and student-teacher ratio laws can stymie strategic staffing models by not allowing more than one adult in the same classroom to be assigned to support students, or they may prohibit a highly effective teacher from taking on additional students, even with additional support and pay.
- Five states do not allow districts to request a waiver on class-size or student-teacher ratio restrictions.

- 25 states allow waivers.
- 20 states and the District of Columbia do not address class-size or student-teacher ratio in policy.

2. Teachers as observers

- When policy restricts the ability of teachers to be formal observers, it limits career pathways for teachers who do not want to be administrators yet want to serve in a leadership capacity. It also limits districts' ability to think creatively about reconfiguring roles to deliver more support to help teachers grow.
- Thirteen states block teachers from formally observing other teachers.
 - 28 states allow teachers to observe other teachers.
 - Nine states and D.C. are silent on the issue.

3. Team outcomes

- Districts need flexibility to create team-based accountability, where teachers are held accountable for team outcomes. At present, 30 states include student growth as one measure in teacher evaluation.
- Eleven states do not allow districts to attribute team outcomes to teacher evaluations.
 - 21 states do allow it.
 - 18 states and D.C. do not address the issue in state policy.

4. Restrictions on the use of support staff and time

- Restricting the roles of paraprofessionals, residents, and other support staff too harshly limits how schools can think creatively about tapping into all the adults in the building to best meet student needs. When state policy limits the time teachers have to collaborate, it can impede team-based approaches to instruction.
- 14 states have policies that restrict the use of support staff or teachers' time, which may restrict new models or collaboration.
 - 36 states and DC do not restrict teachers' time or how support staff are used.

Additionally, **only eight states** provide some type of supplemental pay for teacher leadership roles beyond mentoring novice or aspiring teachers, meaning even if policy were to allow for these innovative staffing models, many states are not structured to compensate teachers for the additional leadership responsibilities they would assume.

State leaders are uniquely positioned to create opportunities for school districts to reimagine the teaching role by helping districts pilot new staffing models; leading them to evaluate the outcomes of the models and share what works; offering waivers from restrictive policies (like class size), if they have a plan and commit to tracking outcomes; and funding the design, development and evaluation of the models.

See more recommendations and evidence for reimagining the teacher role, and examples of states, districts, advocacy organizations, and teacher prep programs taking steps to make it happen in [Reimagining the Teaching Role: How Strategic Staffing Can Attract and Retain Effective Teachers](#). You may also find individual [state profiles](#), offering a snapshot of how each state's policy may be helping or hindering classroom innovation.

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About the National Council on Teacher Quality: NCTQ is a nonpartisan research and policy organization on a mission to ensure every child has access to an effective teacher and every teacher has the opportunity to be effective. We believe a strong, diverse teacher workforce is critical for providing all students with equitable educational opportunities. More information about NCTQ can be found on our website, www.nctq.org.