

Teaching shouldn’t be a one-size-fits-all job. To make teaching attractive to educators entering the profession and sustainable so they stay long term, we need to rethink the fundamental structures that define the teaching job.

Reimagining the teaching role requires state and district leaders to have enabling conditions in place that support bold improvements to the job. **This diagnostic is designed to help you clarify which enabling conditions are and aren’t in place in your state.**

Use this tool as a starting point for establishing priority focus areas that support schools and districts in reimagining the teaching job and creating a springboard for broader and deeper shifts over time. Note that some of these conditions are typically under the purview of State Education Agencies, and others may require collaboration with legislators.

Instructions: For each of the guiding questions below, assess your state’s conditions on a scale of 1 to 3:

1. This condition doesn’t exist at all in our state.
2. This condition somewhat exists in our state.
3. This is a strength in our state.

Do Our **State-Level Policies (Guidance and Accountability)** Create the Conditions for District Innovation?

District Action	State Role	Self-Assessment
The district offers multiple pathways into the teaching profession and shelter-and-develop supports for new teachers.	Our state actively invests in reducing economic barriers to teaching, such as offering loan forgiveness programs and licensure test fee waivers.	
	Our state actively invests in programs to recruit and prepare a diverse cadre of aspiring teachers, such as grow-your-own programs, apprenticeships, and teacher residencies.	
	Our state minimizes unnecessary barriers to entry for community educators and volunteers by, for example, providing flexibility in how districts/schools can staff people in these positions, state funding for these roles, and efficient systems for background checks and fingerprinting.	
	Our state recognizes or regularly approves teachers’ certification from other states.	

District Action	State Role	Self-Assessment
	<p>Our state minimizes barriers to entry that don't correlate with student success, such as taking graduate-level coursework to attain a teaching license.</p>	
	<p>Teachers who are on track to achieve their full certification can be considered "teachers of record" for a portion of the day (e.g., to teach elective or enrichment classes or to provide options for flexible student groups).</p>	
	<p>Our state requires or encourages district leaders to consider many factors in addition to seniority when making layoff decisions.</p>	
<p>The teaching role includes sustainable workloads, professional learning support, and competitive compensation.</p>	<p>Our state's high school crediting and seat time policies recognize learning that occurs outside of school (e.g., through internship experiences and dual enrollment courses), which can also enable schools to reduce or reallocate teaching loads for high school teachers.</p>	
	<p>Our state doesn't require districts to adhere to or provide funding for implementing a state-dictated salary schedule that defines steps and lanes.</p> <p>Our state provides sufficient funding for districts to establish competitive minimum teacher salaries.</p> <p>Our state provides guidance, incentives, and/or funding for districts to implement career ladders with compensation that varies by the roles and responsibilities teachers take on.</p>	
	<p>Our state doesn't require or incentivize districts to pay higher salaries to teachers with advanced degrees.</p>	
	<p>Our state adjusts base pay requirements at least every three years according to changes in the cost of living. Our state also provides funding that enables districts to meet those requirements.</p>	
	<p>Our state supports differential pay for effective teachers in shortage-subject areas and/or high-need schools.</p>	

District Action	State Role	Self-Assessment
	<p>Our state's "teacher of record" requirements are flexible enough to enable teaming structures that serve students and teachers better than the one-teacher, one-classroom model. For example, schools can leverage community partners and/or teacher residents to provide enrichment, tutoring, and more without also staffing a certified teacher to that time.</p>	
<p>Teachers work with expert-led teams of educators who share the work.</p>	<p>Our state's class-size-maximum rules are flexible enough to enable schools to vary class sizes based on the roles and expertise of teachers on their teams. These flexibilities can enable schools to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce teaching loads for rookie teachers by increasing class sizes (within reason) for highly effective teachers, electives, and/or advanced classes. • Create more individualized attention based on student need by having some teachers work with large groups of students—supported by technology—to free up other teachers to work in small groups with students who need the most support. 	
	<p>Our state's educator evaluation systems permit team-based evaluation systems and incentivize or prioritize leadership beyond the classroom.</p>	
	<p>Our state's educator evaluation systems incorporate multiple performance measurements, such as student growth metrics from standardized assessments, classroom observations, and student surveys.¹ Our state also offers guidance and implementation support for those evaluation systems.</p>	
<p>Career pathways include a mix of leadership roles that increase the impact of the most effective educators.</p>	<p>Our state allows for flexibility in the amount of time that teachers spend in student-facing roles, enabling schools to create release time for effective teacher leaders to support colleagues.</p>	

¹ The National Council on Teacher Quality, "Seven ways to make improving teacher evaluation worth the work," Feb. 2022, <https://www.nctq.org/blog/Seven-ways-to-make-improving-teacher-evaluation-worth-the-work>.

Does Our State Provide **Incentives and Supports** for Districts to Innovate?

Priority Area	State Role	Self-Assessment
Build school and district leaders' capacity.	Our state provides dedicated funding to support pilot projects and help scale up successful models that improve the teaching job.	
	Our state provides technical assistance that helps districts become savvier with using data to diagnose their highest-priority schools and content areas and focus their improvements.	
	Our state provides scheduling and staffing tools and guidebooks that help district and school leaders organize existing resources to support innovative staffing models that improve the teaching job.	
	Our state creates networks of district and/or school leaders working on similar teaching job priorities and facilitates professional learning communities (e.g., Principals' Community of Practice) to support their change management.	
Incentivize and learn from rapid innovation.	Our state creates "innovation zones," which are schools or groups of schools with less restrictive rules and accountability. These schools have more flexibility to try out new staffing models.	
	Our state creates laboratory or teaching schools in which aspiring teachers learn and teach alongside expert teachers using creative staffing structures. These schools are paired with teacher prep programs and include funding for codification and sharing learnings.	
	Our state invests in research to study innovative staffing models to scale effective models and identify best practices. Our state measures impact on a broader set of student and educator outcomes, as well as the development of those instruments, including their impact on educator diversity.	
Develop accountability to protect equity when implementing new strategies.	Our state helps districts design and implement new staffing models, new salary incentives, or new teaming structures in ways that ensure students furthest from opportunity don't get less or less effective resources as a result.	

Does Our State Have Strong **Data** Systems?

Key Question	State Role	Self-Assessment
Do we understand where shortages exist based on teacher turnover patterns and unfilled positions?	Our state systematically tracks teacher turnover data to understand the rate of teachers leaving their schools, districts, and/or the profession entirely.	
	Our teacher turnover and mobility data enables us to understand differences in teacher attrition by subject area, teachers' race/ethnicity, and preparation pathway.	
	Our state systematically tracks teaching positions that are vacant or filled by educators teaching outside their field to understand critical shortage areas. Data is broken down by grade band, subject, and certification area and reported at the school level.	
Do we have enough new teachers coming into the profession to fill available positions?	Our state systematically tracks trends in teacher preparation program enrollment and completion. Those figures are broken down by program type, certification area, region, and teacher race/ethnicity.	
	Our state links data from teacher preparation programs, teacher licensure, and K-12 staffing to understand how many teachers who are prepared in our state are hired as teachers of record. Leaders use this data to identify what gaps exist and where.	
	Our state tracks and reports on the effectiveness and retention of educators based on the preparation pathway through which they entered the profession.	
	Our state collaborates with teacher preparation programs to use this data to direct candidates toward the highest-demand certification areas and better prepare teachers in areas with high attrition.	
Do we distribute our teacher workforce to give all students access to effective, qualified, and diverse teachers?	Our state tracks teacher characteristics– including the number of effective teachers, teachers teaching out of field, teachers' race/ethnicity, etc.–at the school level.	
	Our state makes data on teacher characteristics and effectiveness publicly available, consistent with applicable privacy constraints.	
Do we engage teachers in defining the most critical needs in our state?	Our state engages educators (e.g., through advisory groups, regular surveys, focus groups, or other structures) to solicit input on the most important strategies for strengthening the teaching job and supporting educators for maximum effectiveness with students.	

Sources

National Council on Teacher Quality, "State Data Guide - Teacher Supply and Demand", 2022, https://www.nctq.org/dmsView/NCTQ_Teacher_Supply_and_Demand_State_Data_Guide.

Education Resource Strategies, "How School District Leaders Can Support Teachers and Drive Change - Prioritizing Areas of Focus," https://www.erstrategies.org/tap/invest_better_teacher_experience