

"We are facing a serious teacher shortage across our state. At a time when we are asking so much of our teachers, we need to do more to give them the support they need to succeed. I am committed to making progress on improving teacher salaries and boosting mentorship programs — so we can recruit and retain the outstanding teachers our students need and deserve."

Governor Jay Inslee

December 2015

TACKLING WASHINGTON'S TEACHER SHORTAGE

Washington is experiencing a significant shortage of qualified teachers and substitutes. School districts across the state are struggling to recruit and retain enough qualified teachers, a problem that hurts our children's ability to succeed in the classroom. Governor Jay Inslee believes we cannot wait until the next biennium to begin tackling this problem. He is proposing legislation to boost the number of qualified teachers and to keep them in the profession longer.

BACKGROUND

A recent survey administered by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Association of Washington School Principals shows that schools are struggling to find qualified teachers. Nearly a quarter of principals indicated they are in crisis mode. Of those responding:

- » Forty-four percent were not able to fill all their classroom teacher positions with fully certified teachers who met job qualifications.
- » Eighty percent had to employ individuals with emergency teaching certificates or with emergency substitute certificates as classroom teachers or as long-term substitutes.
- » Twenty-nine percent had unfilled classroom teacher positions.



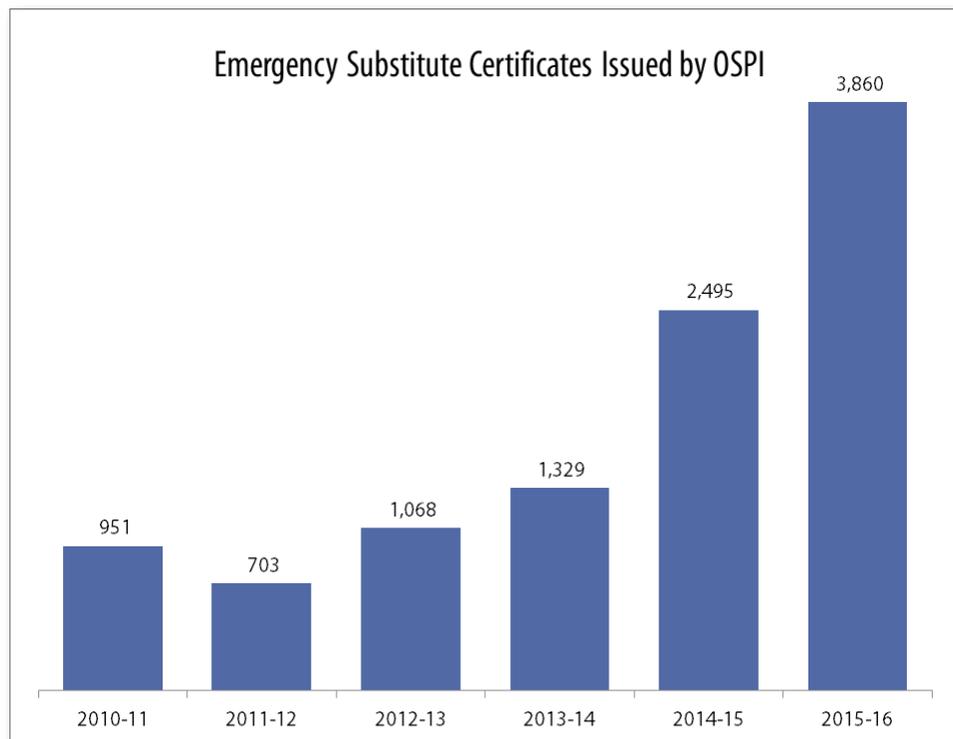
The push to get more permanent teachers in the classroom has depleted the pool of substitutes. Last school year, OSPI issued a total of 2,495 emergency substitute certificates. This year, it is on track to issue 3,860. Emergency substitute certificates require minimal teaching qualifications and can be used by districts as a last resort when no qualified substitutes are available. Emergency substitutes should be seen as short-term solutions.

Principals also report they have been pressed into service in the classroom as substitutes themselves, limiting their time handling administrative and other important responsibilities managing schools. In fact, 74 percent reported having to sub in the previous five days.

The teacher-shortage pinch is being felt most acutely in the areas of special education, math and science. Washington also faces an emerging shortage of elementary teachers.

This fairly recent trend can be traced, in part, to the freeze of Washington’s teacher labor market during the Great Recession. Teachers who typically would have retired instead stayed on the job due to the uncertain economy and their ability to make ends meet. Now as the economy recovers, teachers are retiring at a high rate. Meanwhile, low starting wages and hiring freezes that school districts put in place to shrink their budgets during the recession dissuaded many college students from entering teacher preparation programs. All this is compounded by the state’s recent efforts to shrink class sizes. The 2015–17 budget included \$530 million for 6,495 new teaching positions to shrink kindergarten-through-third-grade class sizes and staff full-day kindergarten.

Meanwhile, research shows that half of beginning teachers leave the profession in the first five years on the job, with 20 percent leaving after just one year. The primary reasons teachers leave are low pay and lack of support in the classroom.



GETTING STARTED ON A SOLUTION

Pay raises for educators, especially beginning teachers

Governor Inslee proposes raising the minimum teacher salary to \$40,000 per year. This represents a raise of \$4,300 in the 2016–17 school year from the already budgeted 4.8 percent cost-of-living adjustment in the 2015–17 biennial budget. An estimated 8,778 teachers will receive a raise ranging from \$1,000 to \$4,300.

The Governor believes we must also work to make all teacher salaries more competitive. In addition to increasing the base salary, his legislation will provide a minimum 1 percent salary adjustment beginning in the 2016–17 school year for all other teachers. Classified and administrative staff allocations will also receive 1 percent salary adjustments.

Mentoring for beginning teachers

We know that high-quality induction programs — programs that support beginning teachers in the classroom — have a strong positive effect on student learning. We know, too, that teachers often begin their careers in our more challenging schools. It is especially important that these new teachers receive the assistance and coaching they need to succeed in the classroom and meet the needs of a diverse student population. Strong mentoring programs keep good teachers on the job.

To this end, the Governor proposes investing \$5 million in the Beginning Educator Support Team mentoring program at OSPI. This funding will double the BEST resources available to pair new teachers with qualified mentors, help them develop a professional growth plan and provide time for beginning teachers to work with mentors and observe high-performing peers.

To cover the costs of this plan, Governor Inslee proposes closing or limiting several outdated tax breaks that are not as high a priority as our state’s K-12 education system. His plan would raise about \$101 million in the next fiscal year by making the following tax and revenue changes effective July 1, 2016:

 [Repeal the use tax exemption for extracted fuel.](#)

 [Refund the state portion of sales tax to nonresidents.](#)

 [Repeal the sales tax exemption on bottled water.](#)

 [Limit the real estate excise tax exemption for banks.](#)