



My name is Bret Church, and I am a School Leadership Professor at Emporia State University. I appreciate the opportunity this morning to speak to you regarding teacher recruitment and retention in Kansas, as it is related to House Bill 2626.

A growing educator shortage is having significant impacts in schools and communities throughout the United States.

2/3 of school districts nationally report experiencing teacher shortages (Frontline, 2021)

Teacher preparation enrollment was down one-third from 2010-2017 (Partelow, 2019)

This challenge is affecting our state as well:

Teacher Vacancies increased 62% between the fall of 2020 and 2021 (KSDE 2021)

Preliminary statistics show that the total completers in all licensure areas related to Pre-K through 12 education will be down over 200 completers when comparing 2021-22 and 2022-23.

In response to this growing concern, the Kansas Teacher Retention Initiative was launched in the summer of 2021, through a partnership between Emporia State University, the Kansas Association of School Boards, Kansas National Education Association, and the United School Administrators of Kansas. While each of these organizations have been individually aware of this growing challenge, this collaboration established an alignment of efforts and a clear and shared focus representing key stakeholder groups that working together can address ways to meet this challenge head on.

As a first step in this process, the Kansas Teacher Retention Survey was distributed between October and December of 2021. The response was excellent with over 20,000 educators participating in the survey representing 50% of educators in Kansas. The data was analyzed and in early 2022 a state report was released.

Educators who participated in the survey were asked to rate their likelihood of retiring in the next three years, changing districts, going into administration, and leaving the profession entirely. The Likert scale utilized for these questions were Not Likely at All (1), Potentially but Not Likely (2), Somewhat Likely (3), More Likely Than Not (4), and Very Likely and Will Probably Happen (5).

14% of respondents answered that they were More Likely than Not (4) or Very Likely and Will Probably Happen (5) to retire in the next three years.



16% of respondents answered that they were More Likely than Not (4) or Very Likely and Will Probably Happen (5) to leave the profession at some point. This does not include those who are retiring.

We combine these two factors to identify an overall risk factor of 30%. This percentage represents the number of educators that Kansas schools will have to replace, simply to keep the number of teachers at current levels. The alternative for some districts will be less teachers, and higher class sizes.

Additionally, we asked educators to rate their satisfaction on thirty-four factors. One of those questions asked about "Tuition reimbursement or similar incentives to advance your education." The response to this question placed it as number 31 out of 34 factors.

Due to the challenges, we face with encouraging and recruiting those into the education profession and retaining those educators once they are in our schools and communities, any assistance is meaningful in helping to incentivize those who want to secure an education degree, teachers returning to get a high-need credential, or assisting someone currently working in a classified role in our schools to get their teaching license. This funding would be important to reversing the current trend. Furthermore, based on the number of applicants for the Kansas Teacher Service Scholarships that are currently unable to receive assistance, HB 2626 could provide relief in a very timely manner.

The coalition supporting the Kansas Teacher Retention Initiative is committed to continuing our work in the future. We hope to continue to administer the Kansas Teacher Retention Survey on a bi-annual basis. We look forward to continuing to work with Kansas educators, Kansas school districts, and Kansas community members, for the benefit of Kansas students.