

**Kansas State University Education Department- edcoll@k-state.edu**

Have you seen a decline over time in the amount of students majoring in elementary or secondary education? If so, why do you think there is a decline? Are there any specific subjects that people are not wanting to go into?

ENROLLMENT NUMBERS AT KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY HAVE STAYED RELATIVELY STABLE THE LAST FEW YEARS.

AS A STATE, WE CONTINUE TO STRUGGLE WITH CERTAIN CONTENT AREAS AND WITH CERTAIN GEOGRAPHIC AREAS OF THE STATE. FOR EXAMPLE, SPECIAL EDUCATION IS THE AREA WITH THE GREATEST NEED. HOWEVER, ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS, SCIENCE, MATH, FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES AND SCHOOL COUNSELING HAVE ALSO BEEN MENTIONED AS NEED AREAS. FURTHER, CERTAIN AREAS OF THE STATE SEE GREATER NEED INCLUDING WESTERN KANSAS AND OUR LARGE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

If you have seen a decline, what do you think can be done to get the amount students back up?

THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BOARD OF THE KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SUPPORTED BY K-STATE, HAS DEVELOPED EDUCATEKANSAS.ORG A WEBSITE FOCUSED ON PROMOTING OUR PROFESSION AND PROVIDING INFORMATION ON THE MANY PATHWAYS TO BECOMING A LICENSED TEACHER.

If you believe there is a shortage of teachers in Kansas, do you think this a statewide problem or just a problem in specific areas of the state?

SEE MY RESPONSE TO THE FIRST QUESTION. KSDE COMMISSIONED A TASK FORCE TO LOOK AT THIS ISSUE LAST YEAR. WE FOUND THAT WE NEEDED MORE ACCURATE DATA TO REALLY TELL THE STORY.

IF YOU HAVEN'T SEEN THE REPORT, IT IS QUITE GOOD. IT HIGHLIGHTS THE DATA WE DO HAVE, DISCUSSED SOME CHALLENGES AND LAYS OUT 65 ADVOCACY STEPS THAT DISTRICTS, HIGHER EDUCATION, THE STATE DEPARTMENT, AND THE LEGISLATURE SHOULD CONSIDER TO HELP ELIMINATE VACANCIES ACROSS OUR STATE.

Links Provided:

<http://www.ksde.org/Home/Quick-Links/News-Room/commissioners-blue-ribbon-task-force-addresses-teacher-vacancies-and-decline-in-employment-pipeline>

<http://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/Communications/Publications/BRTF%20Final.pdf>

FINALLY, kansasteachingjobs.com will give you a picture of the positions still open in our state. Most districts use it as an advertising resource. Not all positions posted are for licensed teachers. I WOULD BE HAPPY TO VISIT WITH YOU ABOUT THIS TOPIC. THANK YOU FOR REACHING OUT TO K-STATE.

**Sterling College Education Department- karen.baehler@sterling.edu**

Have you seen a decline over time in the amount of students majoring in elementary or secondary education? If so, why do you think there is a decline? Are there any specific subjects that people are not wanting to go into?

If you have seen a decline, what do you think can be done to get the amount students back up?

If you believe there is a shortage of teachers in Kansas, do you think this a statewide problem or just a problem in specific areas of the state?

**AT-LARGE RESPONSE:**

Although nearly every state has reported teacher shortages to the U.S. Department of Education, the problem is much more pronounced in some states than others are. Kansas is no exception. In the past, Sterling College's teacher education program would have as many as 30 clinical teachers in the schools every semester. However, we currently have been graduating 11-15 certified teachers every May. Unfortunately, in Kansas, the shortages are disproportionately felt in special education, math and science, and in bilingual and English-language education.

Regardless of the state, students in high-poverty and high-minority schools are typically hit hardest when there are teacher shortages. Teacher attrition remains high and is also a contributor to the shortage. Many teachers will leave the profession after five years, and will cite dissatisfaction with their job as the reason. More specifically the dissatisfaction can be caused by difficult administration policies where teachers have a lack of autonomy and discretion in their own classrooms. Scripted classrooms are common in many of the schools to provide consistency, but often feels unnecessary to well-prepared teachers.

Salary issues, overcrowded classrooms, additional duties are all contributors to the teacher shortage. But what can be done to correct this problem? Obviously increased pay should be an option, but maybe compensation packages that include help with housing, childcare and more aggressive forgivable loans could be on the table too.

(A side note, I was once asked to teach at a Chinese University. The salary was not high, but I would have been provided airfare over and back, housing, a driver who would pick me up each day and take me to the University, a personal shopper and a graduate student who would help with grading. )

Topeka is concerned about the shortages and has formed a committee of teachers. They meet regularly to discuss attrition, and how to attract the best and brightest to this very important

career.

Sterling College is committed to preparing our graduates for the diverse classrooms they will inevitably encounter. We also offer online courses and the opportunity to student teach in the state that you are most interested in living. We offer non-traditional ways to obtain teacher licensure. In addition, once our graduates have completed the necessary steps toward being certified, our hope is that they will remain in the classroom for many years.

**Fort Hays State University Education Department- padams@fhsu.edu**

Have you seen a decline over time in the amount of students majoring in elementary or secondary education? If so, why do you think there is a decline? Are there any specific subjects that people are not wanting to go into?

During the last five years I have seen a decline in both elementary and secondary education as college majors. This year it appears that we have had an increase in elementary majors. While the number of secondary teachers that are majors in college is down, we have seen the number of individuals seeking to become secondary teachers through our Transition-to-Teaching (T2T) program has grown from 75 to over 200 in the last four years. The T2T students are career changers – they a college degree in the area that they will be teaching and complete their coursework while on the job. All the T2T students must be hired by a school district prior to entering the program. The number in the program is not enough to keep up with demand.

The initial decline for elementary occurred several years back when school districts had to cut budgets – meaning teacher positions. At the same time this occurred there was a great deal of negative material circulating about teachers and the teaching profession – such as the removal of tenure and due process from teacher contracts. Teaching was not an attractive option as it did not appear to be a respected position. Efforts are being made to change this, but it is a slow process to rebuild.

I am not sure there are any positions that people want to go into as much as there are shortages in the science area, English, Physical Ed, Family Consumer Science, Special Ed, and Elementary.

If you have seen a decline, what do you think can be done to get the amount students back up?

One of the critical needs is to convey to individuals that teaching is a great profession. One effort that is out there can be found at <https://www.educatekansas.org/> Teachers also need to let students know that teaching is a great career. Also greater awareness of scholarships should be shared as there are several programs that can make college accessible for those who want to be teachers.

If you believe there is a shortage of teachers in Kansas, do you think this a statewide problem or just a problem in specific areas of the state?

I believe the shortage is not statewide, but a regional problem. The southwest has problems getting teachers as does the southeast. Rural schools also have difficulty in recruiting.

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**Superintendent: Mrs. Robertson- robertson.kathy@usd298.com**

Do you think there is a shortage of teachers in Kansas? If so, why do you think there is a shortage?

I believe the lack of support by our past Governor of Kansas and Legislature has impacted individual who thought about going into education. Why would anyone want to go into a field that isn't respected, even vilified by the governor, legislators and the public at large? Hopefully things will start turning around with Governor Brownback leaving, a more progressive legislature that believes in education and thus, the public stance towards education will follow with a more positive outlook.

Has USD 298 had to deal with any problems relating to a shortage of teachers in the state? If so, how has the district dealt with the problems?

I am teaching English in lieu of putting students on a computer program for 10th, 11th and 12th English.

As a superintendent, have you ever had to deal with problems relating to teacher shortages.

Yes, currently I am teaching 10th, 11th and 12th grade English. As a Special Education Administrator, we were always looking for Special Education teachers and would hire subs if we weren't able to fill all our positions within the Coop that I worked for.

If you think there is a shortage, what do you think could be done to fix the problem in the state?

Promote teaching as a career and increase teacher's salary.

**LJSHS Principal: Mrs. Walter- walter.christi@usd298.com**

Do you think there is a shortage of teachers in Kansas? If so, why do you think there is a shortage?

Yes I do think there is a shortage. I think there is a shortage because the climate around education is negative. I think it is negative because there is a feeling that the state legislature and the governor both are not listening to educators and only asking more of schools with less money. It can be frustrating.

As a principal, have you ever had to deal with problems relating to teacher shortages.

This past year alone only saw very few applications for many of our positions. Since Mrs. Robertson is licensed to teach English, we didn't have to start the year without an English teacher. We are very lucky she is willing to take the time out of her "other" job to help out up here. We really appreciate her willingness to help.

If you think there is a shortage, what do you think could be done to fix the problem in the state?

Fix the problem? I am not sure there is a fix. I am not sure throwing money at teachers would fix it either. Teachers need to feel as if their work is valued. The increased pressure educators feel to from the outside to increase "student achievement" (ie test scores) without the support necessary to make it happen can also be a deterrent from going into education. Student achievement is not the sole responsibility of the education system. Our communities, families, law enforcement, and schools help a child succeed if they are all working together. Many times it feels as if the school system is on its own and that takes it toll.

**LES Principal: Mr. Koch- [koch.steve@usd298.com](mailto:koch.steve@usd298.com)**

Do you think there is a shortage of teachers in Kansas? If so, why do you think there is a shortage?

I do believe there is a shortage of teachers in Kansas. I believe one of the factors is teacher pay and benefits. There is a perception that teachers receive very good wages, benefits, and summers off. Teachers pay, for their level of education, is average at best. Teachers are required to pay into KPERs for their retirement benefits. (This is not an option, but a requirement.) Few districts offer additional retirement benefits, however the benefit is usually low. And summers off sounds great, until you figure in the number of hours spent "off-the-clock" preparing lessons, grading papers, classroom management details, attending workshops and/or taking courses to maintain your license, etc. Basically, many teachers I know personally put in 2000 hours plus per year. They just do it over 10 months, instead of 12, so their summers off were really hours worked in advance of summer. Plus, "summer off" is not paid vacation time. "Summers off" is the teacher's salary paid over 12 months, instead of the 10-month school year.

Some people entering college to become teachers are finding they can receive higher pay in the private sector. Often, their benefits are also better. A member of my family went to college to be a high school math teacher and football coach. However, after taking several hours of math, he realized he could make more money, still work with concepts in math and physics, entering another field. His starting pay was substantially higher. The corporation pays in to his retirement, plus it offers up to a 100% matching benefit for his first 6% of his pay. His health insurance is superb with a very low deductible, including dental and vision. Though he works 12 months of the year, he did receive two weeks paid vacation the first year, with the number of weeks of paid vacation increasing over the years. When he leaves work, he is done for the day. He does not have work to take home. When he is sick or has to miss a day, he does not have to prepare for a substitute; he just picks up where he left off.

Another reason, I believe, there is a shortage of teachers, is due to the lack of respect for the teaching profession. I am not sure when this started, however, it exists. When I was in school, I did everything possible to do what was expected; completed my homework, put out my best effort, acted as expected. I did not want the school or teachers to contact my parents, as I knew I did not want to face the consequences at home. Today, this is seldom the case. In addition, state and federal legislators, some organizations, and some people place blame on education for the woes of society; often increasing requirements on educators.

As a principal, have you ever had to deal with problems relating to teacher shortages?

Personally, I have not. At the elementary school, we have been very blessed with quality candidates. However, over the past several years, the number of applicants for an elementary teaching position at Lincoln has dwindled from fifteen to twenty applicants per position to five or six applicants. Currently at our high school, Mrs. Robertson and Mrs. Walter had no applicants for the English position, so Mrs. Robertson is teaching the courses. Several districts are also in need of a high school English teacher, as well as other teaching positions.

If you think there is a shortage, what do you think could be done to fix the problem in the state?

I wish I knew. I have often compared teaching to a horse race. Teachers want to “win;” are expected “to win.” The jockey (whether it be the state or federal legislators, the department of education, organizations, or individuals) are spurring the horse as hard as possible and at the same time have the reins pulled back as hard as possible. I do not believe the teacher shortage is due to any one problem.

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**Salina Superintendent- jim.hardy@usd305.com**

Compliments to you for your efforts. Below is my feedback. I have served as a teacher, asst. principal, principal, superintendent at 7 school districts during 36 year career at districts 1A-6A in all corners of the state.

Do you think there is a shortage of teachers in Kansas? If so, why do you think there is a shortage?

There is a shortage, most noticeable in isolated areas of the state and more so in specific disciplines. There are less people graduating from college to be teachers and like any job there are always people leaving the professional for a variety of reason, with not enough new people to fill the ranks.

Has your school district had to deal with any problems relating to a shortage of teachers in the state? If so, how has the district dealt with the problems?

In my current district we have several special education positions open. We tried to hire school counselors and could not find any so we hired social workers whom we will work with for their licensure. When I was in Western Kansas in a small town we might get two people to apply for a position, even elementary school.

As a superintendent, have you ever had to deal with problems relating to teacher shortages?

The problems I have to deal with as a superintendent includes hiring people who are not certified and we have to work hard to get them licensed.

If you think there is a shortage, what do you think could be done to fix the problem in the state?

Kansas is ranked 38-40th in the nation for teacher salary. Even if you have a heart for teaching you have to decide if you can raise a family on a teacher salary, especially coming out of school with college debt. The Kansas legislature needs to make a stand on funding education at a competitive level. We love our teachers and do everything for appreciation but that doesn't pay the bills.

**Sylvan Superintendent- jstecklein@usd299.org**

Do you think there is a shortage of teachers in Kansas? If so, why do you think there is a shortage?

Yes, there is a shortage. If you look at the schools that are looking for teachers, it is unbelievable

Has your school district had to deal with any problems relating to a shortage of teachers in the state? If so, how has the district dealt with the problems?

Yes, it is getting harder and harder. Luckily we have been able to find the teachers that we need.

As a superintendent, have you ever had to deal with problems relating to teacher shortages.

It seems the past 5 years has been very difficult in finding teachers and it is getting harder each year.

If you think there is a shortage, what do you think could be done to fix the problem in the state?

I believe they need better pay, but more importantly the legislators have to do a better job in promoting public education and let them know they are doing a great job. Young people do not want to go into education, lack of pay, and very little respect from people..

**Additional Information:**

This is a quote from Terrell Davis who is an administrator in the Wichita district:

I believe the shortage has a lot to do with recession and frozen teacher salaries over the past 8 years and in Kansas, you can add the new feel that Education is no longer valued. Young adults are selecting to go into other career fields where there is more money and more value. We need to return to the days of honoring our teachers/educators and find a way to pay them as the important people that they are. We are adopting a new approach in our district where we are raising salaries and aggressively recruiting the the best and brightest to come to Wichita. We want our teachers to have the calling on their life, and the financial security to fulfill that calling without being homeless or qualifying for free and reduced lunch.