

**IN BRIEF:**  
**What's the Current Picture of  
Educator Supply and Demand in Washington?**

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***Where do we have shortages? Will they worsen in the future?***

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI's) 2007 Educator Supply and Demand report surveys Washington school districts about their current openings, perceptions of supply versus demand for various teaching areas, and forecast of future need. The 2007 report marks the fourth report conducted since 2000. Findings from the 2007 survey include:

- 36 out of 49 teaching fields show some degree of shortage.
- Fourteen educator roles show high degrees of shortage:
  - Special Education
  - Early Childhood Special Education
  - Mathematics
  - Middle Level Math/Science
  - Science
  - Science-Biology
  - Science-Chemistry
  - Science- Earth Science
  - Science-Physics
  - Occupational Therapist
  - Physical Therapist
  - School Nurse
  - School Psychologist
  - Speech Language Pathologist
- Surplus exists only in the areas of elementary education and social studies.
- High-need subject areas persist statewide, although districts in some rural/remote and central regions of the state show higher degrees of shortage.

Overall, the report concludes that the degree of shortages in Washington State has increased in most areas since 2004, and may worsen given increased federal and state requirements such as No Child Left Behind and added state graduation requirements. The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) conducted a survey of Washington school districts, asking them to estimate how many additional math teachers (either as full or partial Full Time Equivalents (FTEs)) they will need when the State Board of Education increases the graduation requirement to 3 credits. With 97% of school districts reporting, they estimate up to 466.48 FTE will be needed.

***How often does the state/higher education use educator supply and demand data to affect preparation program capacity/enrollment? Are there any incentives provided for public institutions to structure enrollment to meet state needs?***

In 2007, the PESB added to the criteria for approval of new educator preparation programs that they must demonstrate that their proposed program enrollment reflects

state/regional need. This is not yet, however, a significant consideration as part of ongoing review of existing programs, which focuses primarily on the quality of preparation. The PESB will be examining the need for considering strategic enrollment strategies as part of program review when it conducts its review of current program design standards in 2008. But, particularly for public institutions, decisions about enrollment often occur beyond the college of education, at a higher level of institutional leadership.

Since 1999, the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) has operated competitive grant programs to expand and create new academic programs in high-demand fields. More recently, institutions have requested “high-demand” funding enrollment slots directly from the legislature, with a very small percentage requested for educator shortage areas.

A number of legislators have questioned whether private colleges and universities should be allowed to compete for state high-demand funds on an equal footing with the public colleges and universities in order to bolster statewide efforts.

In 2007, the Legislature created a Joint Committee on the Education of Students in High-Demand Fields. The Committee concluded with a January 2008 report that suggested state adoption of a definition of high-demand in order to better focus efforts. The suggested definition was programs in which “the number of students prepared for employment per year from in-state institutions is substantially less than the number of projected job openings in that field, statewide or in a sub state region.” But the committee did not reach consensus on how to increase the capacity of Washington institutions in high-demand fields. The PESB surveyed current higher education preparation programs about their capacity to produce math teachers. Though currently enrolling 197 teacher candidates across programs, they have the capacity to enroll 1,100 more.

Actual enrollment slots are part of the challenge. Whether those prospective educators will actually seek employment in that field, or in education at all, once they have completed the program, is another part.

### ***More Than Just Increased Production***

Getting a true picture of educator supply and demand is complicated. Vacancies can occur through retirements, resignations, leaves of absence, or transfers of educators into other positions. A recent University of Washington report showed that over a five

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*Approximately 230 undergraduates complete Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) programs at four higher education institutions (University of Washington Seattle, Washington State University, Eastern Washington University, and Western Washington University) in the state each year. If individuals with undergraduate degrees in SLP wish to practice in the public schools, they must earn a master's degree and meet American Speech, Language and Hearing Association standards. The same four public higher education institutions offer an SLP masters degree, however combined they enroll on average only 80 master's degree candidates. Approximately seventy-five percent of the state's SLP undergraduates are not admitted to the state's SLP masters programs. Of the approximately 80 enrolled in masters programs annually, 25% of those are from out-of-state, many of whom will return to their home state when they have completed their degree. Further narrowing the pipeline is the fact that of the roughly 60 that will complete their masters and remain in Washington, most will not choose to practice in the public schools, but favor clinical, hospital or private practice.*

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year period, about an even percentage of teachers are leaving the profession altogether as are transferring to a different school or district. So some of what is represented as vacancy is the need for new/returning individuals, but some is individuals shifting from one school/district to another. This is important to understand for those tempted to compare annual vacancies with numbers in that field annually produced by educator preparation programs.

For example, the fact that district administrators report 470 math teacher vacancies and preparation programs produced 175 teachers endorsed in math does not mean that preparation programs should produce 295 additional math teachers. Some vacancies will be filled by transfers, and some by out-of-state teachers moving to Washington. While greater production is needed, it also may not substantially impact vacancies in rural and remote communities if the program is not connected with or in geographic proximity to that community. In other words, Washington State University might greatly increase their production of math teachers, but will one of them be willing to move to Onion Creek or Oroville? So meeting educator demand is also dependent upon the number and location of programs. Effectively meeting educator demand requires a more complex and strategic approach to supply.

The OSPI Supply and Demand reports suggests that policies aimed at alleviating shortages must take into account the nature and cause of these shortages. The report proposes that shortages may be classified into one of three types:

1. A recruitment/retention shortage – which occurs when too few candidates are attracted to a particular subject area or role; such as special education or mathematics;
2. A training shortage – caused by lack of adequate access to preparation programs that produce educators in shortages areas; and
3. A distribution shortage – which occurs when too few educators are willing to work/live in districts experiencing a shortage.

### ***What are current strategies in place in Washington State to recruit individuals into education professions?***

A variety of programs exists in Washington State that aim to support and facilitate entry into education professions, including:

- Scholarships or forgivable loans linked to several years of professional practice in shortage fields or hard-to-staff locations;
- Alternative Route Programs aimed at immediate placement of mid-career professionals and experienced paraeducators into supervised internships;
- Programs and recruitment efforts aimed at increasing racial/ethnic diversity of education professionals to better reflect diversity of our student population;
- Programs to recruit middle and high school students into education professions;

- “Pipeline” programs that guide and provide financial support for paraeducators from gaining their associate degrees all the way through baccalaureate degree and teacher preparation;
- Programs that aim to recruit, prepare and retain prospective teachers within communities where they will teach; and
- Programs to encourage community college students to choose a career in education.

Oversight and operation of these various types of programs is the responsibility of a variety of agencies and organizations, including the Higher Education Coordinating Board, Professional Educator Standards Board, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Educational Service Districts (ESD’s), individual higher education institutions, local school districts and others. In an effort to provide some state-level coordination around recruitment efforts, the PESB has convened a cross-agency/organization group, including representatives from the business community, to look at current and future efforts. In addition, the legislature has charged the PESB with submitting a report with recommendations on improving recruitment and retention of math and science teachers due December 1, 2008.

### ***What’s needed next?***

Given that ensuring Washington has a sufficient supply of qualified educators is a complex challenge, the strategies must involve many and varied approaches that form a cohesive and coordinated plan.

### **Enhanced access and expanded program delivery options for preservice educator preparation.**

A greater repertoire of options for educator preparation must be added to those that currently exist. There are still geographic regions in Washington State where individuals who wish to become educators lack reasonable access to a preparation program. Additionally, some individuals need greater flexibility in preparation program design to meet their needs. Options must include:

- Supporting institutions in implementing greater use of technology in preservice preparation; including greater use of online technology and strategies for more effective use of the K-20 network;
- Expanding alternative routes to teacher certification, with participation from all institutions;
- Exploring an alternative route for school psychologists and speech-language pathologists;
- Expanding cross-institutional consortia as a delivery model for educator preparation as a means for enhancing geographic access;
- Increased and better coordinated state-level marketing and recruitment efforts;
- Exploring an increased role for community colleges and ESDs;

- Ensuring that criteria for approving new preparation programs includes clear demonstration of how the program will expand current options, in terms of providing greater access and ability to address state goals and candidate needs;

In addition, because of the complicated nature of educator supply and demand, steps need to be taken to better link production and consumers. Districts, with data to inform their current and future workforce needs, need to form closer partnerships with colleges of education as suppliers of their future workforce. Moving beyond districts finding spots for relatively short term student teaching experiences, schools need to be akin to teaching hospitals, with university faculty in schools to a far greater degree.

### **Incentives and supports for district / preparation program partnerships –**

Both as a better link between preparation and workforce as well as in recognition of the value of field-based internships in the preparation of educators, we need to insist upon and increase support for the creation of, preparation partnerships. Not only is this a model that supports educator supply and demand, formal and informal partnerships are an opportunity to apply research and best practices to real-life situations; piloting promising practices in educator preparation, classroom instruction and school improvement. Formal partnerships could differ in focus to include:

- Creating Professional Development Schools where university faculty are on-site, lead teachers serve as adjunct faculty for the college of education, and there is a deliberate focus on data related to impact of the program on student performance;
- Converting some Focused Assistance Schools into Professional Development Schools where concentrations of teacher candidates increase the ratio of assistance to students;
- Teacher “fellowships” or “residencies” with focus on training for the needs of a particular community / student population. Could include rural/remote communities recruiting, training and retaining within their own communities.
- Preparing teachers for a particular subject area, such as math and science.

Creating these types of school-based partnerships requires a culture change for schools and universities. For higher education institutions, it requires:

- Dissolving institutional barriers/model strategies for effective collaboration between deans/directors of colleges of education and colleges of liberal arts and science.
- Addressing such issues as flexibility in faculty load and assignments to facilitate greater direct involvement of university faculty in schools.
- Address tenure criteria that create a disincentive for faculty to increase presence in K-12 school settings.

