



2024 LABOR MARKET OUTLOOK

Education

The State of Public Education

The education of a country's population is the key to its innovation and economic growth, and it remains highly personnel-intensive. There is no substitute for the engagement of large numbers of talented teachers able to provide students with personalized attention. While many U.S. workers are motivated to teach and to work with young people, job seeker interest in education has shifted from traditional school jobs to roles outside the classroom. School administrators, powerless to rectify the primary cause of their hiring and retention challenges—a ballooning “teacher pay penalty”—are in the unenviable position of having to find creative solutions elsewhere.



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Job seeker interest in education consulting, online tutoring, curriculum design, and employee development roles has never been higher. Yet there is a shortage of education talent where it is needed most—in public schools, especially in special education and STEM. Addressing that shortage will require significant improvements to public school job quality.

—Julia Pollak, ZipRecruiter Chief Economist

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Top challenges in recruiting and retaining teachers:

1. **Wage penalty:** Teachers' pay hasn't kept pace with that in other professions.
2. **Work-life balance:** Jobs often involve long commutes, early mornings, and demands on teachers' personal time.
3. **Workload pressure:** Heavy workloads contribute to burnout and turnover.
4. **Classroom resources:** Uncomfortable, unsafe, or under-resourced classrooms diminish job satisfaction.
5. **Student behavior:** Too little support for managing disruptive students can harm morale.
6. **Limited opportunities:** Inadequate career advancement opportunities can contribute to teacher turnover.

The School Staffing Crisis

There are tens of thousands of unfilled teacher vacancies in the U.S., and over 160,000 jobs are filled by underqualified teachers, according to research from Kansas State University's College of Education.¹ 40 of 50 states report ongoing teacher shortages in public schools, which are especially acute for special needs and STEM teachers.²

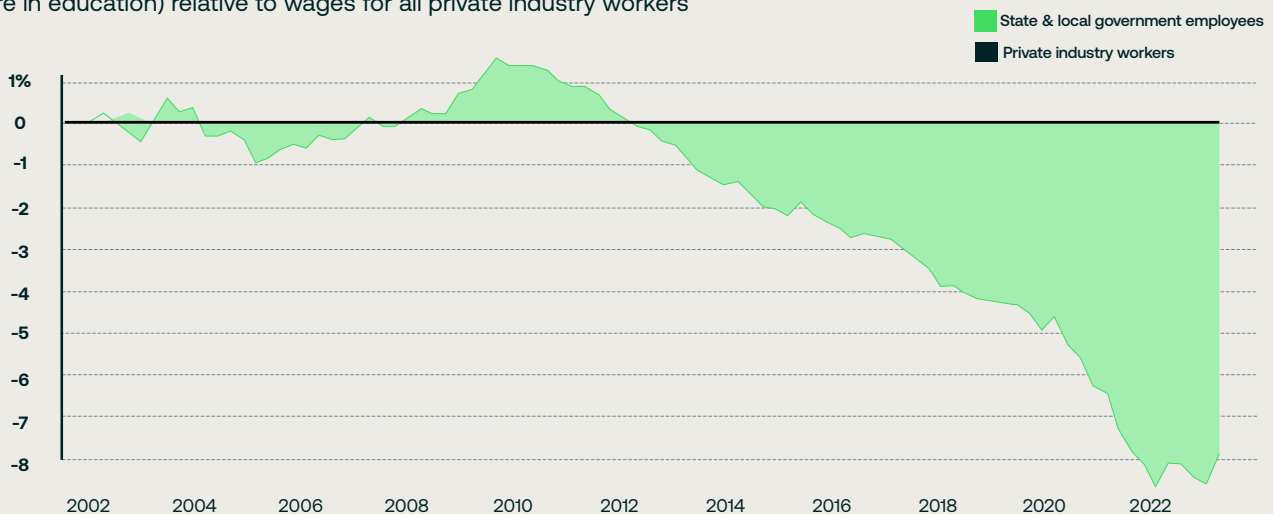
At the same time, there are many U.S. workers who are eager to work in the broader field of education, outside a school. On ZipRecruiter, job seeker interest in education consulting, tutoring, online education, curriculum design, employee development, and similar roles is extremely high. Teaching talent exists—it just tends to seek more autonomy, greater flexibility, and higher pay than the typical school provides.

More Responsibilities, Less Pay

Pay for teachers has lagged behind that in other occupations over the past 40 years, with teachers now earning 26.4% less than comparable college graduates, according to research by the Economic Policy Institute.³ The gap has widened since the pandemic. Arguably, teacher pay should have risen faster than that in other occupations following the pandemic, to compensate teachers for the increased burdens of their roles: a new virus risk, setbacks in test scores and mental health, understaffing, and the relative improvement of other occupations where work has become more flexible. While technology has made many other jobs easier and more pleasant, many teachers argue that the introduction of laptops and tablets into the classroom has created distractions, making their jobs harder.

A public school teacher wage penalty has emerged in the past decade

Wages for state and local government employees (53% of whom are in education) relative to wages for all private industry workers



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Cost Index, Dec 2005=100, Seasonally Adjusted.

1 Pandey, Erica. "America's Empty Classrooms," Axios, Aug. 19, 2023.

2 Jones, Arthur, "Why there's a special education and STEM teacher shortage and what can be done," ABC News, May 11, 2023.

3 Walker, Tim, "Teacher 'Pay Penalty' Reaches Record High," NEA Today, Oct. 3, 2023.

Demographic Trends in the Teacher Workforce

Teachers are retiring in large numbers or leaving the profession due to burnout, at the same time that enrollment in teacher training programs is falling. Given current demographic trends and enrollment patterns, teacher shortages are on track to grow worse—unless schools find ways to make the jobs more appealing to new generations of talent.

Industry Snapshot

Fastest-growing job titles

Based on change in job postings, 2022 to 2023

Demand for these roles rose most between 2022 and 2023:



Instructional Systems Specialist



Physical Education Teacher



Academic Tutor & Mentor



Special Education Teacher



School Psychologist

Source: ZipRecruiter, Inc., internal data, Jan. 1, 2022 - Oct. 24, 2023; roles with over 100 postings.

Top-performing job titles

Based on average # of clicks per posting

Job seekers on ZipRecruiter express the highest interest in these roles:



Admissions Consultant



E-Learning Designer



Financial Coach



Educational Consultant



Infant Toddler Lead Teacher

Source: ZipRecruiter, Inc., internal data, Jan. 1, 2023 - Oct. 24, 2023; roles with over 100 postings.

Top-performing markets

Based on average # of applies per posting

Job seekers in education on ZipRecruiter express greatest interest in these markets:



New York, NY



Fairfax County, VA



Long Beach, CA



Ridgefield, CT



Bethesda, MD



Houston, TX

Source: ZipRecruiter, Inc., internal data, Jan. 1, 2023 - Oct. 24, 2023; markets and roles with over 100 postings.

Three Trends to Watch

1. Major U.S. companies are investing in upskilling their workforces

U.S. employers are actively addressing labor shortages and skills gaps through training initiatives. The Lowe's Foundation is investing \$50 million through its Gable Grants Program to prepare 50,000 people for skilled trades careers over the next five years. The McDonald's Archway to Opportunity has awarded over \$185 million in high school and college assistance to restaurant employees. Walmart has committed \$1 billion through its Live Better U program to pay 100% of college tuition and books for 1.5 million of its associates. These are a few examples of the major private sector and civil society training programs taking place across state and industries.



2. Online and hybrid learning remain important, even after the pandemic

About 15% of U.S. college students attended primarily online institutions in 2021,⁴ and many more use online learning platforms like Coursera, edX, Udemy, and MasterClass. The global online education market is projected to be a \$319 billion industry by 2025, due to cost advantages, convenience, scale, and student satisfaction.⁵ As more education moves online, it is becoming easier for institutions to gather data on how students learn best. Expect to see rapid innovation in the coming years, such as more training programs that harness the power of video games and extended reality to engage young people. Online training programs also have a large advantage in recruiting and retaining instructors.

3. Social media for education

Americans are increasingly getting their news and information on social media. TikTok's short-form videos have captivated the attention of users, including educators and content creators who adeptly convey complex subjects in brief, entertaining clips. YouTube, with its vast array of channels covering news, science, and educational topics, remains a go-to platform for many young people seeking engaging and accessible information. Key challenges to using these resources effectively include the difficulty of avoiding distractions and misinformation.



⁴ "Selected statistics for degree-granting postsecondary institutions that primarily offer online programs, by control of institution and selected characteristics: Fall 2020 and 2019-20," National Center for Education Statistics.

⁵ "Global Online Education Market - Forecasts from 2020 To 2025," Research and Markets.

Attracting the Workforce of Tomorrow

What workers want

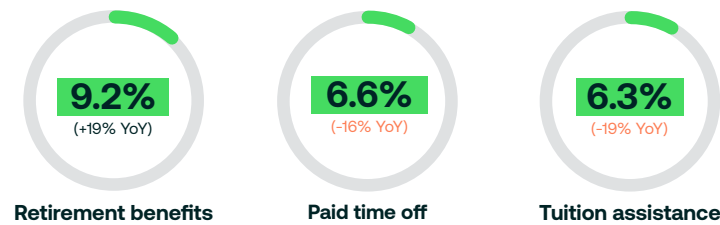
Job seekers like education for the ongoing opportunities it presents to learn and for the security of yearly contracts, but wish the roles were less stressful.



Source: ZipRecruiter Q3 2023 Job Seeker Confidence Survey.

Trending benefits

Mentions of benefits in job postings on ZipRecruiter



Source: ZipRecruiter, Inc., internal data, Jan. 1, 2022 - Oct. 24, 2023.

52.8%

of education job postings on ZipRecruiter list soft skills.

Source: ZipRecruiter, Inc., internal data, Jan. 1, 2023 - Oct. 24, 2023.

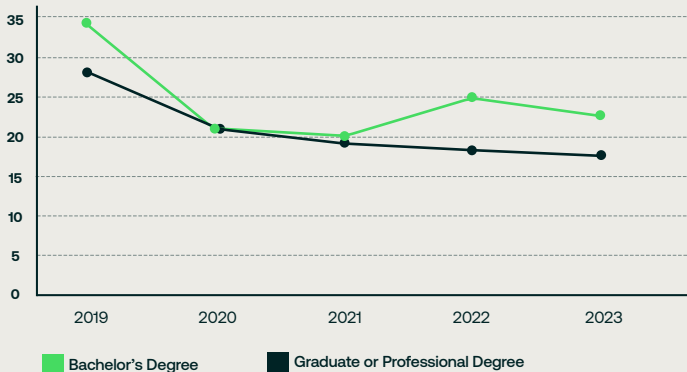
22.0%

of education job postings on ZipRecruiter are remote.

Source: ZipRecruiter, Inc., internal data, Jan. 1, 2023 - Oct. 24, 2023.

Evolving job requirements

The number of education job postings requiring bachelor's degrees or master's degrees have fallen substantially since 2019.



Source: ZipRecruiter, Inc., internal data, Jan. 1, 2019 - Oct. 24, 2023.

ZipTips

To attract and retain top education talent, ZipRecruiter recommends that educational organizations:

1. Provide competitive compensation

Until pay gaps between teaching jobs and other jobs with comparable education requirements narrow, attracting and retaining top talent will remain challenging. Local governments should face continued pressure to fund K-12 education adequately, and to prioritize teacher pay over other expenses that are less closely linked to student achievement.

2. Address employee burnout

This means investing in employee retention to combat short-staffing, improving work-life balance, tracking employee workloads, ensuring that employees have adequate break time and prep time, offering sick leave, and facilitating collaboration between staff. The top motivation for job-switchers in education is the desire to find a job that is less stressful, according to ZipRecruiter surveys.

3. Offer employees learning and development opportunities from the beginning

After a low-stress environment, the second-most important thing job seekers in education want is opportunity to learn new things.

4. Compete on benefits (e.g., housing or educational assistance)

Teachers have one of the highest unionization rates, and therefore tend to have attractive standard benefits packages. One way schools can compete is by offering less common benefits that are popular with college-educated workers, such as tuition assistance and student loan repayment assistance. Currently, only 0.2% of education jobs posted on ZipRecruiter mention student loan assistance benefits.