

Teacher Shortages
September 2015
Collated by Dr. Patti Harrington

Summary Findings: With 31 of 41 school districts in the state making a voluntary report upon request by the Utah School Superintendents Association, summary findings include:

1. 15 districts were forced to start school on day one without having a certified teacher in every classroom.
2. 48 classes were taught by substitutes in the first days of school; 7 were taught by paraeducators; 11 taught by teachers who had an expired license; and 3 classes were taught by teachers not certified in subject. In four instances, classes that were missing teachers were combined into one or more overly-large class.
3. 74 classes are being taught this year by people who are not yet certified but who are pursuing an Alternative Route to Licensure.* Five classes are being taught by college student interns.
4. All but one school superintendent reported that the pool of qualified candidates for teaching positions is shrinking and the decrease in **quality** candidates is evident in both secondary and elementary applications and in both rural and urban districts.
5. The types and numbers of positions that were not filled on day one of school include:
 - 27 Special Education
 - 22 elementary education
 - 19 secondary math
 - 17 secondary science
 - 11 secondary technology/CTE
 - 9 dual immersion
 - 5 secondary Language Arts
 - 4 Speech Pathology
 - 3 school psychologists
 - 1 elementary orchestra
6. By mid-September 2015, classes still in need of teachers included some for elementary education, Special Education, and some secondary courses.

*** Alternative Routes to Licensure (ARL) are frequently cited in district teacher shortage discussions below. The Utah State Office of Education defines the ARL program as:** Utah's Alternative Routes to Licensure (ARL) is a teacher preparation program for individuals who wish to earn an initial Level 1 teaching license or are currently licensed teachers who wish to earn another type of teaching license. ARL allows participants to teach in an accredited Utah school on a temporary license for up to three years while they are fulfilling licensure requirements. Participants must be employed by a Utah school district, charter school, or accredited private or parochial school while earning a license and must be teaching in a licensed position at the time a license is earned and issued.

Participants in the ARL program complete course work determined by an official review, take required content knowledge test(s), take required content and general pedagogy courses (typically 7-10 classes), teach successfully for a minimum of one year full time or two years if less than full time in their eligible subject area up to a maximum of three academic school years in a licensed position, have successful principal's evaluations of classroom performance and teaching disposition skills, and upon program completion, be recommended for licensure by the principal and the ARL advisor. Participants are responsible for all costs involved in completing the ARL process. Participants successfully completing the Alternative Routes to Licensure program will be issued a Level 1 Utah Professional Educator License.

Alpine School District

Alpine School District was able to fill all positions to start the school year.

Beaver County School District

We hired the last teacher the Friday before school began.

We hired one teacher (out of 7 new) that had been released from another district. We kept one teacher whom we normally would have released because we knew we would not have been able to replace that teacher.

The pool for elementary candidates is staying about the same. The pool for qualified secondary teachers is shrinking, especially in Special Education, physical science, and for technology-related subjects.

Box Elder County School District

We were able to hire teachers for all open positions.

We hired two math teachers, one on an ARL and the other, an intern. Already we have parents and students expressing their concern about the quality of education they are receiving from these teachers. Realizing we have few, if any other options, we are seeking to quickly build the capacity of these teachers. Is it where I would like to be? No! But when we have a limited number of options we do what we can to best staff schools.

Math is not the only area we were struggling with this year. I would say it is wide spread and in most of the content areas from secondary to elementary. The two exceptions where we have several candidates are physical education and history. As I attend the recruitment fairs in the state, I see prospective teachers accept more lucrative opportunities in other states, when we can least afford to see quality candidates leave our state.

The pool of qualified candidates is shrinking. We hired teachers this year we would not have hired in the past.

I believe we are on the path of a teacher shortage crisis. The number of students entering into educational programs is decreasing while the demand is increasing. My concern is there is no quick fix to such a problem. It will take 4 to 5 years to graduate someone with a teaching degree so the solution is 4 to 5 year down the road if we implement a plan now. If it takes a year or two to address and change this trend we are now 6 to 7 years way from a solution. I do not see the luxury of waiting to address this concern.

Canyons School District

No, we were not able to hire all the teachers needed by the first day of school.

The needs in our districts are in Spanish (Middle School), Kindergarten, 1st Grade, 2nd Grade, School Psychologists, and Special Education. We are currently covering those areas with substitutes (K-2), and paraeducators (Special Education)

We still have two classes without a professional teacher — one kindergarten and one first grade

Yes, we had to hire Math/Science/Elementary ARL candidates as no professional teachers were available. We hired teachers who had great content knowledge in their “field” but lack the pedagogy and engagement strategies for teaching. ARL candidates require a lot of additional time and support from staff members and coaches. We also hired a few secondary interns who are struggling with classroom management and instruction.

The pool of qualified candidates is shrinking dramatically.

We are hiring more out of state candidates than ever before due to lack of in-state candidates and district competition.

- Recruiting Needs:--
 - Science—Physics, Chemistry, Middle School Integrated
 - Technology and Engineering,
 - Dual Immersion Middle School
 - Elementary K-2
 - Special Education
 - School Psychologist

Carbon County School District

We did have a full staff this fall; however we did hire some ARLs in Science and math.

We always have struggles finding Science, Math, and SPED. But Elem. teachers are not nearly as plentiful as in the past.

We lost an Elem. teacher in mid July. We posted and received two applicants. We took the better of the two. In the beginning of my fifth year as superintendent in Carbon, as I look back, it is sad that so many secondary students in Math and Science have ARL teachers. It is the number one biggest hurdle to helping kids succeed academically.

All candidate pools are much shallower. Math, and Science are very low, but the number of elementary teacher candidates is shrinking.

The salary is a factor but the amount of pressure there is on teachers today is unbelievable. I don't have the answer but the SAGE scores and School Grades make it not very enticing to go into a profession with that much pressure and without much financial reward.

Davis County School District

No, we did not have all teachers hired by day one of school.

We had five Elementary Ed openings, two Secondary Technology Ed positions, and three Special Ed positions still open on the first day of school. We had to start the year with substitutes in those classrooms.

We currently have a High School History opening and four Special Ed openings.

Yes, we had to hire some teachers who were not up to the quality we usually demand. Particularly for late openings, we've had to hire teachers that we may not have hired otherwise. These teachers have been hired on one-year-contracts.

The pool of qualified candidates is definitely shrinking

Language immersion positions have been particularly difficult to fill this year; Special Ed, as always, is very difficult as well.

The teacher shortage is really hard to quantify because although we may be able to fill positions, we don't necessarily feel that they are being filled with the quality of teachers we have hired in the past. It's much like comparing a fine restaurant with McDonald's. I may be full when I leave either one, but there is a huge difference in the quality.

Emery County School District

- 1) Did you have all of your teachers hired by day one of school? **No. We were still looking for elementary teachers, a secondary math teacher, a resource teacher, and a high school English teacher. We covered the classes with substitutes and ended up with several teachers that have not completed their licensure. Some are a year away. We still are trying to hire a Special Education teacher.**
- 2) Did you hire any teachers that you believed were less than the quality teachers you wished to hire? **Yes. We still have concerns about the Math teacher and two of our**

elementary teachers. They lack classroom management skills and the math teacher is not prepared for the new core standards.

- 3) Is the pool of qualified candidates for teaching in your district shrinking, growing, or is it about the same? **Definitely shrinking – fast.**

Garfield County School District

We were able to hire teachers for all our open positions.

Yes, we had to hire teachers who are not fully prepared. We currently have three teachers who are working on an ARL and do not have a teaching license.

The pool of qualified candidates is shrinking. Three years ago in the Garfield County School District we had over 50 applicants for a full time elementary teacher position; this year we received one application for a full time elementary teaching position.

Grand County School District

Grand County is not fully staffed. We are still looking for a pre-school teacher and are covering those classes with paraeducators and a principal supervisor.

We have 10 of our teachers who are working on alternate programs, ARL's or basic educational degrees in addition to their existing degrees or, they are actually working toward their first degree.

Granite School District

All positions were filled.

Jordan School District

The Jordan School District (JSD) hired 400 teachers for the start of the 2015-16 school year. Three positions were filled with substitute teachers. However, due to the increase in student enrollment by 800+ students, the district had to hire additional teachers. JSD has filled all but 1 secondary Engineering position and 5 elementary positions to meet our growing needs. The candidates remaining in the pool at this time are not strong candidates.

This year, the district's student enrollment increased by approximately 800 students. According to JSD's 5-Year Building Construction Plan, the district is projected to open 6 new schools in the next 5 years, pending the passage of a bond. Meeting the continuing growth needs of the district will be extremely challenging.

There are fewer candidates for hard-to-fill areas such as STEM teachers, special education, Dual Language immersion and some CTE areas. School will soon be faced with fewer class offerings

for students because districts will not be able to find qualified teachers in these hard-to-fill areas.

The shortage of qualified employees is not just limited to teachers. Districts also struggle to meet Federal and State Compliance requirements for special programs and services. It is extremely difficult for districts to find qualified speech and language pathologists, school psychologists, nurses, and bus drivers. Often times, vacancies in these areas remain unfilled and other professionals are required to “pick up the slack” or the districts must seek contract services with agencies that provide these services.

Our main recruitment efforts are in state; however, our University partners are telling us there is a 20% decline in enrollment in their teacher preparation programs. The shortage is upon us; however, the teacher shortage is a nationwide problem.

Kane County School District

We were not able to hire a secondary Math teacher. We are covering this by having existing teachers teach during their prep period. We intend to advertise and try again this coming spring. We were also unable to find an acceptable English and Science teacher at the secondary level. We asked the retiring English teacher to come back for one more year and we hired a non-certified person with a science background to teach the science class.

We did hire a non-certified person to teach Science. This was not our preference but we had no choice. This high school is small and only has one Science teacher for 7-12 grades. It is not an ideal situation or a long term solution.

We are finding that the pool of teachers available for Kane District employment K-12 is becoming smaller. Candidates for elementary through high school positions were very small and the quality of candidates was noticeably short on excellence. For example, in the three elementary positions there was only one candidate that stood out as a quality teacher. We had one highly qualified applicant for the secondary Math position. She had graduated from one of our high schools and wanted to come back. But she teaches in Wyoming and when she realized she would take a \$23,000 pay cut she had to decline. After her, there was nothing we felt comfortable with. In the English and Science positions, we were bare bones to start with. There were no qualified candidates we felt safe with for hiring.

We feel this has to be the number one priority of the legislature and state school board. There needs to be a long term commitment from the legislature to significantly increase teacher salaries. It should be a separate line item not associated with the WPU. Education is not an attractive profession for a larger and larger population of students entering college. I am hearing more and more educators say that they don't encourage their own children to enter the profession even though they are successful educators themselves. I am one of these. The

pay level is so low, it is almost impossible for them to sustain a family when they are starting out in education.

Logan City School District

Logan City School District	
Question	Response
1. Did you have all of your teachers hired (appropriately in subject and grade) by day one of school?	No, we did not.
1a. If not, where were the gaps in your district, by subject and grade?	<p>We were not able to fill the following positions by day one of school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary orchestra • Secondary math/level 4 <p>We were scrambling two weeks before school to fill kindergarten, second grade, fourth grade, middle school math, high school math, science, engineering, business/marketing, and special education.</p>
1b. How did you “cover” those classes – with substitutes, teachers out of subject, Para educators?	<p>Classes were covered by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collapsing smaller sections and reassigning teachers • Hiring educators with an expired teaching license • Utilizing a long term substitute
1c. How many classes still do not have a teacher in them as of September 21, 2015?	We are fully staffed.
2. Did you hire any teachers who you believed were less than the quality of teachers you wished to hire? Please elaborate in as much detail as possible without divulging confidential information or identification.	Yes, we hired a number of educators with expired licenses, as well as a number of ARL candidates. We will also place a number of teachers on authorizations and/or SAEPs.
3. Is the pool of “qualified” candidates for teaching in your district shrinking, growing, or is it about the same?	<p>Our candidate pool is substantially shrinking especially in early childhood, elementary education, special education, mathematics, biology, physics, fine arts, and all areas of CTE.</p> <p>Logan District use to receive 200+ elementary applications each spring compared to</p>

	<p>approximately 80 the past few years.</p> <p>We use to get nearly two dozen applications for each secondary opening compared to approximately five or six now.</p> <p>If we have vacancies in June or thereafter, we get one or two applications and those applicants are not highly qualified and do not have positive reference checks.</p>
<p>4. Other comments you wish to be heard on this matter?</p>	

Morgan County School District

1. 20 of 22 teaching positions filled before the first day of school except for
 - a. Secondary Special Education and middle school CTE
 - b. Filled with ARL candidates on first day of school. Considered filling with long term substitutes.
 - c. All positions currently filled.
2. Teachers are hired each year in our district that have been passed over by other school districts.
3. The pool of qualified candidates in our district is shrinking.

We are losing teachers each year to retirement and relocation to districts that pay more. We also have a few teachers who leave because of positions offered in schools and charters closer to where they live.

Murray City School District

1. We did have all our positions filled the first day of school.
2. We did end up hiring two “ARL” teachers, which would not have been our first option. Time will tell how good they are but our experience with “ARL” teachers hasn’t been the best.
3. The pool is definitely shrinking.
4. Last year we ended up “non-renewing” about 10 teachers which was a huge number for our district. I think that this speaks directly to the quality of teachers available in the pool of candidates available. I would be interested to know how many of these teachers got jobs in other districts this year.

Nebo School District

1. No, we were not fully staffed on day one of school.
 - a. We had gaps in SPED Severe, SPED mild/Moderate, SPED Pre-school, and secondary math.
 - b. We covered with substitutes and having teachers teach out of subject.
 - c. We still have one class without a professional teacher, but several classes with teachers who are working on Letters of Authorization.
2. We have several who are not deemed professional teachers yet as they are on ARL's.
3. The pool of qualified candidates is shrinking
4. The teacher shortage is real, primarily because we cannot attract people into education. The big draws used to be amazing retirement (now significantly reduced), great insurance (significantly reduced), the guarantee of steady paychecks with steady increases (threatened by performance pay), and the community holding educators in high esteem (seemingly under attack at every turn as the dialogue with policy makers and media has moved to "we are failing"). Solving the challenge will require a multi-faceted approach.

We are also starting to see shortages in classified positions (bus and lunch primarily), so let's not forget that the same problems and solutions are likely needed here as well.

North Sanpete School District

We hired enough teachers, but several were not properly endorsed and some were not even certified yet. Our applicant pool is not adequate.

North Summit School District

Yes, we were lucky to fill all open positions.

We felt good about our newly-hired people.

The quality candidate pool is shrinking.

Certainly we need more candidates in our state, but we need to make it more attractive.

Ogden City School District

1. To date, we do have all of our teachers hired. The hardest to fill were the secondary math slots and the CTE Technology positions.
2. We have not hired any teachers that we felt were less than quality. So far, we have been fortunate as to the quality of new teachers.
3. Yes, the pool is shrinking, and definitely not growing.
4. We did some heavy recruiting early last school year and went outside the state. We have been very happy with the teachers we have recruited from Michigan. This is due to the teacher program that they have. Their students receive a full year student teaching internship and seem better prepared.

Piute County School District

We were able to hire for all open positions.

In small districts it is hard to find highly qualified teachers to meet all subject areas. We hire the most qualified, then, we place them on an ARL or SAEP plan to meet other qualifications needed.

The pool of qualified candidates in our districts is about the same as in past years.

Rich County School District

1. We did have all our teachers in place on day one, however, we hired an SLP on the first of August, so I am sure the other school was in trouble.
2. In two categories, we hired the only qualified candidate that applied. We had no choices to make.
3. The quality candidate pool is shrinking, particularly at the secondary level.

Salt Lake City School District

We were not able to hire to fill all open positions and still have these needs: middle school math, academic coaches in math, and elementary self-contained special education

In order to start school, we had a substitute for middle school math, we are continuing to look for coaches, and we combined classes in special education.

As of mid-September, we still need coaches, special education and now, speech pathology.

We hired a few that are on one-year only contracts.

The quality candidate pool is shrinking in some areas and can vary from year-to-year.

Investments in mentoring and professional development can help with retention of the narrowing group of candidates we have.

San Juan School District

1. We had all positions filled by the first day of school with the exception of a CTE Welding/Automotive Teacher. We used a substitute until we could hire an ARL candidate. As of September 21st, we have filled all teaching positions within the District.
2. We hired 7 ARL Candidates. Even though most are doing surprisingly well, they still have little or no training as teachers.
3. The pools of "qualified" candidates is definitely shrinking. For elementary teachers, one out-of-state source is dramatically drying up because the teachers coming out of their program have a very difficult time getting licensed in the State of Utah.
4. We are very worried that we will be unable to attract Math, Language Arts, Science, CTE, Special Education and even elementary teachers in the future. Even though we have

filled all positions, we did not get any applicants for a few critical positions. However we were able to fill these positions based on applicants for other positions and by approaching individuals asking if they would be interested. We are working with USU-Eastern to try to establish a teacher education program in our area, but generated very few students interested this year.

Sevier County School District

Yes, we were able to fill all positions by the start of school, but we barely made it.

The greatest challenge is finding high school math and elementary teachers.

We didn't have to start without certified teachers, but if we were forced to, we had planned on assigning long-term substitutes. Today, all of our classes have a teacher assigned, however, we have four teachers assigned who are unqualified per license, and three on ARL tracks.

We were fortunate in that people want to move to our valley. We had far fewer applicants than we have had historically. The majority of our hires were high quality. We are already beginning to intervene and coach/support some. Our hope is that we get them to the effective level but we will non-renew if necessary. Again, this is a small minority of all that we hired. We hired 36 new teachers. That is a very large amount for a district that employs less than 250 teachers. This year the great majority were secondary (25 of the 36). We have never been so worried that we wouldn't find quality teachers as we were this year; miraculously our slots were filled. It is interesting to note that 14 of the 36 were level 2 educators, meaning the candidates likely, and unfortunately, came from other Utah districts.

The pool of qualified candidates is clearly shrinking. However, we are fortunate that people want to live in our beautiful valley.

Addressing the teacher shortage should be the number one priority for all educational stakeholders in the state of Utah as was clearly revealed in the Cedar City legislative/educational stakeholder meeting.

Tintic School District

1. No, we did not have all of our vacancies filled by day one of school.
 - a. We were lacking Math, English and Science in one school and Agricultural Science in another building.
 - b. Classes are being covered via IVC from Tintic High School and other outside means.
 - c. Some classes do not yet have a professional teacher in them but are covered only by IVC classroom instruction or concurrent enrolment.
2. Yes, we had to hire people who were not certified for the assigned subject. One teacher in the most rural area was an individual with a physical education license and not one of the three advertised as needed.
3. The quality candidate pool is shrinking dramatically in all areas and grade levels.

Tooele County School District

1. Did you have all of your teachers hired (appropriately in subject and grade) by day one of school? NO
 - a. If not, where were the gaps in your district, by subject and grade?
Elementary, Secondary in most subject areas, SPED, SLP, Psych, CTE
 - b. How did you “cover” those classes – with substitutes, teachers out of subject, paraeducators? Substitutes (Long and short term), ARL (most we have had in years), Interns, and we are begging for teachers to return to education. Many are assigned outside or their licensed area. Paraeducators are also being used to cover classes.
 - c. How many classes still do not have a teacher in them as of September 21, 2015? Three Elementary, Four secondary
2. Did you hire any teachers who you believed were less than the quality of teachers you wished to hire? Please elaborate in as much detail as possible without divulging confidential information or identification. Absolutely. The pool has shrunk, if not disappeared, for rural districts. We cannot compete with the larger districts in salary. We have had to step up our efforts to recruit from out of state to improve our pool. The ones who stay from in-state colleges are ones who have a tie to our area. Many leave the state for higher salaries and again, many go to the larger districts and we are left to pick through non-renewals and subpar or those who were not rehired in other districts. We will be investing more time on the road recruiting out of state as we have no other options to fill our classes. Hiring ARL and long term substitutes is the only way we are “down” to having only 7 open positions, as of mid-September.
3. Is the pool of “qualified” candidates for teaching in your district shrinking, growing, or is it about the same? Significantly shrinking
4. Other comments you wish to be heard on this matter? Our most rural schools are hardest to fill. Turnover of 50% or more of staff makes it extremely difficult to turnaround a low performing school. Any help is long overdue.

Uintah County School District

1. Did you have all of your teachers hired (appropriately in subject and grade) by day one of school? No.
 - a. If not, where were the gaps in your district, by subject and grade? We had openings in Special Education, Secondary Math and Secondary Science. We also had openings in elementary education.
 - b. How did you “cover” those classes – with substitutes, teachers out of subject, paraeducators? We used substitutes and increased class sizes.
 - c. How many classes still do not have a teacher in them as of September 21, 2015? Two are still covered with substitutes. Many have been filled with ARLs.

2. Did you hire any teachers who you believed were less than the quality of teachers you wished to hire? Please elaborate in as much detail as possible without divulging confidential information or identification. We have hired 28 ARLs this year.

3. Is the pool of “qualified” candidates for teaching in your district shrinking, growing, or is it about the same? I'm not sure. Early in the Spring, we seemed to have had a good pool of candidates; we just can't get them to move to Utah or into a rural setting.

Wasatch County School District

Did you have all of your teachers hired (appropriately in subject and grade) by day one of school?

- a. If not, where were the gaps in your district, by subject and grade? *We opened a chemistry job last spring, we couldn't get it filled.*
- b. How did you “cover” those classes – with substitutes, teachers out of subject, paraeducators? *Bought out preps from other teachers*
- c. How many classes still do not have a teacher in them as of September 21, 2015? *Fully staffed with the exception of the previous example*

Did you hire any teachers who you believed were less than the quality of teachers you wished to hire? Please elaborate in as much detail as possible without divulging confidential information or identification. *I have been in this job (HR) for three years. This year represents the largest number of nonlicensed/ARL teachers. Most of that is due to Dual Immersion programs.*

Is the pool of “qualified” candidates for teaching in your district shrinking, growing, or is it about the same? *Drastically shrinking across all areas.*

Washington County School District

1. No, we were not fully staffed by the beginning of school.

Our needs were in:

- Special Education Mild Moderate Teacher (2 locations, both filled now)
- Special Education Severe Teacher (1 location, still vacant)
- Special Education Preschool Teacher (2 vacancies)
- Dual Immersion Teachers (3 locations)
- Speech & Language Pathologist (2 vacancies)
- Occupational Therapist (1 vacancy)

We covered classes at the beginning of school with SPED Para-educators working additional hours in SPED classrooms, and Substitute Teachers for Dual Immersion classrooms

As of mid-September, we are still in need of teachers for dual Immersion classrooms (selections have been made, pending start dates) and one part-time SPED Severe Teacher.

We have hired quite a few under-qualified educators this year, with regards to licensure.

The pool of qualified candidates seems to be about the same. We are checking our online applicant system to see if we can compare the number of applicants between the two school years for a more accurate reading.

We are seeing fewer qualified teachers applying for jobs as the demand for teachers continues to grow. We are undoubtedly headed on a collision course.

Wayne County School District

There is a little different situation in our schools.

We chose not to replace a business teacher due to a serious shortfall in funding. We were able to replace some required classes with existing personnel. We did advertise for one position and got only two candidates. (They did not seem to be great candidates, as they only sent a little 1 page application with no supporting detail.)

We hired a new CTE teacher and that person was the only candidate but we are pleased with the quality offered there. We are experiencing fewer and fewer applicants in our recruitment each year and are concerned about the bleak prospects in the future.

We have a fair reserve of Elementary teachers waiting in the wings, but no secondary teacher prospects.

Usually we get only applicants that have not found a job in the larger districts, and unless they are REALLY interested in living in a rural community, they usually move on after one or two years.

Weber County School District

Weber School District began the school year with the following teacher shortages:

- 1) Secondary Math – 5 Openings
- 2) Secondary Language Arts – 2 Openings
- 3) Special Education – 5 Openings
- 4) Secondary Science – 2 Openings
- 5) Elementary Education – 7 Openings

We covered these openings with substitute teachers.

The pool of “qualified” candidates in our area is definitely shrinking.