RESEARCH BRIEF

Teacher Recruitment in California

An Analysis of Effective Strategies

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Teacher Recruitment in California: An Analysis of Effective Strategies

James L. Gentilucci, Ph.D., and James J. Brescia, Ed.D., researchers at the Veritas Research and Evaluation Group, prepared this report for the sole use of the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (hereafter referred to as the "CCSESA"). The researchers exercised due and customary diligence while conducting research and writing this report. Every effort has been made to ensure the quality and accuracy of the findings presented herein. All recommendations, opinions, or findings referred to in this report reflect the circumstances and facts as they existed at the time the researchers conducted the study. Any changes in such circumstances and facts may adversely affect any recommendations, opinions, or findings contained in the report.

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We thank the CCSESA research committee and its chair, San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools Anne Campbell, as well as the Executive Director of the CCSESA, Peter Birdsall, for enthusiastically supporting our work from its inception.

Finally, we express our appreciation for the important contributions of those who offered us their expertise during the research process. In particular, we thank Diane Ehrle, Ed.D., Manager of Assessment, Accountability, and Evaluation at the Orange County Department of Education; Danielle Brescia, Director of Human Resources at ColRich; Anne Gao, Senior Financial Analyst at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and Amanda Dickey Esq., Policy Consultant for Intergovernmental and Legal Affairs for the CCSESA.

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[i] Throughout this report, we refer to K-12 districts and county offices of education collectively as local education agencies or "LEAs." According to the U.S. Department of Education, a LEA is a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a state for either administrative control or direction of public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision.

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■ INTRODUCTION

Those who analyze trends in California K-12 education should not be surprised that LEAs in many areas of the state are experiencing difficulty recruiting high-quality teachers, especially in the areas of special education, mathematics, science, foreign languages, and bilingual education.[1] While recent large-scale analyses of the problem suggest that California is facing a massive *statewide* teacher shortage,[2] this study presents evidence that the scope and severity of the problem are much more nuanced than claimed.[3] Teacher shortages vary significantly throughout the state and across K-12 grade levels because of regional differences in geography, economy, and demography as well as disparities in resource capacity among LEAs.

While the problem has been studied extensively, it has been examined primarily from the perspectives of researchers, policymakers, and government officials—those who are external observers of the K-12 educational system. Such inquiry is *descriptive* rather than *explanatory,* and it infrequently considers the issue from the perspectives of those who are participants within the system.

This study, sponsored by the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA), follows an alternative line of investigation and examines the problem through a different research lens. It uses an inductive "bottom-up" rather than "top-down" lens that has its roots in Grounded Theory as articulated by Glaser and Strauss (1967)[4] and refined by Strauss and Corbin (1990).[5] It provides an overview of the teacher shortage and a detailed analysis of recruitment strategies used throughout the state by directly eliciting the perspectives of K-12 superintendents, human resource directors, and site principals—those who know the problem most intimately and who interact with it directly at the "street level." [6]

Because the CCSESA is interested in identifying and analyzing *effective* recruiting strategies in use across the state, the study is intentionally focused on the practices of California LEAs that fill 90 percent or more of their teacher vacancies each year. Leaders from these LEAs were invited to share their professional knowledge and insight about strategies they use to address teacher shortages in their local settings.

■ CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM

Recent media attention notwithstanding, recruiting sufficient numbers of high-quality teachers for California's K-12 schools is not a new challenge. Teacher shortages have waxed and waned since the 1960s as a result of economic expansion-recession cycles, changes in workforce demographics, and fluctuations in school-aged populations throughout the state.[7] However, the present shortage of well-prepared teachers differs notably from its predecessors because of the convergence of four significant economic and demographic trends: 1) effects of the state's cyclical, boom-and-bust economy, 2) massive retirements among the Baby Boomer generation, 3) maturation of the Millennial generation into the workforce, and 4) the increasingly prohibitive opportunity costs associated with entering the teaching profession. The confluence of these trends has diminished the teacher supply pipeline, and it is not a transitory phenomenon. Today's shortages portend more fundamental and lasting changes that are taking place among the state's nascent teacher workforce.

THE EFFECTS OF CALIFORNIA'S ECONOMIC MERRY-GO-ROUND

During the mid-1990s, a period of enhanced revenue related to the state's "dot-com" technology boom, the governor signed into law California Senate Bill 1777, the *K-3 Class Size Reduction Program.* The goal of SB 1777 was to improve education in kindergarten and grades one through three by providing funds for reducing classes to 20 or fewer pupils per certificated teacher.[8] Predictably, demand for teachers surged as LEAs attempted to recruit sufficient numbers to comply with the new legislation,[9] and what was arguably an artificially created teacher shortage ensued.[10]

Despite a scarcity of available teachers in some areas of the state, nearly all of California's first- and second-grade students and approximately two-thirds of its kindergarten students were receiving at least some instruction in 20:1 classroom settings by the end of the 1998-99 school year. However, rapidly achieving this goal forced many LEAs to hire under-licensed teachers (i.e., those not fully credentialed) and by the 1999-2000 school year, 13.4 percent of the state's teachers were providing instruction using waivers or emergency permits.[11]

When the technology bubble burst in 2001, California's economy entered a severe recession. After years of excess revenue and substantial expenditures, the state found itself facing an estimated $20 billion-dollar shortfall in its 2002 budget.[12] In response, the governor proposed cutting approximately $1.6 billion dollars in financing for LEAs, and layoff notices were issued to an estimated 25,000 teachers.[13] Another boom-and-bust teacher employment cycle had played itself out on the California stage.

The state's economy officially exited the recession in late 2002,[14] and by the 2004-05 academic year a weak recovery in the rate of teacher hiring began. Between that school year and the 2007-08 academic year, 4,506 teachers were added to LEA payrolls bringing the state's certificated teacher workforce total to an all-time high of 310,361 (see Figure 1).[15] Despite the improvement in the teacher employment picture, critical shortages of high-quality instructors persisted in the areas of special education, foreign languages, mathematics, computer sciences, physical sciences, and music.[16]

Unfortunately for teachers hired after 2004, California's economic recovery and subsequent revenue boom were being driven by yet another, more pernicious financial bubble in the credit and real estate markets. Relaxed lending standards by financial institutions made it possible for thousands of subprime borrowers to obtain home mortgages. Subsequently, the demand for houses skyrocketed as Californians rushed to buy and sell properties that were rapidly escalating in price.

Like all economic bubbles, the subprime real estate market eventually collapsed, and people lost homes, businesses, savings, and jobs. Bankruptcies and home foreclosures soared, and rapidly declining tax revenues plunged California into what is now known as the Great Recession.[17] Drastic cuts to educational funding and subsequent teacher layoffs quickly followed. Teacher employment in California shrank from a high of 310,361 in 2007-08 to a low of 283,836 in 2011-12, an 8.5 percent reduction in the statewide teacher workforce. Again, the teacher workforce was shaken by the state's economic expansion and contraction cycles.

California Teacher Employment and Economic Recessions
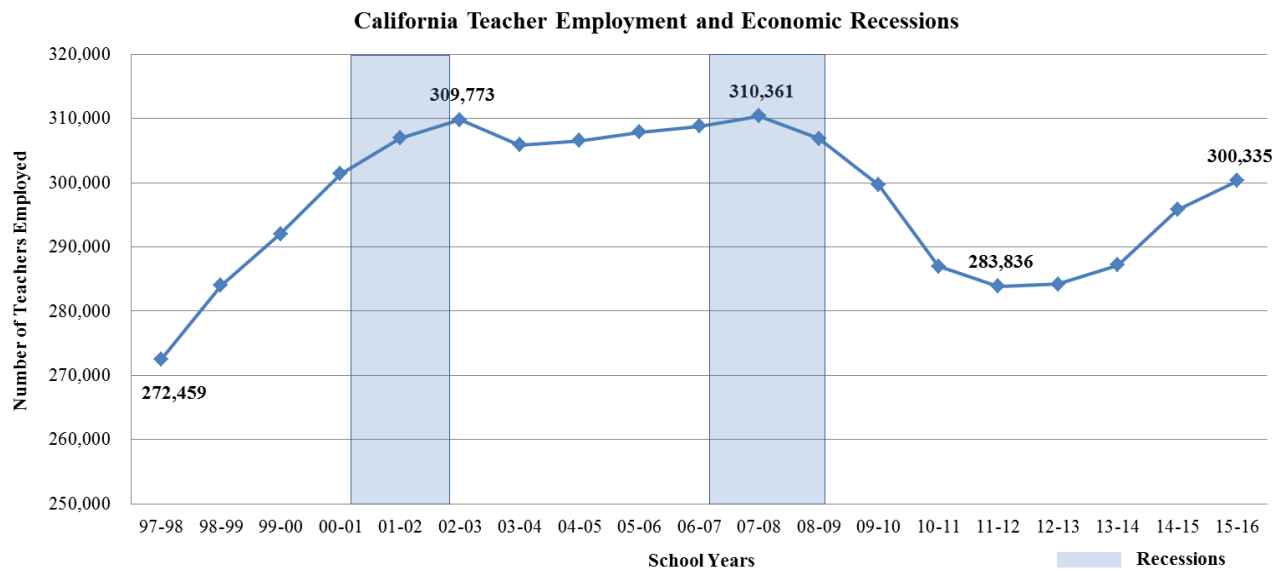
Figure 1. Historical levels of teacher employment in California K-12 public schools overlaid with most recent economic recession data.[ii] Note: Although the official periods of recession (shown in blue) were relatively short-term, their effects continued to disrupt U.S. labor markets for several subsequent years.

In particular, the devastating effects of the Great Recession continued to ripple through the economy long after the "jobless recovery" began, and prominent economists and social scientists cautioned that the recession's economic trauma would lead to long-term attitudinal and behavioral changes related to work.[18] The lessons of the Great Recession and cyclical teacher hiring-and-layoff patterns were especially instructive for the "recession generation" of college-aged students who searched, often with limited results, for career opportunities upon graduation. These graduates, often saddled with substantial student debt, eschewed lower-paying teaching opportunities for other more lucrative careers. Consequently, enrollments in teacher preparation programs throughout California dropped precipitously along with the number of new credentials issued by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (see Figure 2).[19]

[ii] Source: Authors' calculations based on data provided by the California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Office and the National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc. Online available: http://www.nber.org/cycles/.
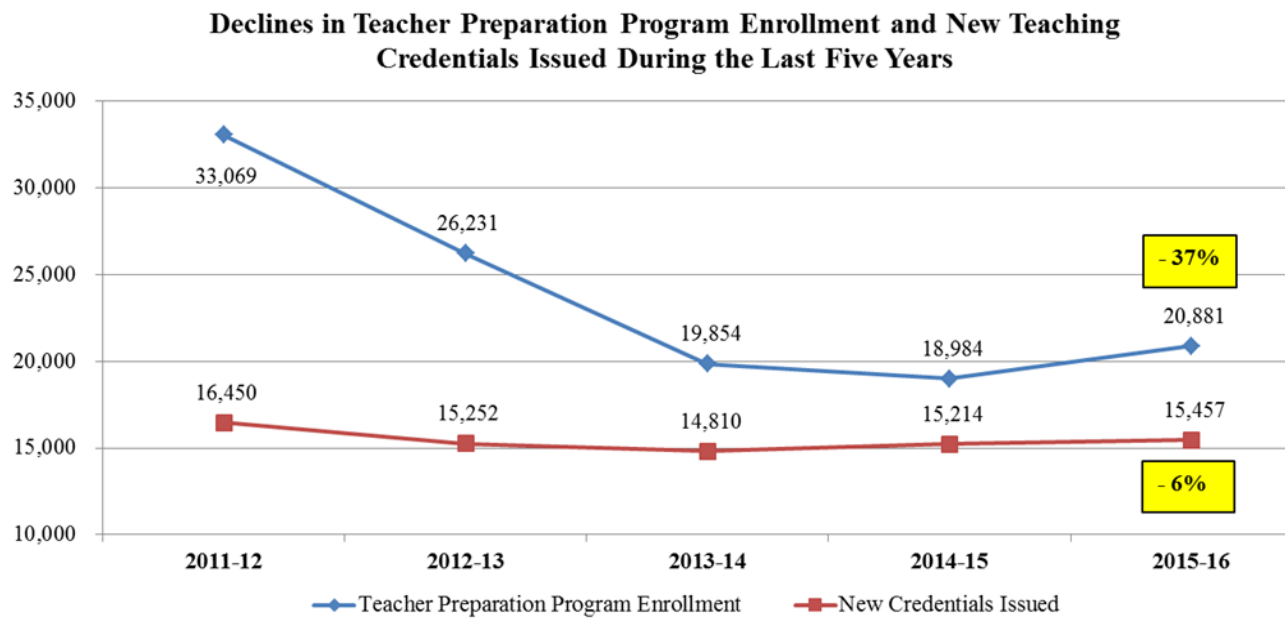
Figure 2. Percentage decrease in the number of individuals enrolled in teacher preparation program and the number of new credentials issued. Source: California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

BABY BOOMERS BID FAREWELL TO THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Another teacher workforce crisis, driven by demographics and influenced by the effects of the Great Recession, began to manifest itself in California's schools by the end of the 2007-08 academic year. Leading-edge members of the Baby Boomer generation began retiring in substantial numbers, and what began as a trickle soon became a flood as successive waves of Boomers reached the average teacher retirement age of 62.3 (see Figure 3).[20] By the end of the 2015-16 academic year, 125,124 teachers had retired from their positions.[21] If this trend continues as predicted, the state's K-12 teacher workforce will lose approximately one-third of its most experienced and accomplished educators by 2020 as the largest teacher retirement cohort in any decade post-World War II completes its tenure in California's schools.[22]

In light of the exodus of Baby Boomers from teacher employment ranks, LEAs redoubled "tried-and-true" recruitment efforts to attract new teachers to their schools. Although some experienced success, many others fell far short of their recruiting goals. LEAs in rural and remote areas and those with concentrations of high poverty households and second-language

learner populations continued their struggles to find sufficient credentialed teachers to staff their classrooms.

Annual Teacher Retirements in California, 2007 - 2016
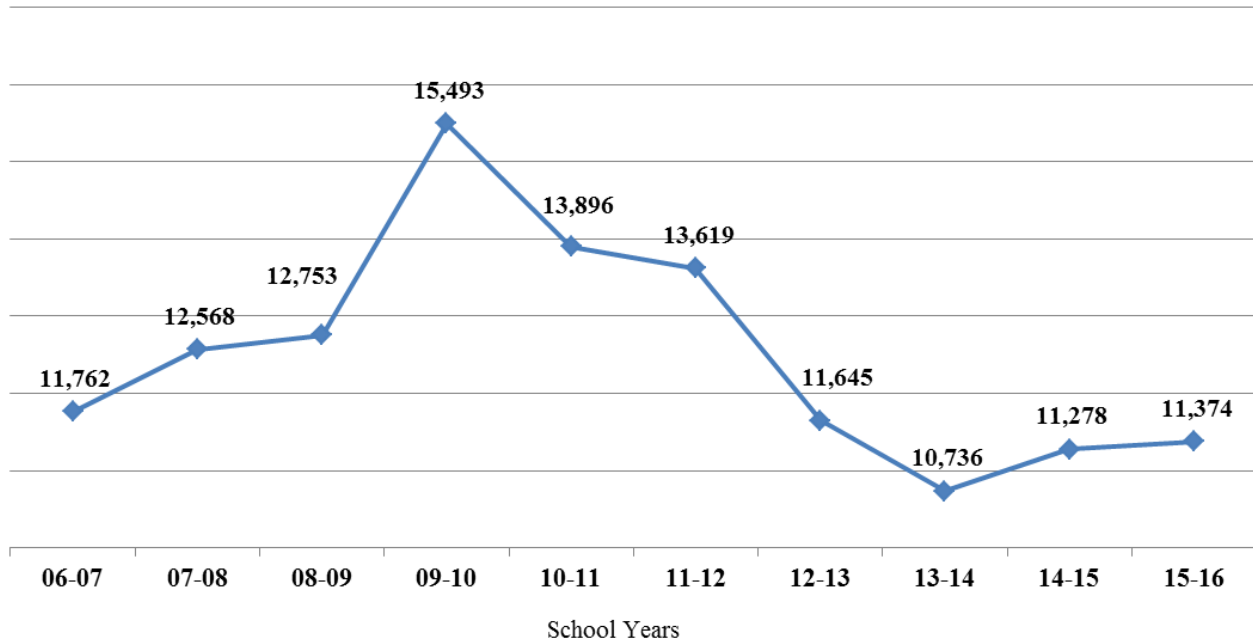
Figure 3. Retirement trends for California teachers, 2006-07 through 2015-16. Source: CalSTRS Comprehensive Financial Report, 2016.

To compensate for this scarcity, LEAs were forced to fill teaching assignments with individuals who held Provisional Internship Permits (PIPs), Short-Term Staff Permits (STSPs), multiple and single subject General Education Limited Assignment Teaching Permits (GELAPs), Special Education Limited Assignment Teaching Permits (SELAPs), and teaching waivers. Use of permits and waivers was designed as a short-term solution, but data indicate the hiring of individuals with emergency type credentials has become a prevalent long-term statewide trend (see Figure 4).[23] More important, data indicate high-poverty and high-minority LEAs hire twice as many of these underprepared teachers as LEAs that have more resources and fewer minority enrollments, and this practice threatens to worsen teacher-quality and equity gaps between high- and low-resource LEAs.[24]

Use of Interns, Permits, and Waivers Has Risen Sharply During the Last Five Years
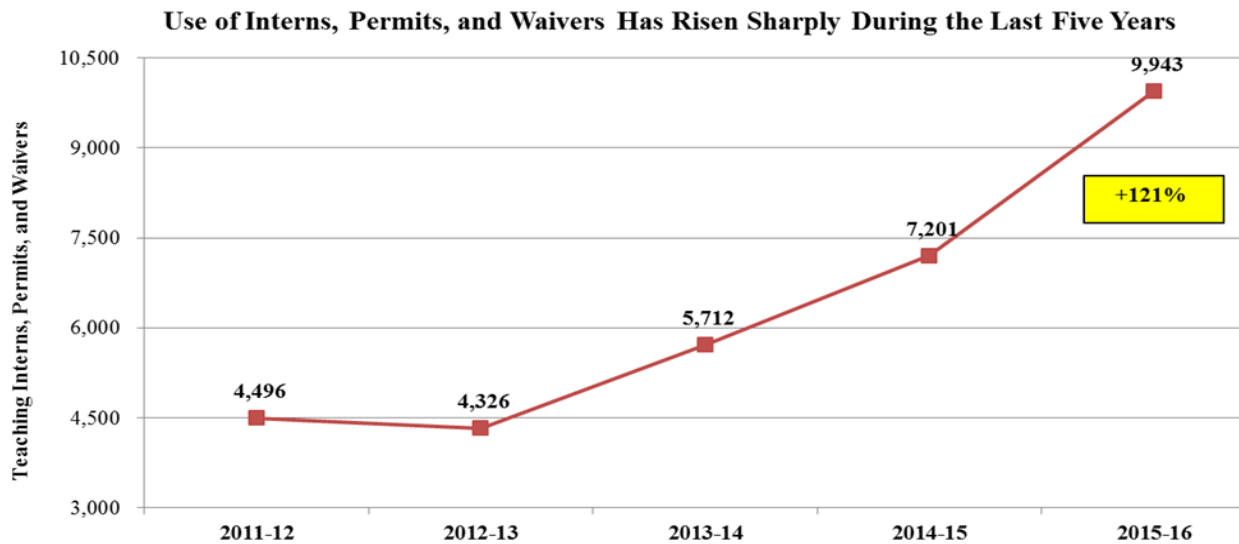
Figure 4. The hiring of teacher interns and those with specialized permits and waivers in California K-12 schools has increased dramatically during the past five years. Source: California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

RISE OF THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION

This research suggests that successful recruitment strategies for the Millennial Generation may differ from those of previous generations. This group consists of approximately 80 million individuals, and it is the largest generational cohort in American history.[25]

While its predecessor Generation X constitutes the bulk of today's workforce, it is estimated that Millennials will comprise 50 percent of the nation's workforce by 2020 and 75 percent by 2025 (see Figure 5).[26] It is also important to note that the post-millennial Generation Z, born between 2001 and 2015 and estimated to consist of 73 million digital natives, is not included in Figure 5 because its oldest members are still in high school. However, this latest generational cohort shares many of the values and characteristics of the Millennials, and its entrance into the workforce will likely amplify the trends observed today.

Generational Cohorts Move Through the Workforce
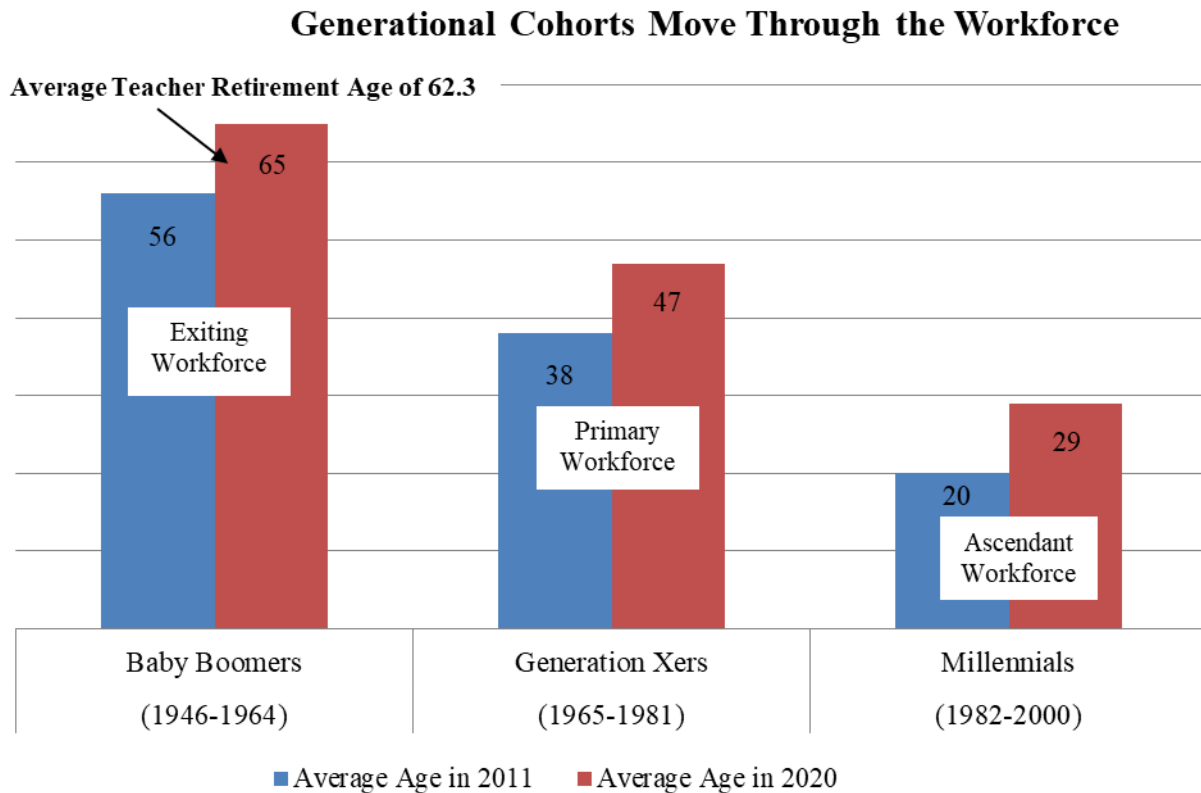
Figure 5. Depiction of how three generational cohorts are affecting teacher supply in California. Source: Authors' calculations derived from annual population estimates provided by the United States Census Bureau.

While every generation differs from its predecessors, Millennials possess distinctly different workplace values from those of their Baby Boomer and Generation X parents (see Table 1). For example, recent studies of Millennial characteristics reveal that they are less motivated than predecessor generations to advance in the workplace by following traditional career paths.[27]

Instead, they place particular emphasis on being remunerated and promoted based on individual talent and performance, regardless of the length of time on the job. Flexibility, quality of work environment, employment stability, control over their schedules, opportunities to work remotely, and the ability to take time away from work when needed all matter greatly to this generational cohort.[28]

Table 1

Selected Generational Differences in Workplace Attitudes and Values [29]

	Baby Boomers	**Generation X**	**Millennials**
Birth Years	1946 - 1964	1965 - 1981	1982 - 2000
Cohort Size[iii]	75.5 Million	65.7 Million	79.4 Million
Work Ethic	• Driven • Ambitious • Invented the 50-60 hour work week • Strive to do one's very best	• Balanced • Work smarter not harder • Self-reliant • Project oriented • Want structure and direction	• Idealistic vs. realistic • Flexibility and control most important • Want to have a say • Work anyplace, anytime
Work Values	• Pay and benefits are most important • Loyalty • Respect • Formal roles • Competition • Face time at work • Play by the rules	• Pay and benefits are important but balanced with a desire for personal growth • Adaptability • Loyalty, to a point • Resent being in Boomers' shadow • Independent • Self-starters • Diversity	• Workplace culture is more important than pay and benefits • Multitasking • Meaningful work • Collaboration • Tolerance • Goal-oriented • Tech-savvy • Entrepreneurial
Work – Life Balance	• Imbalance between work and family • Live to work • We can have it all	• Seek balance between work and family • No more latch-key kids • Work to live • Maybe we can't have it all	• Life is short – have fun • Emphasis on self-fulfillment rather than work • We know we can't have it all

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[iii] While there is a consensus about the birth years for the Baby Boom generation, demographers use slightly different birth years to define Generation X and the Millennial Generation. This produces variability in cohort size estimations.

Table 1 (continued)

Selected Generational Differences in Workplace Attitudes and Values

	Baby Boomers	**Generation X**	**Millennials**
Career Advancement	• Ambitious • Follow corporate path • Ladder climbers • Strive for the corner office • Long-term commitment to a single employer	• Focus on results, not on time spent on the job • Will follow corporate path but are willing to deviate to meet goals • Committed to employers but will change for advancement opportunities	• Recognition for my work is more important than a title • Create own path for career • Now! • Short-term commitments to multiple employers
What They Seek in a Workplace	• Flat organizations • Democratic • Semi-formal • Equal opportunity • Friendly	• Functional organizations • Efficiency • Fast paced and flexible • Informal • Access to technology	• Google-like • Fun, flexible, positive • Want continuous feedback • Highly creative and entrepreneurial

Despite differing Millennial workplace attitudes, the researchers found that most LEAs in the study sample continue to use strategies that were successful for recruiting Baby Boomers and Generation Xers in years past and here an important cautionary metaphor is offered:

It will become increasingly difficult to catch Millennial fish using Baby Boomer lures.

Take, for example, one of the most common "lures" used to recruit teachers during the past—pay and benefits. LEAs that continue to market their pay scales as a *primary strategy* to recruit Millennials are overlooking the reality that flexibility in compensation and advancement is more important than the amount of pay Millennials are initially offered. Another weakness of this strategy is that the salary and benefits system used in California's public schools has not changed much in nearly a half century,[30] and its non-performance-based compensation and

advancement structure (i.e., track-and-step with advancement options limited by collective bargaining) offers Millennials a system that does not match their values and professional aspirations.[31] Consequently, the best and brightest of this generational cohort often choose professions other than education because those professions offer innovative and flexible reward and promotion systems.[32]

THE OPPORTUNITY COST OF A CAREER IN TEACHING

Economists use the term opportunity cost to describe the loss of potential gain from other alternatives when one alternative is chosen, and changes in the labor market coupled with dramatic increases in the price of college tuition and fees have created an opportunity cost conundrum for Millennial students considering a career in teaching. Many are asking if the benefits of teaching outweigh the potential financial costs incurred by not pursuing more financially lucrative careers.

Throughout the college-going years of California's Baby Boomers and Generation Xers, the cost of obtaining a degree and credential at a public four-year institution was relatively moderate, depending on the choice of university (CSU or UC), lifestyle (i.e., living with parents or independently), and other personal decisions. The price of a four-year degree changed in the 2000s when college costs began to escalate rapidly. Between 2006 and 2016, tuition and fees at four-year universities increased by an average 63 percent, far outpacing increases in the overall Consumer Price Index (see Figure 6).[33]

The rapid increase in the cost of attending a four-year university placed considerable financial stress on students and parents as they struggled to find a way to pay for college. As a result, students and their parents began to finance a greater percentage of educational costs, and annual subsidized and unsubsidized borrowing rose from $42.6 billion in 1995 to $106.8 billion in 2016.[34] As of 2017, cumulative student debt totaled $1.3 trillion dollars, and the average student who graduated in 2016 had $37,172 in unpaid loans.[35]

Increase in College Tuition and Fees 2006 - 2016
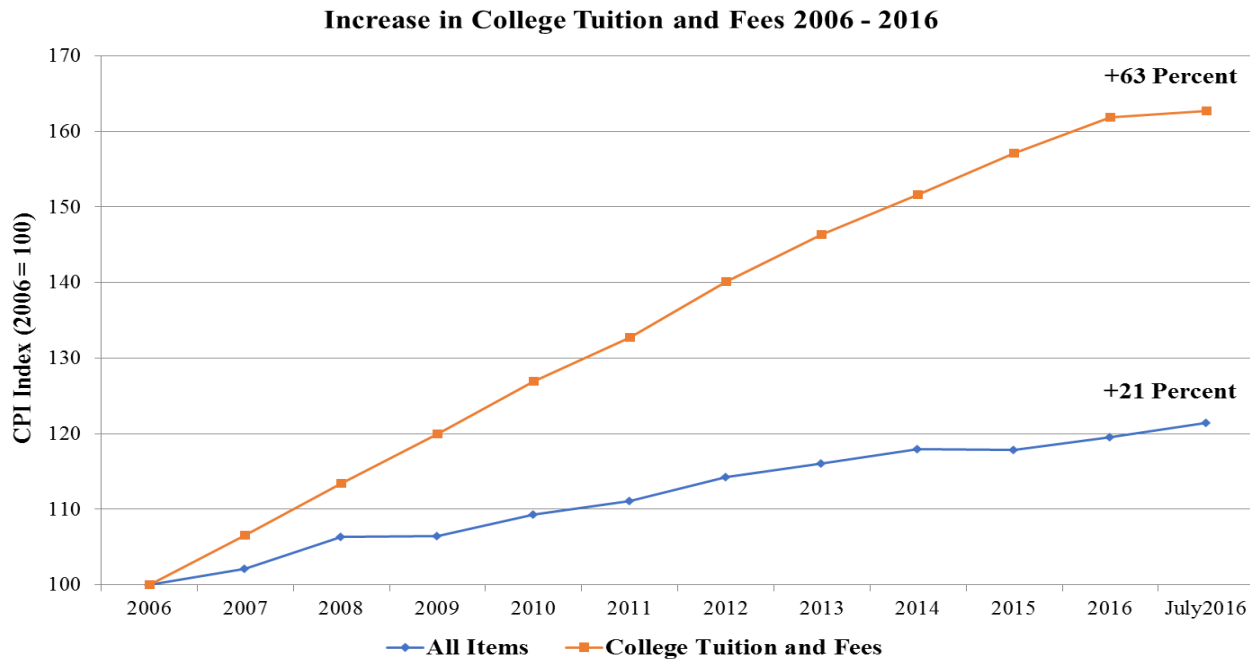
Figure 6. The rise in college tuition and fees has far outpaced the increase in the Consumer Price Index for all items during the last 10 years.

From a purely cost-benefit perspective, becoming a teacher may no longer make financial sense to many Millennials. This point is illustrated in the following simplified cost-benefit analysis (see Table 2). Multiple data sources were used to compare estimated costs and projected earnings for a student who is considering a teaching career and another who is contemplating becoming a registered nurse (i.e., two-year RN). Table 2 displays the estimated financial status of each student at the end of a six-year period.[iv]

[iv] Here are the assumptions built into the analysis: 1) a full-time teaching career student will attend a local campus of the California State University system; 2) the base year for calculation is 2017-18, and the cost-of-attendance for undergraduate students is $25,627.67. This amount is inflated by 4 percent annually to estimate costs for each successive undergraduate year of study; 3) the cost of the base credential year is $28,514.00, and it is inflated by 4 percent annually to estimate its true cost *after* four years of undergraduate study; 4) the average beginning teacher salary (BA + 30 with credential) for the base year is $44,995, and this amount is inflated by 2 percent annually to estimate the average beginning teacher salary when the teacher candidate is ready to enter the classroom; 5) the average starting hourly wage for full-time registered nurses in California was $35.37 during the base year, and this amount is inflated by 3 percent annually to reflect market demand.

Table 2

Hypothetical Cost-Benefit Analysis of Teaching and Registered Nursing Career Paths

Year	Item	Teacher	Registered Nurse
2018 – 2019	Tuition	($25,627.67)	($20,207.20)
2019 - 2020	Tuition	(26,652.77)	(21,015.49)
2020 - 2021	Tuition or **Earnings**	(27,718.88)	**73,569.60**
2021 - 2022	Tuition or **Earnings**	(28,827.64)	**75,776.69**
2022 - 2023	Tuition or **Earnings**	(34,369.64)	**78,049.99**
2023 - 2024	Tuition or **Earnings**	**51,886.78**	**80,391.49**
Net Financial Status		($91,631.82)	$266,565.08

Note: Figures shown in parentheses are costs (negative numbers). Figures in bold text are estimated average yearly earnings.

According to the data in Table 2, a prospective teacher who enters the workforce after a five-year course of preparation and a registered nurse who does the same after a two-year training program experience drastically different financial outcomes at the end of year six. Assuming both used loans to pay for their entire educations, the teacher would end year six approximately $91.6 thousand dollars in debt, while the registered nurse would have repaid all loans and earned enough cumulative income for a possible down payment on a first home.[v]

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[v] During the August 2017 legislative session, the Governor signed into law Assembly Bill 170, which ended a half-century-old law that prevented aspiring teachers in California from obtaining a baccalaureate degree in education and required them to pursue a teaching credential only after earning an undergraduate degree. The effects of this legislation on credentialing practices and concomitant opportunity costs associated with entering the teaching profession are unknown at the time of this report.

■ METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to generate empirically-based knowledge about three topics of interest to the CCSESA: 1) the characteristics of LEAs that successfully recruit teachers, 2) innovative strategies that show promise of efficacy in recruiting teachers, and 3) how LEAs can replicate, adapt, and scale these practices in their unique geographic, economic, and demographic settings. This report of findings explains why the present teacher shortage differs significantly from those of that past, and it identifies strategies that have been developed through professional knowledge and insight to address staffing challenges in California's K-12 schools. A brief discussion of the methods used to conduct the study is presented here to provide appropriate context for understanding the report's findings and recommendations.

SELECTION OF THE STUDY SAMPLE

Only California LEAs that had filled at least 90 percent of their teaching vacancies for the past two years were eligible to participate in the study. After considering the challenge of choosing a sample that accurately represented LEAs across that state, the researchers developed four pre-selection criteria to guide the purposeful sampling process. They included geographic location, locale type, size, and wealth status (i.e., basic aid funded versus local control funding formula [LCFF] funded).

Use of these criteria resulted in the selection of 21 LEAs that reflected the state's varied geography, demography, and economic conditions. After securing agreements of participation from each LEA, a *post hoc* analysis of two additional characteristics—student socioeconomic status and the percentage of English language learners (ELL) in the study sample—was undertaken to verify the representativeness of the sample. The outcomes of pre-selection screening and *post hoc* analyses follow.

Geographic Location

The LEAs in the sample are located in 10 counties, each with a unique set of geographic, demographic, and economic challenges that mirror those found throughout California. Figure 7 displays these LEA locations.
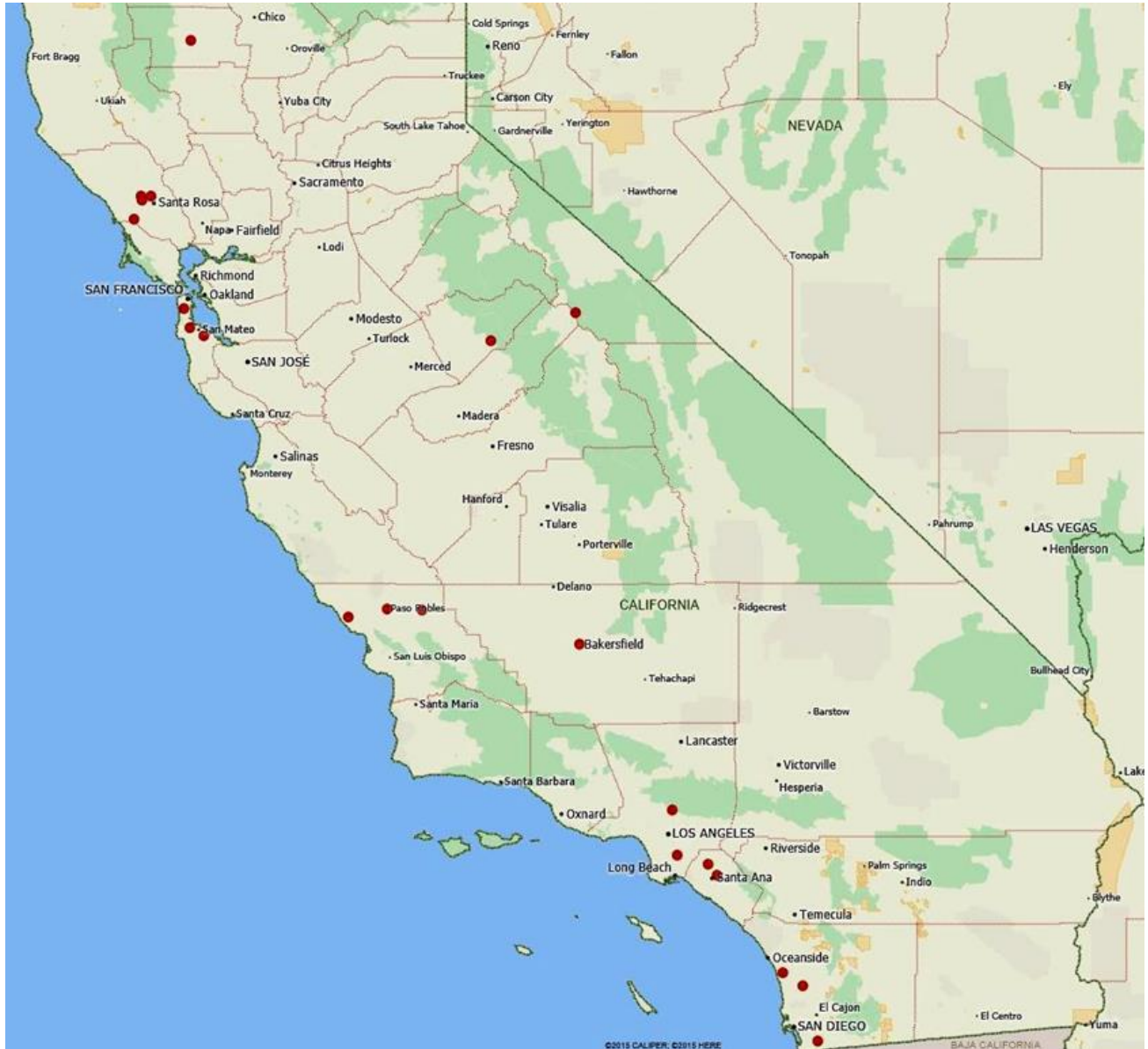
Figure 7. Red symbols represent the location of LEAs that provided data for the study.

Locale Type

Four geographic locale types—city, suburban, town, and rural as defined by the National Center for Education Statistics—were used as sampling criteria.[36] Table 3 compares the percentages of locale types represented by the sample LEAs with those of the entire state. The data indicate the study sample is somewhat weighted in favor of suburban and rural LEAs.

Table 3

Comparison of Locale Type between LEAs in the Study Sample and all LEAs in California

Locale Type	LEAs in Study Sample (%)	LEAs in California (%)
City	33	44
Suburb	43	39
Town	5	6
Rural	19	11

Source for California data: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2012.

LEA Size

Enrollment distribution percentages (i.e., LEA sizes) of the sample were compared with those of LEAs across the state. Ninety percent of the study sample consists of LEAs with enrollments of 30,000 or fewer students, while the statewide percentage of LEAs with this enrollment characteristic is approximately 65 percent.[37] This difference weights the sample in favor of small- to mid-size LEAs (see Figure 8).

Enrollment Classification of Sample LEAs
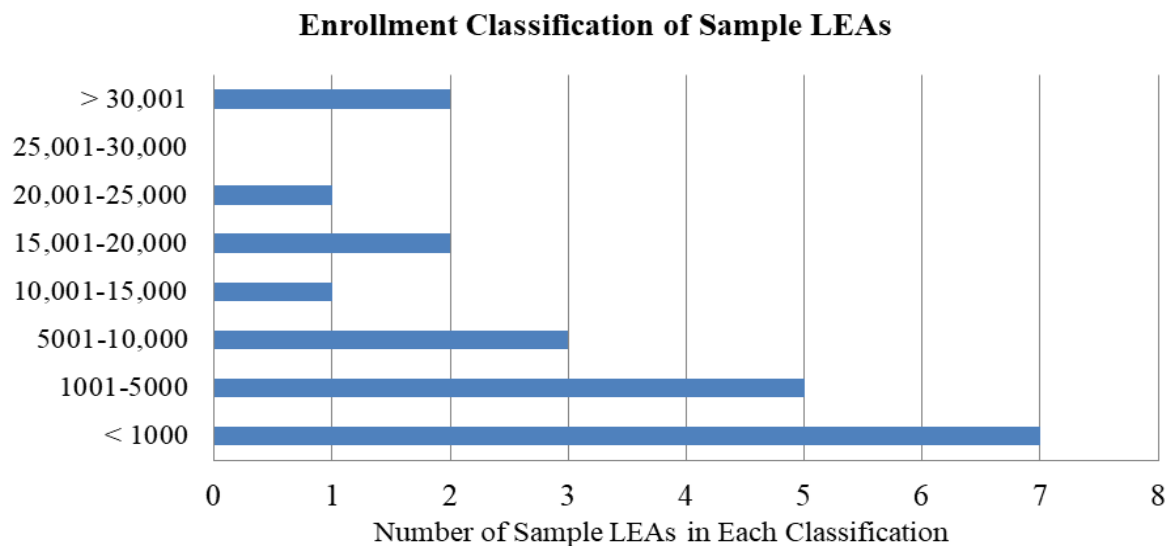
Figure 8. Number of sample LEAs by enrollment classification.

LEA Wealth Estimation by Funding Formula

The percentages of study sample LEAs that received funding vis-a-vis local control funding formula (LCFF) or basic aid formula (BA) were compared with those of LEAs across the state. According to these data, LEAs in the sample are relatively wealthier (i.e., fewer LCFF LEAs) than the statewide average (see Table 4).

Table 4

Comparison of District Wealth Status by Funding Formulae

Funding Formula	LEAs in Study Sample (%)	LEAs in California (%)
Basic Aid	33	13
Local Control Funding Formula	67	87

Source: Public Policy Institute of California, 2013.

LEA Wealth Estimation by Student Socioeconomic Status

However, a *post hoc* examination of student socioeconomic status within the study sample revealed that sole use of funding measures might not be the most reliable method of calculating low- or high-wealth status. To examine this issue further, the researchers calculated the percentage of students in each LEA that participated in the Federal Free and Reduced Price Meals Program (FRPM) during the 2015-16 academic year, and those values were compared with the statewide average participation rate of 59 percent.[38]

Figure 9 shows the distribution of student participation in the FRPM program within the 21 sample LEAs. According to these data, six LEAs with low-poverty enrollments (those with FRPM participation percentages equal to or less than 25 percent) are offset by 12 LEAs with high-poverty enrollments (those with FRPM participation percentages greater than 50 percent), making student poverty slightly overrepresented in the study sample.   Using this measure, the relative wealth status of LEAs in the sample more closely approximates that of all LEAs in the state.

Free and Reduced Priced Meals Program Participation in Sample LEAs

Number of LEAs	< 10%	11-25%	26-50%	51-75%	>75%
	3	3	3	8	4
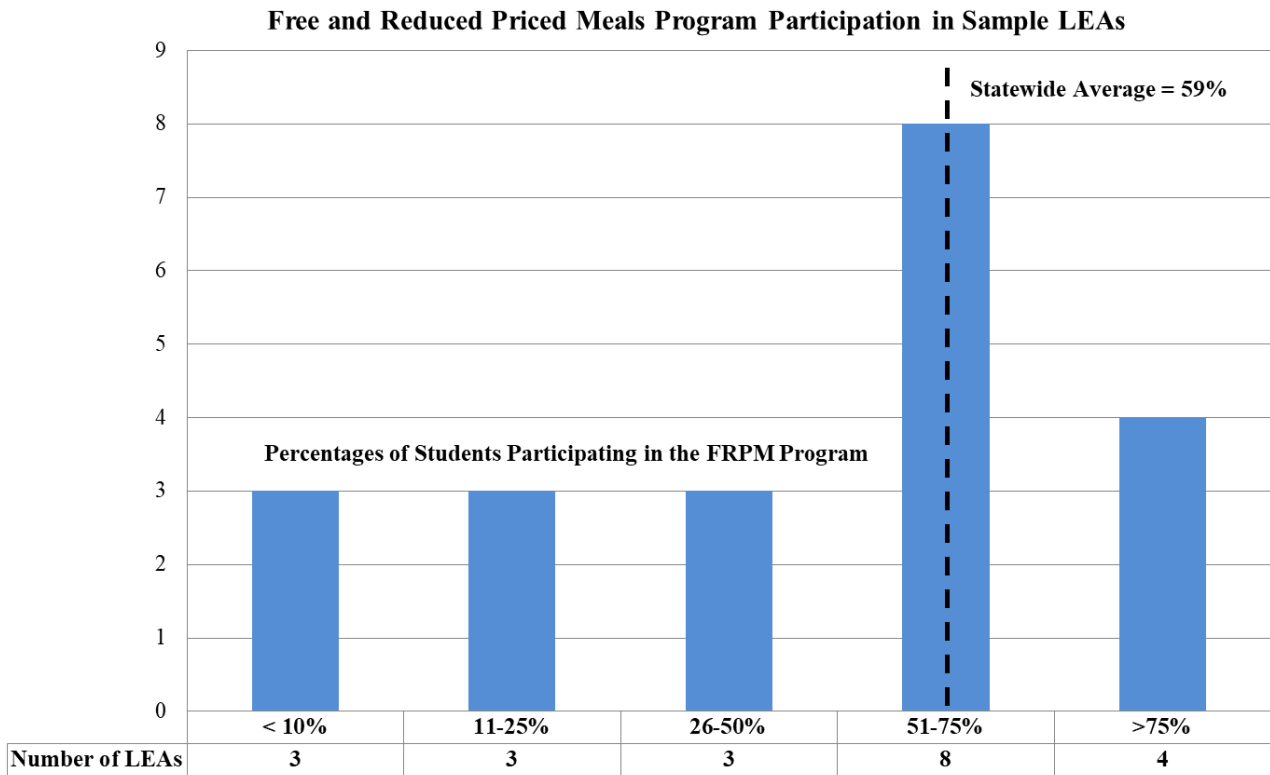
Figure 9. Number of sample districts classified by percentages of student participation in the federal free and reduced-price meals program. Source: California Department of Education, CALPADS, for the academic year 2015-16.

A final measure of "typicality" between the sample LEAs and all LEAs in the state consisted of comparing the average percent of English Language Learner (ELL) enrollments in the sample with the average for the state. The average ELL population in the sample LEAs was 25 percent, slightly greater than the statewide average of 22.7 percent.[39] In sum, the results of both the pre-selection criteria and the *post hoc* analyses demonstrate that the study sample is mostly representative of LEAs throughout the state.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Researchers utilized an ethnographic data-gathering approach known as open-ended interviewing[40] to encourage recruitment personnel to describe in their own words the recruitment strategies they used and how well those strategies were working in their local environments.

Each LEA was asked to sign an informed consent document that explained the study's purpose and goals and provided assurances of confidentiality. Interviewees were informed that study would be compiled into a report for use by the CCSESA, and that at no time would they or their LEAs be identified by name in the report. Data were then collected during face-to-face and phone-conference interviews with staff (selected by the LEA participants) who best could provide insight into local recruiting practices.[vi] Interviews were conducted in individual or small-group format, and most were 30-45 minutes in duration. Permission to record was obtained before each interview commenced.

The researchers developed an interview protocol consisting of six "grand-tour" questions to elicit narrative data about the study's topics. These questions were crafted to facilitate, but not lead, participant interviews with the goal of ensuring interviewees shaped their own narrative:

1. Describe the function of teacher recruitment in your LEA and identify the persons who are responsible for it.
2. Describe at least three teacher recruitment strategies used by your LEA that you think are successful.
3. What data do you use to determine your recruitment effectiveness?
4. If you plan to modify the LEA's teacher recruitment strategies, what would be different and why?
5. If you could make changes at the state level to help with recruitment, what would they be and why?
6. Is there anything else would you like to share about teacher recruitment?

As interviewees spoke about recruitment in their respective LEAs, the researchers used probing questions to gather additional details and to check for understanding of responses. Participants were given an opportunity for non-directed commentary at the end of each interview to encourage sharing of additional perspectives.

[vi] The authors would like to recognize the contributions of Diane Ehrle, Ed.D., Manager of Assessment, Accountability, and Evaluation at the Orange County Department of Education. Dr. Ehrle collected data from districts located in several Southern California counties.

The recorded commentary was transcribed by an independent service, and interview data were analyzed using open and axial coding methods.[41] Open coding was used to "fracture" data into thematic segments, and axial coding was used to reassemble data in unique ways (i.e., transforming like-data segments into broader conceptual themes). During analysis, preliminary findings were compared across LEAs to identify any disconfirming evidence that might challenge initial findings. Additionally, the researchers compared analyses between themselves to confirm the reliability of findings. The results of this analytical work are presented in the next section of the report.

■ **LIMITATIONS**

Because data collection involved interviewing those with interest in promoting the reputation of their organizations (i.e., those in leadership positions), the findings may be susceptible to a form of self-report bias related to image management.[42] Honest responses are the cornerstone of reliable findings, yet people have an interest in portraying their organizations in the best possible light. The researchers attempted to mitigate this potential bias by frequently requesting clarification and checking for inconsistencies during interviews to encourage interviewees to be as candid as possible.

■ STRATEGIES FOR TEACHER RECRUITMENT

The goal of this study was to examine teacher recruiting strategies within LEAs that reported a significant degree of success addressing teacher shortages in their respective geographic locales. More specifically, the researchers sought to understand how well (or poorly) the strategies used within these successful LEAs align with present-day labor market realities.

The presentation of findings begins by highlighting two noteworthy trends: 1) nearly two-thirds of LEAs in the sample are not experiencing shortages in the elementary grades with the exception of special education teachers, while slightly more than 85 percent are experiencing hiring challenges in specific subject areas in grades 7 through 12. At the secondary level, the most acute shortages are reported in special education, life and physical sciences, and mathematics (see Figures 10 and 11).

Teacher Shortages in Participating Districts by Grade Levels

Grades K - 6
38%

Grades 7 - 12
86%
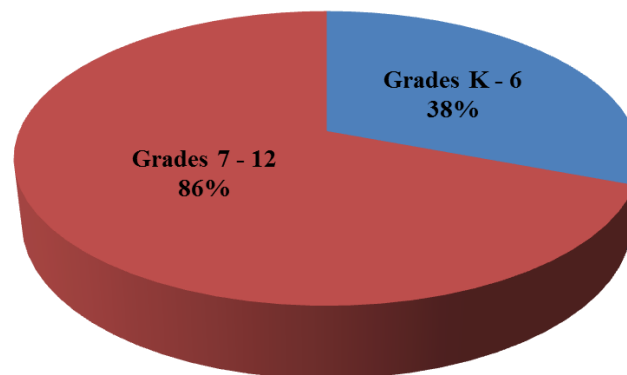
Figure 10. Percent of LEAs in the study sample that reported recruiting challenges in elementary and secondary grade levels. Note: Shortages in secondary grades are related to specific subject areas only.

These findings comport with statewide patterns—teacher shortages vary considerably by region, grade level, and subject area. Because of this, *there is no singular recruiting strategy that will be equally effective for all grade levels across the state.* What works well in one region or LEA may have little or no positive effect in an adjoining one. Despite the hyper-localized nature of shortages, those in leadership positions at CCSESA ask if there are characteristics that

make some LEAs more successful than others with recruitment and hiring. The findings suggest the answer is yes, and an explanation of effective characteristics follows.

Teacher Shortages in Sample LEAs by Subject Area

Subject Area	Percent
Special Education	100%
Advanced Mathematics	52%
Biology	52%
Chemistry	48%
Physics	43%
Foreign Languages	19%
Bilingual Education	19%
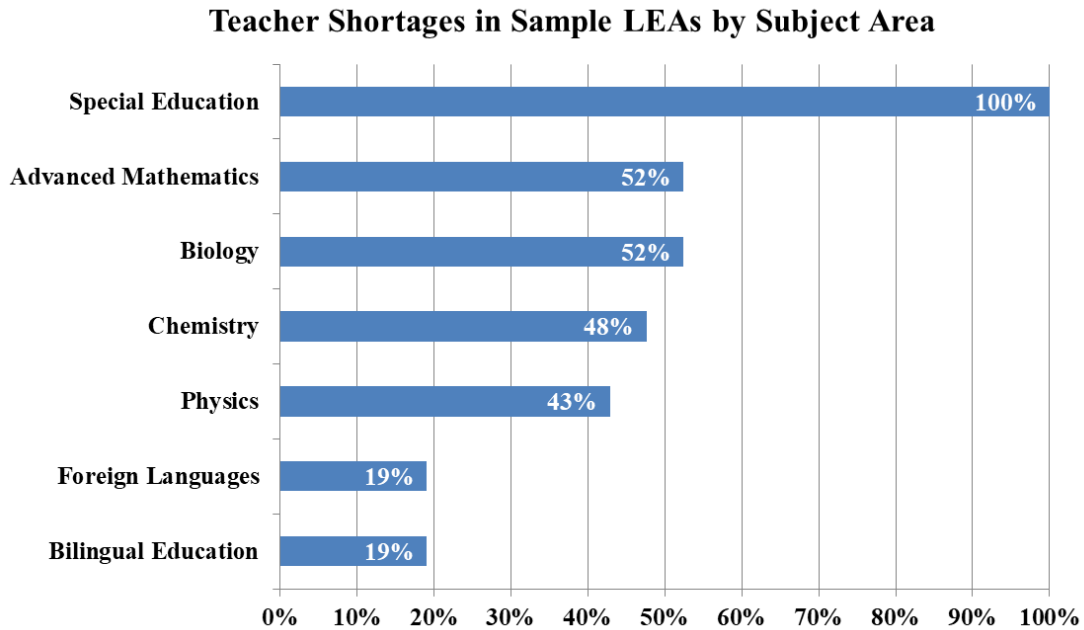
Figure 11. Percent of LEAs in the study sample that reported recruiting challenges in particular subject areas. Note: In this chart, foreign languages are those other than Spanish.

CHARACTERISTICS OF LEAs THAT SUCCESSFULLY RECRUIT TEACHERS

Analysis of the data yielded a number of characteristics that were shared by LEAs that met most or all of their recruiting goals. However, it is important to note that *even within this select sample, there was considerable variation among recruitment characteristics and strategies.* As interviewees described current practice, it became evident that some LEAs were meeting annual recruiting goals using future-focused strategies while other relied on traditional practices that were unsustainable or poorly aligned with current and future workforce needs. In light of this finding, the researchers created a classification system to describe how the characteristics of LEAs with highly-effective practices differ from those that employ less-effective methods (see Table 5).

Table 5

Differences Between Highly-Effective and Less-Effective Recruitment Characteristics

Less Effective Characteristics	Highly Effective Characteristics
Status Quo	Forward Thinking
Reactive	Proactive
Passive Hiring	Active Recruiting
Recruitment	Talent Acquisition
Promote Pay and Benefits	Promote Workplace Culture
Advertising	Marketing
Minimally Funded	Sustainably Resourced
Data Deficient	Data Driven
Competitive Recruitment	Expanding the Supply Pipeline

- **Status Quo versus Forward Thinking**

The American author and philosopher Eric Hoffer once stated that "in times of change learners inherit the earth; while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists." His words capture the fundamental difference between status quo and forward-thinking LEA leaders. Status-quo leaders focus on recruitment strategies that are serving them well, and they express confidence the same approaches will continue to work well in the future. Conversely, forward-thinking leaders are attuned to the realities of the changing employment market, and they push their organizations to adapt as necessary to identify and recruit high-quality teachers.

Data from the sample provide an example of this difference in effectiveness characteristics. The cost of workforce housing, especially in many desirable locations across the state, threatens to force teachers out of certain real estate markets. As of July 2017, the average rental cost for a two-bedroom apartment in California was approximately $2,240, but that figure varies widely

from an average high of \$4,230 in San Francisco to an average low of \$1,425 in Bakersfield.[43] The mismatch between take-home pay and the cost of housing often precludes teachers from living close to the LEAs in which they work, forcing them to settle for housing that often includes long commute times.

When the topic of cost-of-living arose during interviews, some LEAs communicated a status-quo perspective and did not express concern. These LEAs are located in dense population locales where the supply of teachers is sufficient to meet current needs. Thirteen of the 21 LEAs in our sample are located in regions where housing costs are a major recruitment factor. These LEAs recognize that housing costs in their areas can be prohibitive, especially for new teachers. Many of these LEAs reported adopting forward-thinking strategies to address this recruitment barrier.

First, they acknowledged that potential teachers might overlook their recruitment efforts because of perceptions that housing in their LEA locations is unaffordable. In response, they invite local realtors to be part of their recruitment efforts. In this way, teaching candidates can obtain housing information from local experts, and the candidates are frequently surprised that affordable options exist within the LEAs' boundaries. According to a superintendent whose LEA is located in a highly desirable area:

> *We really spend time with candidates personally, reaching out to them, answering questions. A huge part of recruiting is that I try to connect them with real estate agents, just so the [recruiting pitch] is not all lip service. They can actually hear from people in our area who say, "Yeah, we do have rentals for this amount. We do have homes selling in this price range."[vii]*

Another longer-term strategy involves developing affordable workforce housing in high-priced real estate markets. Two of our interviewees reported that they are working with local government agencies to create housing options for teachers and other public service professionals. As one mentioned:

> *We are starting to have more voice [in local government]. We're working with the Housing Authority. Our superintendent sits on the city committee for*

[vii] Because of their conversational nature, interview responses rarely form smooth narratives. Where necessary we edited and consolidated responses to improve clarity and readability (e.g., adding text in brackets). When editing was required, we exercised due diligence to ensure revisions did not diminish the accuracy of interviewee responses.

affordable housing, and they are looking at building, rent control, and subsidized housing.

- ## Reactive versus Proactive Thinking

In today's employment market, it pays to anticipate the future. Those that do not take the long-view about staffing needs are frequently crisis driven. Without a strategic personnel plan in place, they react to unexpected retirements, teacher departures, and changes in student demographics, and are often forced to hire less-than-ideal candidates or to employ underprepared individuals who hold permits or waivers. This reactive characteristic was evident in the responses of LEAs in our sample that experience annual non-reelection rates greater than 10 percent. When asked why this was so, the most common reply was late teacher hires, usually just before school opens.

Use of proactive and strategic recruitment strategies will help LEAs attract and hire better-qualified employees and increase the likelihood of their retention.[44] These LEAs have well-developed personnel succession plans. Many track the employment status of their current workforce to estimate future hiring needs. They use formal and informal communication channels to glean information about possible non-reelects, retirements, leaves, and other attrition. These data are entered into a tracking matrix, and anticipated needs are then built into budget projections. A human resource specialist from a large urban LEA described how this process works in her LEA:

> *We do a hiring matrix districtwide, and then specific to each school site, and then even more specific to each credentialed area. It starts with an [employee] inventory of what each site currently has—what our current staffing is at those sites and what we think the openings might be, like teachers out on leaves of absence and teachers who have submitted a retirement notice. We then take into account teachers whose status is temporary, those who have year-to-year contracts. Finally, we add enrollment projections to determine how many positions we may have open at each site….. And in areas that we traditionally know are hard to fill, we try to be proactive. When we interview, we accelerate the [hiring] process because the faster we can offer a contract, the less likely they are to go to another district.*

Passive Hiring versus Active Recruiting

Some LEAs employ a passive recruitment mindset, expressing the viewpoint that a unique feature of their LEA (e.g., pay, location, demographics, etc.) will bring a steady stream of applicants to their doors, and several stated they have no specific plans to modify their recruit practices in the near future.

Other LEAs have adopted more active recruitment strategies. Furthermore, rural and remote LEAs that have traditionally struggled with teacher shortages have become particularly active recruiters. They use a variety of strategies to bring teachers to their LEAs, including recruiting teachers and teacher candidates from other states. In the words of one rural superintendent:

> *We have built relationships with universities in the Midwest so that we can interview their candidates who are just graduating. We speak to a department chair at a university, and they indicate the names of two candidates who, from looking at their academic trajectory, are likely to be very successful educators. We then contact those candidates directly by phone and invite them to accept a free trip to California. We like it if they stay three days because they get a real sense of the culture of our community, the recreational activities, shopping opportunities, et cetera. And they know if they want to live here or not.*

Active recruitment strategies have become essential for recruiting a sustainable teacher workforce, especially for LEAs that face unique challenges (e.g., high-poverty populations or lower-wage pay scales). Such practices will become increasingly important for attracting Millennial and Generation Z employees.[45]

- **Recruitment versus Talent Acquisition**

What may appear at first glance to be a distinction without a difference describes a fundamental variance in recruiting mindset and approach. All LEAs in the sample stated that they recruit teachers—the difference lies in how they do so. Recruitment-oriented LEAs follow long-established patterns of filling vacancies using common human resource protocols and methods—advertise, screen, interview, and hire. These LEAs frequently rely on generic and broad-channel communication methods (e.g., posting openings on EDJOIN, university bulletin boards, or on LEA websites) to announce openings in their LEAs.

Conversely, LEAs that adopt a talent-acquisition mindset experience more success in hiring employees with unique or hard-to-find skill sets.[46] They use methods that focus on identifying and engaging specific candidates for positions that require unique skill sets such as speech-language pathology or the ability to teach calculus. These LEAs use targeted narrow-channel communication methods such as personalized texts, phone calls, or letters of invitation to invite specific individuals to apply for current or anticipated job openings. One superintendent who considers himself a talent acquisition specialist described how he uses targeting recruiting to fill hard-to-hire positions in his LEA:

> *I decided that I was going to go where the science and math teachers are. So I went to the California Mathematics Council conference, and there was not another superintendent there at all. There were a lot of vendors for gadgets and gizmos and books and things like that, but I was the only one there [looking for teachers]. And so I was able to connect with those who had specific skills that we need. When I said things like, "Hey, we will take all your years of service," or, "Hey, we have a much better location than you have," they were interested.*

- **Promote Pay and Benefits versus Promote Workplace Culture**

One of the most striking characteristics among those interviewed was how they marketed their LEAs to prospective teachers. LEAs that promote and market well-defined cultures attract employees who are more likely to demonstrate "fit" with their organizations, and this improves the likelihood of employee retention.[47] As highlighted in Table 1, teachers in the Baby Boomer and Generation X cohorts are more likely than those in the Millennial cohort to accept employment based primarily on pay and benefits. A common refrain among many Baby Boomers and Gen Xers is that they took jobs because of pay but quit because of the nature of their work or their workplace culture. Therefore, LEAs that attempt to recruit by promoting salary and benefits above other workplace attributes may reap diminishing returns, especially among younger teachers and those entering the job market for the first time.

The importance of creating, sustaining, and marketing a positive, safe, healthy, and productive workplace culture cannot be overstated. Several LEAs in the sample, particularly those with geographic or economic handicaps, reported that even though they offer less salary than surrounding LEAs, they can recruit high-quality teachers because of their excellent culture.

One superintendent related her story about the benefits of promoting her LEA culture to prospective teachers:

> *We are never going to win the money game. You know, we're a small K-8 LEA. We cannot pay like the high school or unified LEAs, but we do have a great culture. We are located in a small town by a big city, and everyone knows everyone else, and it's a pretty cool place. But there are people who are either from a culture like ours or else have heard about how great it is. They stay and listen when we talk with them at job fairs, and they're the ones we have a chance with.*

- **Advertising versus Marketing**

Advertising is a communication tactic used to inform prospective teachers about employment openings within a LEA or school. Marketing, on the other hand, is a comprehensive set of actions designed to promote a LEA's mission, values, goals, and objectives. One is a short-term tool; the other is a long-term relationship-building strategy.

The majority of LEAs interviewed utilized advertising channels depicted in Figure 14. Most use various media to inform prospective employees about job openings, but few are actively engaged in full marketing campaigns. Those that are, however, report that marketing helps them recruit, even in hard-to-hire subject areas. When asked why they thought this was so, the most common response was that marketing creates a more personalized relationship between their LEAs and prospective hires. LEAs also reported that individuals recruited through marketing campaigns had a comprehensive picture of the LEA's mission, goals, and priorities. Consequently, candidates were better able to self-select out early in the hiring process if they perceived their aptitudes, attitudes, and skills were not a good "fit" with the available position or the LEA's culture. A superintendent in a suburban LEA explains why marketing works:

> *I think marketing begins with the right person [in charge]. You have to have a person with passion and conviction for kids, and [s/he] has to be able to sell that quality about the LEA when potential teachers are recruited. [Your marketing leader] has to let them know they're entering one of the best professions in the world, and that they are going to have a huge impact by working in your LEA.*
>
> *So, we work closely with the Chamber of Commerce [to market our schools]. It's really that community outreach that makes teachers feel very supported*

and connected when they come into this area. We provide answers to questions like "Where is the dentist? Where is the hospital? What doctors can I see?" We try to provide that whole package [through marketing].

Another prominent finding relates to social media use among the LEAs. This merits examination because so many young people, including those in teacher preparation programs, spend a substantial portion of their waking hours interacting on social media platforms, and approximately 60% of their social media time spent is facilitated by a mobile device such as a smartphone or tablet.[48]

Most Frequently Used Advertising Channels
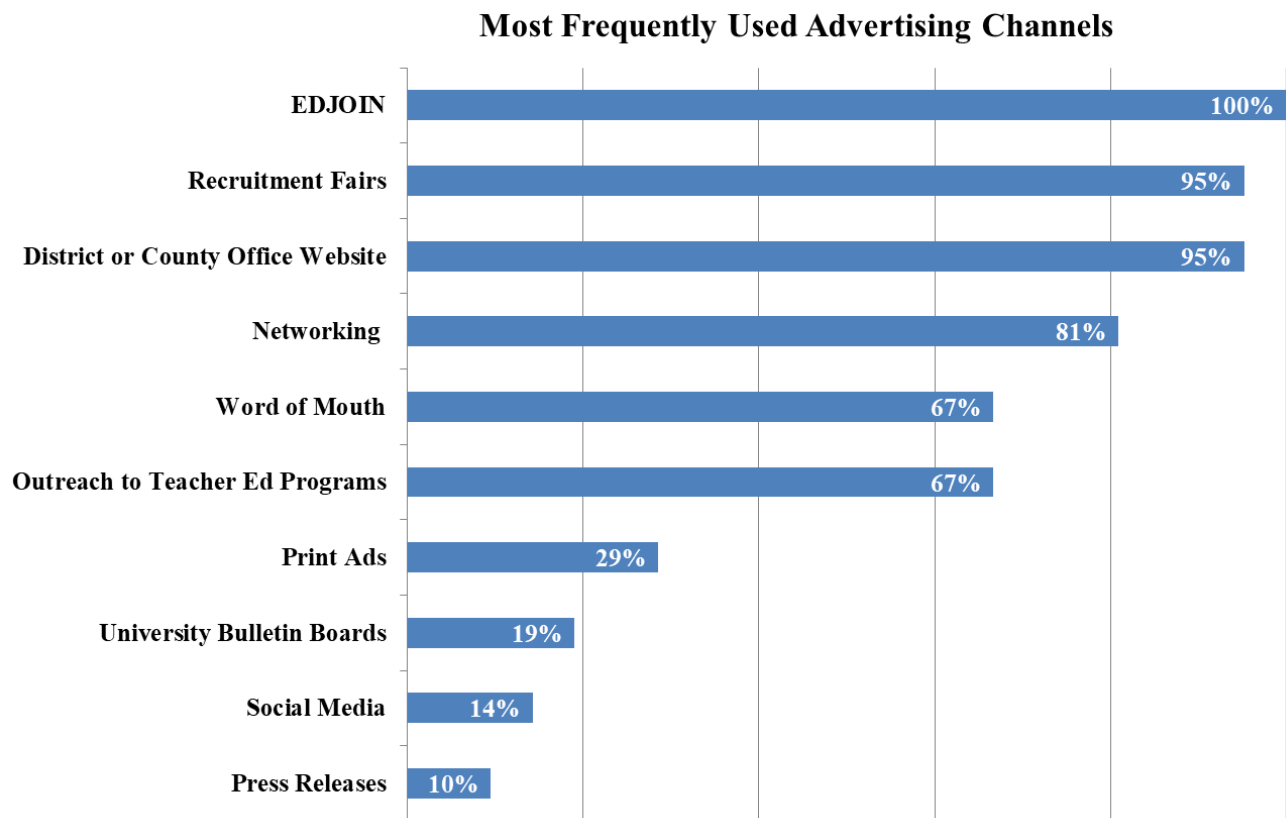
Figure 12. The advertising channels most frequently reported by LEAs in the study sample.

LEAs that grasp this paradigm shift in media use can reach a broader segment of the workforce when they advertise their job vacancies. The need to increase social media use was summed up well by one director of human resources:

We see ourselves as a very innovative LEA, but we aren't using the innovation in our recruitment. I mean you know you look at me and [the other HR person], we're in our 50s, and we're recruiting youngsters in their 20s. These

digital natives are our next generation of teachers, and what we think resonates differently with them. So, we have to change [how we're recruiting].

Three of the 21 LEAs in the sample reported regular use of social media for recruiting purposes. Those that do not yet make full use of social media recruiting cite lack of resources, knowledge, or experience as barriers.[49] Of the many social media platforms available, three were mentioned most often as preferred outlets for recruiting (see Figure 13).

Social Media Platforms Used for Recruiting Purposes
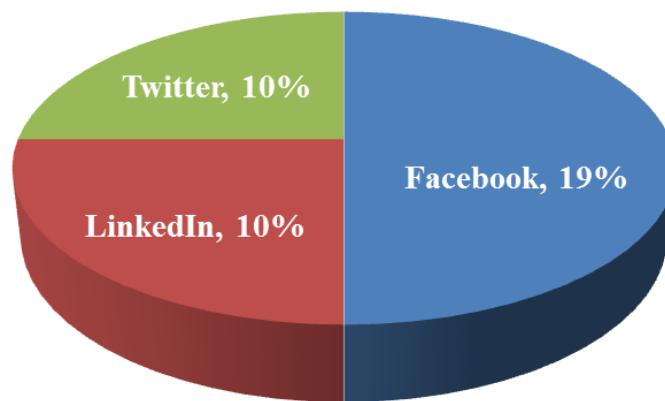
Figure 13. Social media platforms currently used for teacher recruiting among LEAs in the study sample.

Minimally Funded versus Sustainably Resourced

LEAs in California spend an average of 85 percent of their annual budgets on employee salaries and benefits—making human resources their largest and most expensive investment. However, when the researchers asked LEA personnel about the percentage of their annual budgets that was allocated for recruiting purposes, most said it was less than one percent (excluding the hours management and staff devote to the task). Even when personnel costs are factored in, *a majority of LEAs appear to be under-resourced for sustainable recruiting*. Many are using budgetary allocations from prior years, and these may be inadequate for building and maintaining the recruitment systems required to mitigate present and future teacher shortages. According to a human resource director:

Well, money is always a concern. I fully understand that. But as you probably well know soft recruitment costs do not make a huge dent in our budget in HR. There is definitely a lot of personnel time spent on recruiting….[Our annual LEA budget is just about $76 million], and I could probably give you a dollar amount for soft costs. I bet you it's around $13,000 including the EDJOIN licensing.

- ## Data Deficient versus Data Driven

Another characteristic of highly-effective LEAs is their strategic collection and use of data to improve recruitment practices. In these LEAs, numbers are used systematically to reveal meaningful patterns and to answer key questions about policy, methods, and outcomes.[50] Despite the popular notion that today's schools are completely data driven, many LEAs in the sample indicated that they rely primarily on anecdotal information about recruitment outcomes, and only two of the 21 LEAs use data for strategic planning purposes (see Figure 14).

LEA leaders were very candid about the data deficiencies in their recruitment efforts, and most revealed plans to change how data are collected and used in the future, especially the use of post-interview and exit surveys. In the words of one county superintendent:

This is where we're not doing a good job, in my opinion. We're not tracking the number of individuals who participated in the recruitment fairs. We're not tracking to see how many of those were actually hired, for example. We could also do a better job of tracking the number of individuals who are actually going into teaching and then staying in teaching, you know, being successful in teaching. We're not tracking any of that….We definitely need to improve.

Recruiting practices are enhanced when comprehensive employee data-tracking systems are used. The collection, analysis, and strategic use of employment data is essential for identifying current employee trends and generating appropriately responsive recruiting strategies.
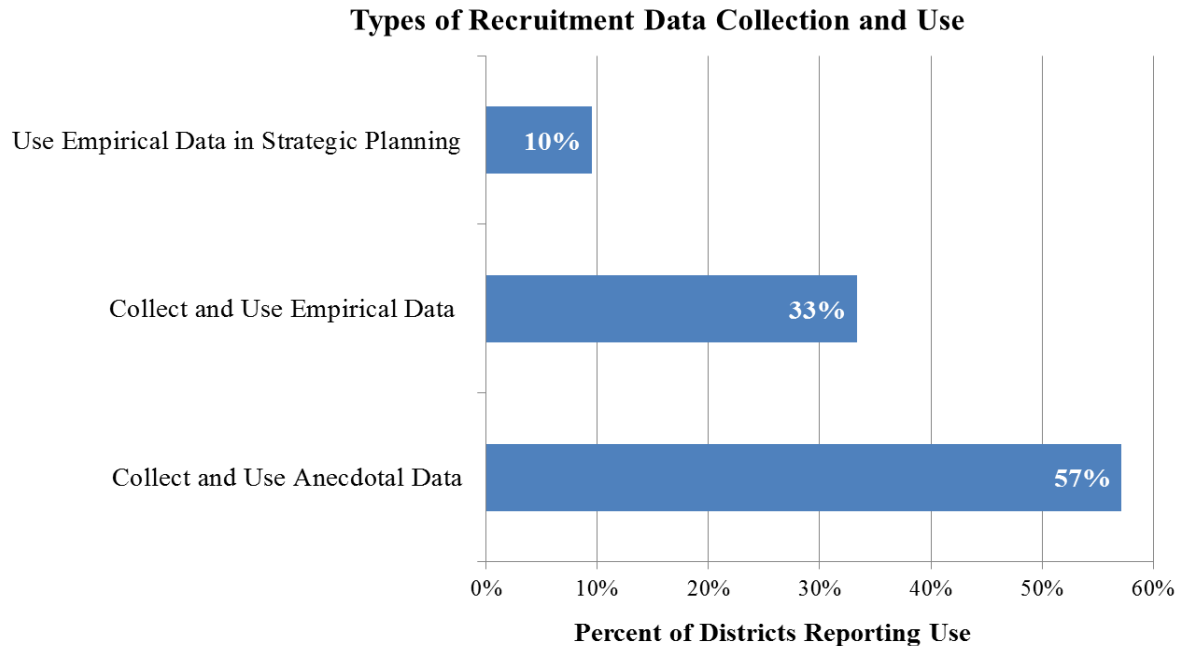
Types of Recruitment Data Collection and Use

Figure 14. Data used to determine the effectiveness of recruiting strategies are mostly anecdotal among sample LEAs.

- ## Competitive Recruitment versus Expanding the Supply Pipeline

One of the most widely used recruitment strategies is competitive recruitment. In this process, LEAs with greater economic, social, or geographic capital fill their classroom vacancies by hiring away talent from neighboring LEAs that often lack comparable resources. This commonly used recruiting strategy was described by a human resource manager of a high-wealth urban LEA:

> *We don't like to have accidental recruitments where you…cast a net and hope that you're going to get applicants. So, especially for harder to find positions, we're reaching out within neighboring LEAs, and we're using our networking to recruit candidates we think are potential matches. We're not afraid to call these folks and say would you be interested in applying with our LEA….We are absolutely not above poaching—all is fair in recruiting.*

While this strategy may work has a short-term fix, it creates a myriad of longer-term problems for the state as a whole. The survival-of-the-fittest mentality frequently creates or exacerbates inequalities among LEAs. When better-resourced LEAs hire the best and brightest teachers away from poorer LEAs, the quality of education provided in less-wealthy LEAs is

often considerably diminished. This concern about equity was discussed by a superintendent of a high-wealth suburban LEA:

> *I'm concerned about the equity implications for LEAs that compete against one another, because the lower income LEAs or the LEAs serving more historically underserved populations, kids who may be perceived as tougher to teach, they have a very challenging recruitment environment.*

Competitive recruitment practices also do little to grow the teacher supply pipeline. In fact, one LEA leader described the process as "rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic" because simply poaching teachers from other LEAs rather than collaborating to create new ways to expand teacher supply might eventually "sink" a significant portion of the state's K-12 school system.

INNOVATIVE RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

In addition to articulating differences between highly- and less-effective LEA recruitment characteristics, interviewees provided a wealth of information about how they successfully and innovatively recruit teachers. Many of the recruitment strategies can be adapted, replicated, and scaled in LEAs across the state. For the sake of clarity, they are grouped by specific focus areas and presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Compendium of Successful Recruitment Strategies

Focus Area and Strategies

Utilize Administrators, School Leaders, and Teachers as Effective Recruiters

- Engage administrators, school leaders, and teachers in the recruitment process. Provide recruitment training if necessary. Bring your best "salespeople" to job fairs.
- Communicate your hiring needs to your internal staff. Most employees are not aware of the recruitment needs of their districts.
- Involve the whole workforce in recruitment—ask everyone to be an ambassador and invite them to help with recruiting.
- Encourage and incentivize administrators and school leaders to serve on the board of the local university or credentialing program. This often gives LEAs early access to the best candidates.

- Encourage lead teachers to present at conferences or act as guest lecturers in a preservice teacher program. Use this position for outreach to potential candidates.
- Provide candidates with an opportunity to speak with the LEA's teachers and administrators. A current teacher's positive experience with a LEA can be the best recruitment tool.

Foster Relationships with Local Universities, Credentialing Programs, and Community Organizations

- Develop relationships with universities that have teacher preparation programs, and reach out to them directly with your hiring needs.
- Encourage student teacher placements at your LEA. Cultivate a relationship with student teachers and, if they are a good fit, encourage them to apply at the end of their program.
- Invite university faculty to teach a course at your district site. Recruit promising students from the class.
- Ask for invitations to meetings of teacher preparation faculty to share information about your district's staffing needs.
- Visit teacher preparation classes and speak with students.
- To help with hiring diversity, cultivate relationships with community organizations. Speak with organization members and provide information about becoming a teacher and enrolling in a credentialing program.
- If distance is a limitation, work with the nearest university that has a credentialing program to establish a satellite program. Collaborate with other LEAs in the region to create a cohort that is large enough to sustain the satellite program.

Engage in Smart and Strategic Marketing and Hiring

- Develop and articulate your LEA's culture and vision. Create a LEA-wide strategic vision for recruiting.
- Highlight the desirable features of your LEA—market lifestyle, community, location, academic performance, and cultural amenities. Every LEA has something to offer.
- Create a marketing package of community information by partnering with the Chamber of Commerce, local real estate agents, etc. Distribute this online and at job fairs.
- Target specific job fairs based on your district needs. Narrowcast, don't broadcast.
- Set up recruitment booths at professional conferences like the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the National Science Teachers Association, or the National Association for Music Education. Go where the hard-to-hire teachers are.
- Recruit from similar geographic, economic, and demographic areas within California and out-of-state. This helps with candidate and lifestyle fit.
- Shift to a talent-acquisition mindset. Consider not just a candidate's qualifications, but also whether the candidate is a "good fit" for your LEA and whether he/she is likely to stay with the LEA.
- Consider opening job fairs to those who are not yet credentialed. This helps make contact with those who wish to teach but are not yet credentialed. Try to recruit them into a preparation program.

Offer High-Quality Supports for New and Existing Teachers

- If possible, offer in-house induction, coaching, and mentors for new teachers. If your salary is comparable to that of a competing LEA, this will be the deciding factor for many candidates.
- If the LEA pays for all or part of induction costs, advertise this to potential candidates. Induction can cost up to $5,000 for new teachers, so covering induction costs can make LEAs with lower starting salaries more competitive.
- Commit to helping new graduates through the process of obtaining a clear credential.
- Market the LEA's professional development and teacher support resources to both new and existing teachers.
- Become a destination district for professional development. Put on a conference in-house once a year to showcase the LEA's strengths.
- Create a positive, professional LEA climate with opportunities for teacher leadership.
- Cultivate a LEA community by offering low or no-cost events, services, or discounts for administrators, teachers, and their families.
- The leaky bucket theory—the fewer teachers you retain, the more you have to recruit. Retention is also a recruitment strategy.

Invest in Local Recruitment Efforts

- Conduct prospective teacher workshops for high school and college students, and other community members. Focus on concepts like "Why be a teacher?" and "Why teaching is rewarding." Ask local partner universities to send their credential program representatives to the workshops to recruit potential teachers.
- Set up career pathway programs to encourage high school students to complete a credential and return to the LEA to teach.
- Incentivize parents to become substitute teachers as a gateway into the teaching profession.
- When hiring non-credentialed staff, look for individuals who could eventually move into a fully-credentialed position.
- Pay substitutes the market rate PLUS a loyalty bonus if they stay with your district for an entire year or a certain number of days in a year. Offer substitutes training, and compensate them at a higher rate if they complete it.
- Work with human resource departments in local industries to identify displaced workers who might make good teachers (e.g., engineers, chemists, biologists, etc.). Let the HR departments know you are hiring so they can notify employees who might be displaced in the future.
- Identify multiple subject teachers with skills in hard-to-hire subject areas and talk to them about earning a second credential. Help cover credentialing costs either as a reimbursement or by paying off student loans while the teacher is employed by the LEA.

Respond to Recruiting Roadblocks with Flexibility and Creativity

- Identify barriers that prevent people from joining your district and focus on those you can change.
- If housing is a barrier, invite real estate agents to attend job fairs with you. They can provide on-the-spot housing information for prospective candidates.
- If the LEA is in a remote or rural region, use a cost of living calculator (e.g., Salary.com) to show potential candidates how their salary would purchase more in a remote or rural location.
- Work with universities to offer satellite programs in rural and remote areas.
- Offer Skype or FaceTime for initial interviews with remote candidates.
- For hard-to-staff positions and/or ideal candidates, make a "twofer" or trailing spouse offer when possible. This makes a significant difference in areas where jobs are hard to find.
- Offer creative staffing options: Mixed assignments, job shares, reemployment of retirees.
- Recruit OT and SLP positions by offering them full-time employment that includes a half-time roving substitute assignment.

Take a Collaborative, Rather than Competitive, Approach to Recruitment

- Promote your county and work together rather than as separate, competing districts.
- Partner with another county or district and look for ways to share resources. For example, combine resources to create a strong LEA-wide marketing campaign.
- Improve inter-district communication about recruitment by creating a formal LEA-wide recruitment "hot list" for high-quality candidates that were not ultimately offered a position at one school or who were laid off, but would be a good fit for another school.
- Join or set up a network of human resource personnel. Meet regularly and pass along information about teachers facing layoffs in one LEA who might be good candidates in another.
- Collaborate with the county office of education to host a countywide job fair.

Utilize Data and Strategize Early

- Develop a system to forecast potential hiring needs. Consider factors like birth rate, housing costs and new housing developments, student/teacher ratios, 0-5 children with an IEP/IFSP, teacher retirements and non-reelects, and long-term leaves.
- Move up the dates of your recruitment timeline.
- Make recruitment ongoing instead of waiting for "batch hiring" in the spring.
- Talk to teachers and staff about their plans to stay with the LEA early and often.
- Use a brief questionnaire at the end of interviews to determine how to improve your process. Exit surveys are like looking at game film—you learn from your mistakes.
- Remain flexible and offer a candidate more than one position based on perceived fit.

Make Efforts to Improve the Recruitment Process and Experience

- Develop and use interview questions that focus on candidates' aptitude for teaching. Candidates may have knowledge about curriculum and teaching, but if they do not have the aptitude for the grade-level or subject-area they won't be a good fit.
- Consider including a demo lesson as part of the interview process. This can help interviewers ascertain a candidate's pedagogy and lesson planning skills early.
- Communicate regularly with interviewees, even those you do not hire. Provide immediate (24-hour) feedback after the interview process.
- Create a positive experience for candidates. Go overboard on customer service because reputation is critical and candidates talk to each other.
- Make your hiring process paperless. This improves the speed of processing and reduces the burden on applicants. Use an online program like Chalk Schools.
- Make same-day offers and notifications to highly qualified candidates. Do not make candidates wait unnecessarily.

■ SUMMARY

The findings from this research reveal both promise and peril as they relate to teacher recruitment in California. LEAs face a workforce crisis unlike any before, driven by a convergence of economic and demographic trends that threaten to disrupt the teacher supply pipeline for the indefinite future. Consequently, it may not be possible for all LEAs to recruit their way out of workforce shortages without significantly realigning recruitment policies and procedures to match the unique economic and demographic needs of the Millennial Generation and Generation Z.

While there is no single set of recruitment strategies that works equally well in every LEA in the state, the data in this report provide valuable lessons that are broadly applicable for those who lead California's teacher recruitment efforts. LEA leaders are encouraged to examine the strategies and practices discussed in this report and to apply them as appropriate in their local geographic, economic, and demographic settings.

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