

The most effective response to Washington’s current teacher shortage will require a comprehensive and systemic effort that involves many different models of teacher preparation; models that continue to address the high standards for approval, along with a robust combination of funding and policy tools that extend beyond postsecondary education to include recruitment, resource support, school partnerships, and public engagement.

Washington’s teacher preparation programs have a strong history of supporting p-12 education statewide. Together, these nationally recognized programs produce approximately 2,500 teachers per year and prepare over 85 percent of beginning teachers hired in Washington.

Our colleges and schools of education support strong partnerships to educate the next generation of teachers to help alleviate the teacher shortage in Washington, and attend to the cyclical nature of shortages faced over time. We are committed to addressing state needs including Special Education, STEM and English Language Learners and diversifying the teacher workforce across all schools and districts to reflect the diversity of our communities and Pre-K-12 learners.

Tools currently being used include providing access to potential candidates who have Associate of Applied Science degrees rather than Associate of Arts degrees. Many programs are also scheduling classes to provide evening, weekend, and/or online coursework. Additionally, programs are also providing part-time models where such delivery is compatible with high expectations. Washington state’s teacher education programs continue to innovate to provide high-quality preparation of teachers to serve our youngest learners.

We believe that in addition to a wide-range of high-quality and rigorous teacher preparation programs providing broad access to potential groups of teachers, **a plan should address** the following:

Recognize and respond to the negative impact on teaching in Washington and nationwide over the last decade by engaging in a high quality, multi-partner public campaign focused on the value and role of teaching as a profession.	Foster evidence-based decision making through the creation of a data system that accurately and productively describes the workforce needs, hiring patterns and new teacher production across geographic and demographic dimensions.
Secure adequate financing of capacity at the classroom level, in field placements, and in mentoring, to adequately prepare and develop teaching candidates	Explore appropriate and powerful incentives to leverage capacity statewide including the recruitment of high-quality candidates to teacher preparation programs, and bringing recent graduates not now teaching back into classrooms, such as tuition reimbursement and conditional loans, scholarships, tuition reductions, loan forgiveness, stipends and paid internships.
Create financial models that direct resources to candidates and allows them choice in their preparation program decision making.	Increase support for the retention of teachers such as supporting best practices for induction into the profession, early mentoring and support, and ongoing high-quality professional development opportunities crucial to continued success.
Expand retooling programs to credential existing teachers appropriately for new subjects or roles.	Support innovative teacher preparation programs while maintaining high standards and expectations.
Support Washington college and university teacher education programs to meet state needs while supporting alternative route programs to align state needs with student demand.	

The education of our state’s children represents a partnership between p-12 and our public and private colleges and universities. We look forward to continued efforts to enhance that partnership so that all students can reach their true potential.