



# Come, Stay, Earn: Financial Opportunities to Augment Teacher Salaries

*Hella Bel Hadj Amor, Ph.D.*



*A report prepared for the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development*

November 2022

## Abstract

This report is a compilation (options, not recommendations) of financial opportunities used in and outside of Alaska to augment teacher salaries. It covers 10 categories, which are bookmarked in this abstract for easy access: [signing bonus](#), [retention bonus](#), [incentives to attract teachers of shortage subject matter areas or to work in a high-need or hard-to-staff school](#), [extra-duty bonus](#), [loan repayment support and scholarships](#), [rewards for acquiring new skills and knowledge](#), [pay for performance](#), [relocation incentives](#), [housing subsidies](#), and [childcare benefits](#). Each section provides an overview, a rationale, examples from Alaska and the nation, and the limited information from existing research.

## About the author

Dr. Hella Bel Hadj Amor is a program evaluator, researcher, technical assistance provider, and grant writer with a passion for supporting educators in the hard work they do every day for the success and wellbeing of students, and for improving equitable outcomes. Her primary areas of expertise are the educator pipeline and helping educators at all levels make effective use of data and evidence to inform practice and policy. She has been proudly collaborating with Alaska education stakeholders for almost ten years.

## Executive Summary

In 2021, Alaska Governor Michael Dunleavy's [Teacher Retention and Recruitment working group](#) met its charge to deliver an [action plan](#) to address the state's recurring critical challenge recruiting and retaining teachers. To support the implementation of one component of the action plan, *strengthening working conditions*, the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development commissioned this compilation of financial opportunities used in and outside of Alaska to augment teacher salaries. It is important for the reader to understand that this is a list of opportunities from the research and the field and not a list of recommendations.

Financial opportunities may make a job more attractive and tip the balance as teachers consider multiple jobs, including lucrative non-teaching jobs. They may compensate for conditions that may be perceived as less than ideal such as working in an isolated community with harsh weather or in an under-resourced school. They may reward teachers for taking steps to grow and become more effective, and for taking on additional responsibilities, whether they would have wanted to in the first place or stepped up to fill an acute need in their school or district. Incentives may help support the high cost of an education. They can offset part of the high cost of moving to and living in certain areas. Bonuses may increase teacher engagement, motivation, satisfaction, self-efficacy, effectiveness, and in turn, their desire to stay in the profession and their school district.

The report leverages two main sources of information: a scan of literature and a survey of Alaska school district leaders. We surveyed all districts and reached a 39 percent response rate (details in the [appendix](#)), from districts across the five regions.<sup>1</sup> The two sources identify a range of financial opportunities:<sup>2</sup>

- A [signing bonus](#), also known as a hiring bonus, is a sum of money a school district can offer a prospective teacher as an incentive to accept a job. In Alaska, examples range from \$1,000 to \$2,000. In the nation, they can be as high as \$20,000.
- A [retention bonus](#) is a sum of money a school district can offer a teacher who elects to stay in the district, a school, or a position. In Alaska, examples start at \$150 and go up to \$10,000. In the nation, the range is \$500 to \$5,000.
- Districts can use multiple forms of [incentives to attract teachers of shortage subject matter areas or to work in a high-need or hard-to-staff school](#), including annual supplements or stipends, increased steps or a different salary schedule, one-time bonuses, or differential pay on an exceptional basis. In Alaska, example stipends range from \$500 to \$2,000. In the nation, they can be as high as \$10,000 in a single year.
- An [extra-duty bonus](#) compensates a teacher for taking on additional responsibilities. These can be taking on leadership roles, working in multiple roles or locations, or working an extended day or school year. In Alaska, example bonuses can be as low as \$200 and as high as \$7,000, roughly similar to the examples we see from the nation.

<sup>1</sup> We use five regions as displayed on p. 7 of this report: Vazquez Cano, M., Bel Hadj Amor, H., & Pierson, A. (2019). *Educator retention and turnover under the midnight sun: Examining trends and relationships in teacher, principal, and superintendent movement in Alaska*. Education Northwest, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/Products/Publication/60186>

<sup>2</sup> Outside of the scope of this report are issues pertaining to retirement, the state of funding for education in Alaska, bargaining agreements, and salary and compensation structures. On retirement issues, see the Teacher Retention and Recruitment [Retirement Working Group](#) Website. On salary and compensation structures, see the University of Alaska Anchorage [Institute of Social and Economic Research study](#).

- **Loan repayment support and scholarships** are ways to decrease the cost of an education for teachers and teacher candidates. None of the surveyed districts currently offer this opportunity. Examples from the nation range from \$3,000 to \$7,500 per year.
- Teachers may receive **rewards for acquiring new skills and knowledge** through additional college education or other training offered by the district or elsewhere, outside of the negotiated salary scale. Acquiring new skills may happen through and result in recertification and new certification such as National Board Certification. In Alaska, examples are \$1,000 to \$2,000 for certification and can be a few hundred to several thousand dollars for education and training support. In some states, bonuses for certification can be as high as \$25,000.
- Under **pay for performance**, teachers are rewarded based on how they perform their job. It can be based on one or multiple factors such as evaluation ratings, student achievement goals, student enrollment, or student or teacher attendance. One Alaska district offers a bonus of up to \$2,000 based on a combination of training and meeting growth targets. There is a wide range in the nation, from \$150 to \$40,000 in our examples.
- **Relocation incentives** are reimbursements for expenses teachers incur when they move to a new location for a job. They can include hiring movers, shipping personal belongings, paying for barge service for a vehicle, and purchasing plane or ferry tickets. Examples range from \$2,000 to \$4,000 in Alaska and up to \$10,000 in the nation.
- To promote recruitment and retention, districts nationwide have experimented with **housing subsidies** such as offering or helping find rentals at below-market rates, paying for relocation, supporting teachers with down payments, and subsidizing home ownership and teacher housing. In Alaska and the nation, these can take the form of a few hundred dollars a month to subsidize rent or mortgage payments and they can be over \$10,000 towards buying a home.
- **Childcare benefits** may include offering free or subsidized space with staff onsite, covering part of the cost of childcare offsite, and identifying local childcare providers and nonprofit organizations that offer scholarships and low rates. Examples from the nation include a district that allocates a \$500 monthly allowance for staff to obtain childcare and one that offers childcare at 10 percent below the local market rate.

**Retention bonuses were most common in the districts that responded to the survey**, followed by extra-duty bonuses, tuition support, and paid professional development (the latter two being forms of rewards for acquiring new skills and knowledge). No district reported using pay for performance based on teacher evaluations or factors such as student enrollment or attendance.

Whether financial incentives are available and how much they are can depend on licensure, job performance, subject taught, whether the position is hard to fill, and any attached commitments. All or some of a bonus may need to be returned if a commitment is unmet.

The effectiveness of financial incentives at recruiting or retaining teachers is not extensively documented and varies. It can be hard to know whether a financial incentive did in fact influence a teacher's decision. There is no consistent guidance from the research on a minimum amount that makes an incentive attractive or on the circumstances under which one is effective. Suggestions from the research are to provide incentives that are substantial and sustained.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> There is an upcoming study on this topic from the University of Alaska Anchorage [Institute of Social and Economic Research](#).

# Contents

*Click on any section and the pop up to go to it directly.*

Introduction	1
Hiring and longevity	2
Signing bonus	2
Retention bonus	3
Assignments	6
Financial incentive for teaching in shortage subject matter areas or working in a high-need or hard-to-staff school	6
Extra-duty bonus	8
Education, credentialing, and training	11
Loan forgiveness and scholarships	11
Pay for performance	16
Cost of living	18
Relocating	18
Housing	19
Childcare	22
Appendix: Survey highlights	24

# Introduction

We need teachers!!!! Plus, other positions!!! Desperate!!!  
-- Alaska Superintendent

In 2020, Alaska Governor Michael Dunleavy spurred the establishment of the [Teacher Retention and Recruitment working group](#). The groups' charge was to develop a thorough understanding of why the state faces a recurring critical challenge recruiting and retaining teachers and to craft an action plan to address those challenges. The [action plan](#) was published in April 2021 and the implementation phase of the work began in early 2022. The working group proposed implementation steps in six areas: strengthening working conditions, developing leadership, restructuring retirement options, enhancing recruitment efforts and opportunities, creating paraprofessional pathways, and streamlining certification and recertification. The working group identified financial opportunities as one important avenue to strengthen working conditions. To inform this component of the action plan and support implementation by Alaska education stakeholders, specifically school boards and superintendents, the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development commissioned this compilation of existing financial opportunities used in and outside of Alaska to augment teacher salaries. It is important for the reader to understand that this is a list of opportunities from the research (most of which is pre-pandemic) and the field and not a list of recommendations.

The report leverages two main sources of information: a [scan of literature](#), including research, reports on state practices, and newspaper articles; and a survey of Alaska school district leaders ([Appendix](#)). The two sources identify a range of financial opportunities. It will behoove leaders to thoughtfully design sustainable packages that take into account district goals and areas of needs, the cumulative effect on a teacher's total compensation of employing multiple strategies, current and projected budget constraints, and district rules, regulations, and collective agreements.

The report's organization is based on a research-based [typology of financial incentives](#) and characteristics of the [teacher labor market](#). The hiring and longevity section describes incentives related to getting teachers to sign up initially and in subsequent years. Assignment is about differential pay based on what teachers teach and where they work. Education, credentialing, and training cover rewarding teachers for acquiring new skills and knowledge. Pay for performance incentivizes the outcomes of teacher practice. Finally, the report addresses ways to compensate teachers for the cost of living where they work.

Outside of the scope of this report are issues pertaining to retirement, the state of funding for education in Alaska, bargaining agreements, and salary and compensation structures.<sup>4</sup>

## [References.](#)

---

<sup>4</sup> Readers interested in retirement issues may consult the Teacher Retention and Recruitment [Retirement Working Group](#) website. On salary and compensation structures, see the University of Alaska Anchorage [Institute of Social and Economic Research study](#).

# Hiring and longevity

## Signing bonus

**Overview.** A signing bonus, also known as a hiring bonus, is a sum of money a school district can offer a prospective teacher as an inducement to accept a job. It can be a one-time lump sum provided upon contract signing or divided into multiple smaller sums over time. Who is eligible for a bonus can vary depending on teacher characteristics, or where or what they teach. There may be a requirement to return all, or a portion of the bonus should the teacher leave before a given period.

**Rationale.** In the national context of teacher shortage, teachers are likely to be considering multiple job offers, including offers outside of the teaching profession. A signing bonus can tip the balance. It can partially compensate for a loss in salary or benefits in their current job or other jobs that they are considering or for a salary that is lower than what they are seeking.

### Examples from Alaska

Table 1: Signing bonus, examples from Alaska

Region	Amount	Recipients	Timing	Funding source
N	\$1,000	New teachers	First paycheck, 2021-22 only	<a href="#">American Rescue Plan (ARP)</a>
I	\$1,500	New teachers in rural schools	2022-23	Operational funds
SE	\$2,000	New teachers		
N/A	\$1,500-\$2,000	Certified staff in the district for multiple years		Title IIA

Key for all tables: I=Interior; N=North; SC=Southcentral; SE=Southeast; SW=Southwest.

### Examples from the nation

- The West Contra Costa County (CA) Unified School District offers teachers a signing bonus of \$6,000. Teachers receive \$2,000 after their first month in the job. The remaining \$4,000 is not paid until they start their third year. The district leverages ARP funds to cover the bonuses.
- In [Massachusetts](#), certified teachers may obtain a \$20,000 signing bonus, with a minimum of \$8,000 received in the first year, and the remainder spread over at least two additional years. The program aims to attract high quality candidates who were not expected to be considering a teaching career, especially those from underrepresented populations. Quality may be based on various factors, including test scores, grade point average, class rank, and recommendations from higher education institutions anywhere in the country. Hard-to-staff subjects may be prioritized.

- In [Minnesota](#), teachers of color eligible for the top two [license tiers](#) in the system may receive a signing bonus of \$2,500 to \$5,000. The bonus increases to \$4,000 to \$8,000 for those licensed in a shortage area. Half of the bonus is paid when the teacher begins employment and the rest after four years if the teacher has "demonstrated teaching effectiveness" under the state's [development, evaluation, and peer coaching for continuing contract teachers statute](#). Teachers must return the bonus if they leave before the end of their first year.
- In Virginia, teachers filling hard-to-staff positions or working in hard-to-staff schools may receive a signing bonus of up to \$5,000, which is funded with [Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund \(ESSER\)](#) monies.
- In Texas, 71 percent of about 300 teachers stated in a 2010 survey that they would apply for a teaching position in another district for a signing bonus of at least \$2,000.
- In the business world, new employees may receive upwards of 10 percent of their first-year base salary as a signing bonus.

**Impact.** [How successful a signing bonus is at convincing candidates to accept a job is unclear](#). This is in part because it is difficult to determine whether a candidate would have accepted the job regardless of the bonus. Indeed, an evaluation of an earlier inception of the Massachusetts signing bonus (1999-2002) suggested that while the program promoted recruitment, many candidates were already on the path towards a career in teaching. According to one source cited in the study, "large signing bonuses...are less effective at attracting teachers and ineffective at retaining them. Large bonuses are both unnecessary and costly" (Fowler, 2008, p. 383). One Southeastern Alaska school district gave up on a \$3,000 signing bonus "due to the cost and the short-term impact of retaining teachers."

## [References.](#)

### Retention bonus

**Overview.** A retention bonus, also known as a longevity bonus, is a sum of money a school district can offer a teacher who elects to stay in the district, a school, or a position. A retention bonus may be offered to a teacher to finish the school year, return the next school year, or sign up early to do so. The bonus may vary depending on how long the teacher has been in the district, school, or position and for how long they commit to stay.

Like a signing bonus, a retention bonus can be a one-time lump sum provided at a given time or it can be spread over time. Eligibility can vary depending on teacher characteristics, or where or what they teach. And all or some of the bonus may need to be returned if a commitment is unmet.

**Rationale.** Teacher turnover often harms student success and is expensive as schools and districts must expend resources to repeatedly recruit, hire, and onboard new teachers.<sup>5</sup> Financial incentives may encourage teachers to reconsider decisions to leave by making their current job more attractive and partially compensating for what a new job may offer.

### Examples from Alaska (Table 2, next page)

---

<sup>5</sup> For a succinct overview of relevant research, including research on Alaska, see Vazquez Cano, M., Bel Hadj Amor, H., & Pierson, A. (2019). *Educator retention and turnover under the midnight sun: Examining trends and relationships in teacher, principal, and superintendent movement in Alaska*. Education Northwest, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/Products/Publication/60186>

Table 2: Retention bonus, examples from Alaska

Region	Amount	Recipients	Timing	Funding source
SC	\$150	Certified staff who inform the district within one week of receiving their contract whether they are staying the following year	Same month	
SE	\$1,000	All returning teachers		
SE	\$1,500	Teachers who have bottomed out of the salary schedule for years of service	August payroll	General funds
SW	\$1,500-\$2,000	Certified staff in the district for multiple years		Title IIA
SW	\$1,500 (classified) \$3,000 (certified)	All staff members who commit to returning the following school year	After the first month of employment in the following school year	General fund, COVID funding
N	\$2,000	All returning first- and second-year teachers	September of the following year	Grant funding
SE	\$2,000	All teaching staff with a positive evaluation who have completed required training when they sign the next year's contract	Currently paid at the end of the current school year although this has varied over time	ESSER
SW	\$2,000	Teachers who announce early that they are returning the following year	Middle of the following year	
I	\$2,000 and \$3,000 depending on how long they have been working	Teachers in rural schools	Winter break	Operational funds

SC	Starts at \$3,000 in first year, increases annually by \$1,000 up to \$7,000 in their fifth and subsequent years. They also receive tuition assistance if they serve in a high-need school for a minimum amount of time.	Related service providers (occupational therapists, physical therapists, psychologists, and speech-language pathologists)	With the first paycheck of the year	
SW	\$5,000	Teachers who announce early that they are returning the following year		ESSER

Table 2 (Cont'd): Retention bonus, examples from Alaska

Region	Amount	Recipients	Timing	Funding source
SW	Up to \$10,000 or three annual payments of \$5,000 each. There are variations depending on where the individual is on the salary schedule.	Teachers after 10 to 15 years of service		General funds

#### Examples from the nation

- The Dallas Independent School District will provide a retention bonus for all staff who return for the school year in 2022-23. The bonus ranges from \$500-\$3,500 and depends on effectiveness ratings if applicable. It is prorated for part-time staff and will be paid in three installments.
- In Spring 2022, [Indianapolis Public Schools](#) announced a bonus for staff who stay in the district of \$1,000 in the fall and \$1,500 in spring 2023. The bonus is based on attendance. To be eligible, staff may be absent for up to two days in spring 2022. The 30,000+ student school district, which employs over 5,000 staff, was planning to invest \$14 million in federal emergency funds in the bonuses.
- Some school districts and states (e.g., Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, and Michigan) are using a \$1,000 bonus to demonstrate gratitude for staff's exceptional service during the pandemic in the hope of encouraging staff to remain in the profession. ESSER funds are used in this endeavor. In 2021, Jefferson County Public Schools in Kentucky was planning to offer \$5,000 to staff in stipends over the course of the school year to reward them for the extra work they did during COVID.
- An Arkansas program in the 2000s provided bonuses to teachers who stayed in districts with fewer than 1,000 students, at least 80% of whom were eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch. The bonus was \$5,000 at the end of the first year (teachers new to the profession only), \$4,000 at the end of both the second and third years, and \$3,000 in the fourth and fifth years. The bonuses increased by \$1,000 in 2009.
- A teacher in Iowa may receive a bonus of \$1,000 to finish the school year. The bonus was set to be paid at the end of the 2022 school year.

**Impact.** There is little evidence of a consistent impact of bonuses on retention. As in the case of signing bonuses, it is difficult to ascertain whether someone eligible for or accepting a bonus was going to stay anyway. One suggestion from the research is to provide the bonus during the following school year rather than during the current one and some Alaska stakeholders agreed that a retention bonus should only be paid if an individual returns. The Southwestern school district that paid teachers \$5,000 in the middle of the school year as a reward for announcing early the previous year that they were returning experienced high turnover once the lump sum was paid out. District leadership recommends instead a two-year commitment with half of the amount paid for each year that the teacher returns. In the Alaska district with a bonus opportunity over \$10,000, fewer than 10 percent of staff achieved the required milestone. The district is considering a similar program for teachers with five to 10 years of service. One Alaska district leader expressed concern that inconsistencies in implementation over time has decreased the promise of this type of incentive. One Alaska stakeholder suggests districts be mindful in offering retention only to some categories of staff, as others may feel devalued.

## References.

## Assignments

### Financial incentive for teaching in shortage subject matter areas or working in a high-need or hard-to-staff school

**Overview.** Districts use multiple forms of incentives to attract teachers of shortage subject matter areas or to work in a high-need or hard-to-staff school, including annual supplements or stipends, increased steps or a different salary schedule, one-time bonuses, or differential pay on an exceptional basis.

**Rationale.** Teachers in some subject areas have particularly attractive and lucrative opportunities outside of the teacher profession. Some schools and districts may be perceived as less attractive because of more challenging working conditions in an under-resourced setting and of living conditions that may include isolation, harsh weather, and high cost of living. Teacher turnover often exacerbates inequities as it tends to be higher in high-poverty schools and in rural schools and districts than it is elsewhere.<sup>6</sup> Financial incentives may partially make up for real or perceived difficulties.

#### Examples from Alaska

Three school districts focus their incentives on special education teachers. One of them uses signing and longevity bonuses. One provides a \$500 stipend and another an annual \$2,000 stipend.

#### Examples from the nation

##### Shortage subject-matter areas

- A program in Florida has offered a one-time retention bonus of up to \$1,200 for middle and high school teachers with satisfactory performance ratings in shortage subjects as well as up to \$10,000 over four years to repay loans. The state also awards a bonus every year to teachers of computer science of \$1,000 if the teacher has a certificate and/or \$500 if it is an industry certification.
- Georgia pays elementary school teachers \$1,000 when they earn an endorsement in math or science.

---

<sup>6</sup> See same research overview in Vazquez Cano, Bel Hadj Amor, & Pierson (2019).

- In 2020, Hawaii increased the annual salaries of special education teachers by at least \$10,000 per year, and Atlanta offered new special education teachers \$3,000 bonuses. Detroit followed suit in 2021, allocating repeated \$15,000 bonuses to special education teachers.
- In Hawaii, teachers can also be rewarded for teaching Hawaiian language subjects.
- In South Carolina, teachers who teach in critical subject areas are eligible for an annual stipend of \$1,500.
- Utah adds \$4,100 to the salary of secondary computer science, math, science, and special education teachers.

#### High-need or hard-to-staff locations

- Programs in multiple districts and states provide bonuses to stay in or transfer to low-performing schools. For example, high-quality teachers can earn an additional \$10,000 to \$20,000 over two years to stay in or transfer to low-performing schools in their district.
- Tennessee offers a \$5,000 retention bonus to highly effective teachers based on their educator evaluation system who stay in high-poverty schools.
- Texas has taken steps to attract and retain quality teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools. The [Teacher Incentive Allotment](#) allows districts to identify teachers as Recognized, Exemplary, or Master, based on National Board Certification or through a district designed, teacher association-approved system. Districts then receive funds to reward individual teachers with a bonus from \$3,000 to \$32,000, using a formula that prioritizes high-need and rural schools.
- As of 2017, Utah offered quality teachers in high-performing, high-poverty schools a \$5,000 bonus, half of which was paid by the school.
- Washington State offers National Board Certified teachers a salary supplement with an additional \$5,000 for teachers in high-poverty schools.

#### Combining subject matter and need

- Colorado candidates performing student teaching in a rural district who agree to stay for three years after they graduate may receive a \$2,800 bonus. Teaching a high-need subject or in a rural district at least 50 miles from a major metropolitan area are prioritized.
- In the early 2000s, certified math, science, and special education teachers in eligible North Carolina regular or alternative schools received a salary supplement of \$1,800 every year they stayed in the school (prorated for part-time teachers). To qualify, middle schools had to meet the criterion of serving at least 80 percent of students who were to receive a free or reduced-price lunch. Eligible high schools were low-performing schools defined as those where at least 50 percent of students performed below grade level on the end-of-course Algebra 1 and Biology assessments. Teachers remained eligible even if their school no longer was. A more recent program pays an extra \$3,000 per year for four years to new mathematics, science, and special education teachers. Another rewards high-quality core subject teachers in low-performing schools. Another increases salaries by 10 percent for teachers of gifted students.

**Impact:** Financial opportunities can encourage teachers to go to and stay in high-needs schools or teach hard-to-staff subject areas and they can be cost-effective. One Alaska Superintendent has had a successful experience with using a bonus to incentivize a teacher to move to a high-need area when they were unable to hire for that position. However, [there is a dearth of rigorous research on the topic](#). Some retention bonuses are associated with lower turnover and review of research internationally suggests that financial opportunities to attract teachers to high-need schools and communities are one of the most promising approaches. Bonuses need to be adequate; yet the research does not yield clear guidance on whether there is a minimum amount for a bonus to be effective. This likely depends on a

range of factors including salaries in neighboring school districts and other local professions. Research also does not clarify under what circumstances retention bonuses are consistently effective. Bonuses must also be sustained. A retention bonus is more likely to affect the decision to stay at the time it is paid than in subsequent years. Bonuses alone are less likely to affect retention and benefit from being combined with improved working conditions. Careful design, clear, comprehensive communication, and implementation matter for effectiveness and buy-in.

## References.

### **Extra-duty bonus**

**Overview.** An extra-duty bonus compensates a teacher for taking on additional responsibilities. These can be leadership roles, such as taking on administrative duties, providing coaching, mentoring, and professional development, or facilitating instructional leadership teams. It can also involve working in multiple roles or locations, working an extended day or school year, teaching large classes, and taking on excessive caseloads. Extra duties may not always be a choice – in some school districts, they can be required during emergencies as part of the bargaining agreements. As such, they may not always be perceived as a choice and clarity in communications is important.

**Rationale.** Insufficient opportunities to provide input into decision-making, to lead, especially without leaving the classroom, and to grow professionally can be frustrating to teachers and encourage them to leave. Further, lack of capacity in under-resourced or small, isolated schools and districts can leave duties unfulfilled that teachers are asked to take on or feel obligated to volunteer for. Providing opportunities and rewarding them can open up opportunities to lead, grow, help others grow, explore other employment opportunities in the district, and to feel rewarded for an additional workload. It is also an opportunity to spread out responsibilities across multiple individuals and avoid overburdening some.

#### **Examples from Alaska (Table 3)**

A Southeastern school district offers teachers extra-duty contracts to serve as coaches or advisors for a semester or year. These are covered by negotiated stipends, rather than bonuses. They are a percentage of base salary depending on activity. Payment is split by month across the length of the activity, out of general funds.

#### **Examples from the nation**

- To help ensure sufficient instructional time in a context of understaffing, in 2020-21, the Atlanta Public Schools paid elementary school teachers an additional \$3,000 a year to work an extra half-hour every day.
- Missouri school used multiple approaches to pay teachers for various additional duties, e.g., increasing the base salary from 0.1 to 5 percent with an average of 2.5 percent, assigning an extra step on the salary schedule, offering an average annual stipend of about \$2,000, ranging from \$300 to \$5,000.

**Impact.** Research on career advancement opportunities is limited and indicates that they may increase teacher engagement, satisfaction, self-efficacy, and desire to stay in the profession and their school district. A balance must be found between adding and rewarding fulfilling responsibilities and piling on so many of them that they discourage teachers from moving up the ladder.

## References.

Table 3: Extra-duty bonus, examples from Alaska

Region	Amount	Recipients	Timing	Funding source
SC	\$100-\$1,000 depending on a mutually agreed upon commitment prior to starting work	Classified and certified staff who serve on special committees outside of contract hours	Once the commitment is fulfilled	
SE	\$200 to \$1,500 depending on assigned responsibilities	Certified and classified staff who take on additional responsibilities, during the school year and the summer, for the school year or a single event	With the last pay period of the contract year	General fund, grants, or federal programs
SW	\$300-\$5,000 e.g., \$3,000 per semester for teachers teaching during a planning period or before or after school	Teachers who take on and complete extra duties	At the end of each activity	General funds
SE	\$400-\$1,600 depending on role and longevity	Certified or classified staff who support programs outside of the regular school day, such as "sponsoring a club, advising a grade, or tutoring students."	End of the semester or school year	Title I or general funds
SW	\$1,000-\$3,000	Classified or certified staff who commit to filling specific needed roles for a year	Half is paid mid-year and the rest when the contract ends.	General funds
SC	\$1,000-\$5,000	Eligible certified staff who take on extra duties	Monthly as part of payroll	General funds
SC	\$3,500 and \$7,000	Lead teachers e.g., individual without an administrator certificate taking on an assistant principal position		General funds

# Education, credentialing, and training

## Loan forgiveness and scholarships

**Overview.** Loan forgiveness, scholarships, and forgivable (or conditional or scholarship) loans, are ways to decrease the cost of an education for teachers and teacher candidates. Forgivable loans are designed to be fully or partially forgiven by states once students meet certain requirements, while those under forgiveness programs are subsequently forgiven subject to requirements. They can be targeted to teachers in shortage subject matter areas or who commit to teach in high-need settings.

**Rationale.** The cost of teacher preparation and resulting debt are a major barrier to individuals going into the teaching profession, in which lower salaries will slow down repayment. It is also an impediment to diversity in the field.

**Examples from Alaska.** None of the district leaders who responded to the survey reported a loan forgiveness or scholarship incentive. A personal communication from a member of the Teacher Retention and Recruitment [organizational health committee](#) suggests that multiple districts in Alaska offer tuition support for paraprofessionals who aspire to become teachers. [Educators Rising](#) is an opportunity to “inspire high school and college students to serve their communities by entering the field of education” through scholarships and other supports.

### Examples from the nation

- Multiple states target scholarships, loans, or other programs at teachers to teach in shortage subject areas or in high-need schools or to acquire additional licensing or endorsements to teach in those settings (e.g., Colorado, Iowa, Maryland, New York).
- [Arizona](#) offers a need-based forgivable loan to promote the teaching profession in the state. The loan is up to \$7,000 per academic year for up to three years and can be used for tuition, instructional materials, and fees.
- In Indiana, high-achieving high school students who commit to teaching in the state for five consecutive years after graduation are eligible for a [scholarship](#) of \$7,500 for their first academic year in a state educator preparation program. To be eligible, students must be among the top 20 percent of their high school graduating class or have an ACT or SAT score in the highest 20 percent. The scholarship is renewable for up to three more years, up to \$30,000, as long as students maintain a 3.0/4.0 GPA and complete all college requirements including earning a minimum of 30 credit hours per year. Students receive half of the scholarship amount in the fall semester and the rest in the spring semester. The scholarship turns into a loan that must be repaid if the five-year teaching requirement is not met.
- Iowa forgives loans at an annual rate of \$4,000 for up to five years for teachers who have graduated in the top 25 percent of their class and teach shortage subject matter content areas.
- Maryland offers loan repayment assistance for teachers who have taught in the state for at least two years, have earned high evaluation ratings, and teach shortage subject matter areas or in high-poverty schools. The Howard County Public School System may provide loan repayment assistance to diverse, qualified teachers who commit to teach there for at least five years.
- A program in Nebraska offers teacher candidates seeking certification in shortage areas a \$3,000 forgivable loan annually for up to 5 years. It is forgiven at a rate of \$3,000 per year after earning certification and teaching full time for two years in the state, and a rate of \$6,000 per year for teachers in low-income and rural schools.

- In Nevada, students who commit to teaching in the state for five consecutive years are eligible for a scholarship of \$3,000 in their first semester in a state educator preparation program. The scholarship is available for every semester up to \$24,000. Students receive three quarters of the scholarship amount when they begin the program and the rest when they complete the five-year teaching requirement. They also receive a \$1,000 bonus at graduation. The program prioritizes students from traditionally underserved groups, veterans, high-need subject matter content areas, and those who commit to teaching in high-need schools.
- Using ARP monies, North Carolina funds a \$33,000 scholarship for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, as well as special education teachers who agree to teach in the system for eight years or in a low-performing school for four. A 25-year long program that ended in 2011 offered the state's top high school students a four-year competitive scholarship if they agreed to teach in the state for at least four years. Those who did not fulfill their commitment had to pay the state back with interest.
- A program in Utah focuses scholarships of up to \$5,000 to paraeducators pursuing an associate degree or bachelor's degree program to become a licensed teacher.

**Impact:** There are some positive impacts of these programs although this is often hard for researchers to gauge because of the limited number of awards. A North Carolina program was found to yield effective teachers who were more likely to teach for five years or more than their peers. Research suggests that programs that cover a substantial portion of tuition and/or living costs are associated with higher recruitment and retention. One study finds that teachers who have left the profession would consider returning if loan forgiveness were available. Another recommends the following for implementation:

1. Recruit and select candidates who are academically strong, committed to teaching, and well prepared.
2. Cover all or a large percentage of tuition.
3. Target high-need fields and/or schools.
4. Commit recipients to teach with reasonable financial consequences if they do not fulfill the commitment (but not so punitive that they avoid the scholarship entirely).
5. Are administratively manageable for participating teachers, districts, and higher education institutions

-- Espinoza et al., 2018, p. 5.

## References.

## **Incentives for increased skills and knowledge**

**Overview.** Increased skills and knowledge inform career ladders, which describe how employees progress to higher levels of responsibilities in their job. They are common in a range of fields, including civil service, law enforcement, and the private sector. In education, teacher salary schedules list teacher salaries and how they increase with years of experience and additional degrees and/or educational credits.<sup>7</sup> Districts may supplement the pay scale by rewarding teachers for acquiring new skills and

---

<sup>7</sup> Redesigning the teacher salary schedule is beyond the scope of this report.

knowledge through additional college education or other training offered by the district or elsewhere. Acquiring new skills may happen through and result in recertification or new certification such as National Board Certification. Rewards may come in the form of financial compensation for completing certification, credits, or a course or through the district paying for them.

**Rationale.** Increased skills and knowledge may be associated with improved self-efficacy and effectiveness, which may result in higher job satisfaction, engagement, and likelihood of retention. They may ultimately benefit students as well as colleagues who can learn from their peers. It can also be a boon for the school district that may identify staff who are interested in and capable of fulfilling different roles.

#### Examples from Alaska

As one Alaska stakeholder states, “incentives to grow professionally are already built into the negotiated contract agreement” in some agreements.

**Table 4: Certification support, examples from Alaska**

Region	Amount	Recipients	Timing	Funding source
I	\$1,000	National Board Certified teachers	Annually	Operating budget
SW	\$1,000	Those who intend to become a National Board Certified teacher	Once certification is completed	General funds
SE	\$2,000	Staff who hold National Board Certification or a master's degree	Monthly along with salaries (part of the negotiated agreement)	General funds

One school district has occasionally offered a bonus to cover certification for specialized staff members such as special education teachers and counselors.

- Two districts, one Southeastern and one Southwestern, use general funds and Title IIA funds respectively to reimburse teachers who teach in high-need schools for completing additional college credits. The Southwestern school district covers the cost of three or six credit hours and requires a commitment to teach there for a minimum amount of time.
- In a Southwestern Alaska school district, teachers are eligible for tuition assistance after two years of service. Another discontinued tuition support when staff did not take advantage of it.

Table 5: Tuition support, examples from Alaska

Region	Amount	Recipients	Timing	Funding source
SE	\$452 per year per teacher for up to three university credits per year	Certified staff	Upon completion of credits and submission of appropriate paperwork to the district office	General funds
SC	\$800 per course	Teachers who have been in the district for at least three years	Upon successful completion	General funds
SC	\$24,000 total district set aside	Certified staff who apply for tuition reimbursement and commit to returning to the district the following year	Monthly payroll	General funds
SE	\$64,000 total district set aside for up to three credit hours per year	Certified staff interested in completing courses		General funds
SW	\$1,000-\$3,000	Classified or certified staff who commit to filling specific needed roles for a year	Half is paid mid-year and the rest when the contract ends.	General funds
SC	\$1,000-\$5,000	Eligible certified staff who take on extra duties	Monthly as part of payroll	General funds

Table 6: Paid professional development, examples from Alaska

Region	Amount	Recipients	Timing	Funding source
SC	\$100-\$1,000 depending on whether this is a school-based opportunity or an out-of-town conference	Certified and classified staff	At the time of travel if there is any, and with that month's payroll otherwise	
SW	\$500-\$3,000 depending on training cost and as decided by a teacher-led professional development committee	Staff interested in training "outside of administrative interests"		Teacher Professional Development fund as part of general funds
SW	Up to \$2,500	Certified staff	Upon training completion	General funds

### Examples from the nation

#### Certification support

- As of 2018, [30 states](#) had “a licensing system that allows teachers to advance beyond a standard professional license...only five require or explicitly encourage additional pay for teachers who obtain advanced licensure.” A license can be based exclusively on an advanced degree and/or National Board Certification status. A bonus can be received for an advanced degree or National Board Certification status even if they are not associated with a license, or for accumulating credits. It can be differentiated based on tiered licensure and effectiveness ratings.
- State bonuses for National Board Certification vary from \$1,000 to \$25,000 or can be a percentage of average annual salary. Teaching in a high-poverty or low-performing school or a rural area could result in a larger incentive. Some states offer scholarships or subsidies to support acquiring National Board Certification. A [specific list by state](#) is available on the National Board for Professional Standards website.

#### Tuition support

- Virginia supported tuition at a level of up to \$500 per course in 2012 for one or two courses per year for special education teachers. Eighty-one percent of about 300 teachers surveyed in Texas in 2010 agreed that tuition reimbursement was an incentive to stay in their school district.

#### Paid professional development

- In 2022, after the Oregon legislature allocated millions of dollars to school districts for teacher retention and recruitment, an Oregon school district planned to spend some of its allocated \$5 million to paid professional development for substitute teachers and educational assistants, to benefit, them, the teachers that they support, and students

**Impact.** [Research suggests](#) that many individuals feel underprepared when they leave the postsecondary system, yearn for additional opportunities for professional growth, value employers that provide them, and are encouraged to stay and work for those employers.<sup>8</sup> Providing those opportunities may also boost recruitment – a national survey of employed individuals revealed that many would apply for a different job that offered valuable professional development opportunities. There is also [limited evidence](#) that incentivizing National Board Certification with a supplement for working in a low-income school encourages certified teachers to work in those schools. Further, research points to the characteristics of effective professional development – it is relevant to practice, active, challenging, collaborative, continuous, and integrated in teachers’ jobs, and involves listening to and observing experts, replicating effective practice, and reflecting. School districts may want to confirm that the opportunities that they provide and support follow evidence-based practice.

#### References.

---

<sup>8</sup> The reviewed research does not distinguish between opportunities that teachers pursue to progress on the salary scale and/or for recertification and additional opportunities they choose based on personal preferences or district incentives.

## Pay for performance

**Overview.** Under pay for performance (also known as merit pay), teachers are rewarded based on how they perform their job. It can be based on evaluation systems that may rate teachers on individual and group practices, feedback from supervisors, mentors, peers, parents, or students, as well as district, school, or student achievement or growth. It can be based on student achievement goals that are not tied to evaluations. It can also be based on other factors such as student enrollment or student or teacher attendance. Pay may come in the form of higher salaries or bonuses and may be based on individual, group, or whole-school goals. Financial opportunities based on performance can be unpopular with teachers as they can be complex and perceived as unfair. A multitude of questions arise e.g., who is eligible? Whose performance is being measured? What metrics are being used? Are rewards determined based on a relative or absolute standard? How are the amounts determined? Who makes the decisions? What is the level of trust between teachers and administrators? Pay for performance is also sometimes seen as causing competition and hindering collaboration among teachers and as being subjective, unethical, inequitable, and unfairly implemented. As such, it is a controversial incentive.

**Rationale.** The logic behind performance pay in the workplace in general is that if a goal is attached to monetary rewards, workers will be more motivated to meet those goals and will be more productive. Similarly, teachers are expected to adopt behaviors that will foster student achievement. Clearly, this logic assumes that money is a motivation, that pay is sufficient to change behavior, and that teachers know how to change behavior to yield different outcomes. This is in line with the [No Child Left Behind Act of 2001](#) goal to provide teachers with annual student test results to measure student progress, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and design lessons that get students to meet or exceed standards. It is also in keeping with the subsequent [No Child Left Behind flexibility](#) (2012) which promoted teacher evaluation systems that rated teachers higher based on their students' growth.

### Examples from Alaska

- One Northern school district has designed a bonus program aimed at boosting student growth in the district, based on three district growth targets. The bonus is available to interested certified teachers who work with students. They receive \$1,600 to attend four hours of training and up to \$400 more depending on which growth target the district meets. The initiative is grant funded and as such, is set to end when the grant does at the end of September 2022.

### Examples from the nation

- One Ohio school district offered teachers evaluation-based performance pay for a maximum of \$40,000 across various bonuses. Bonuses are tied to a measure of student growth, other quantifiable goals for the year, a performance index, a percentage of state report card indicators met, and an individual evaluation rating. The bonuses supplement base pay for teachers who earn one of the top two tiers of the evaluation system (\$100 and \$50) and reward successful schools. Another provides a bonus to all teachers when the district meets certain state goals.
- Two Ohio school districts aim to incentivize higher attendance through performance pay. One offers an individual bonus to teachers who do not take sick or personal leave days. In the other, all teachers receive a bonus if district attendance increases. Every teacher receives a \$150 bonus when district use of sick and personal leave drops by 20 percent, and another \$150 in the following years if district numbers remain low.

- The Washington DC Public Schools rewards teachers who earn Highly Effective evaluation ratings with bonuses up to \$25,000 based on measures of instructional practice, student growth on standardized assessments, instructional culture, and collaboration. Teachers in Title I schools earn over \$2,000 more on average in salary than teachers at non-Title I schools, and over \$4,000 more when bonuses are included.
- As of 2015, the New Mexico pay for performance program rewards teachers rated highly on the evaluation system, which relies heavily on student achievement. At least two-thirds of the awards go to individuals and the rest are grade- or school-level incentives. Individual teachers receive at least \$1,500. Programs vary. Rather than use evaluation ratings, one low-performing school awards bonuses of \$350 to \$7,500 to teachers who move students through 0.5 hours of credit recovery. Another rewards all staff and teachers based on student test scores and school performance. A third bases the bonus on students' ACT and ACT Aspire scores. The Santa Fe Public Schools takes into account teacher evaluation observations, student growth, and at the school level, a measure of growth, student attendance, and findings from a quality of education survey.

**Impact.** Research on the impact of pay for performance tends to be on its effect on student achievement and is typically inconclusive, especially when the incentives are not based on individual contributions. The impact of pay for performance on teacher retention is mixed as well. One study found no effect on retention even when teachers were paid at the end of the school year rather than the beginning. Research suggests that, to increase the likelihood of effectiveness and teacher acceptance, pay for performance systems be designed with clear and fair objectives, and a reasonable, understandable, and believable link between what a teacher does, how their accomplishments are measured, and how much the reward is. The amount of pay also has to be large enough to be motivating. A couple of Alaska stakeholders raised a concern that this incentive might “unintentionally re-route educators to school districts with a higher percentage of above average student achievement and/or greater family resources (and could discourage) educators (from) working in higher need communities with fewer resources to support their work.” Another concern one raised is the inability of teachers in subjects that are not tested with standardized assessments to demonstrate student growth to justify receiving the incentive.

## References.

## Cost of living

### Relocating

**Overview.** Relocation incentives are reimbursements for expenses teachers incur when they move to a new location for a job. They can include hiring movers, shipping personal belongings, paying for barge service for a vehicle, and purchasing plane or ferry tickets.

**Rationale.** Moving is rarely cheap. Relocating to Alaska from the lower 48 and particularly to a rural remote community that may not be on the road system can be very expensive. Relocation incentives help defray the cost of relocating. This may be particularly enticing to teachers, especially those fresh out of college, with salaries that can be low and college debt that can be high.

#### Examples from Alaska (Table 7, next page)

- One Interior school district pays for airfare for teachers to cover a round trip every year.
- One Southeastern school district uses mileage to provide long-term substitutes who fulfill their contract time with airfare into and out of the district.
- Some Alaska stakeholders recall that while some districts may not pay for airfare as part of relocation, they may “help offset the cost of travel to and from communities off the road system” and cover the shipping of goods to villages to make life there more comfortable.

**Examples from the nation.** A review of research on financial opportunities to augment teacher salaries unearthed few specific examples of relocation incentives from the nation. The city of Tulsa, OK, and the state of Vermont launched programs that incentivized workers with a moving bonus of up to \$10,000. A member of the Teacher Retention and Recruitment organizational health committee stated that the “Jefferson County Public Schools in Louisville, KY, offers moving expenses and issues them in two payments during the school year when first year teachers are typically most discouraged.” Private companies advertise online various kinds of packages from which school districts can choose or that can inform district decisions about whether and to what extent to fund teacher relocation. Lists of states and districts that pay for new hires to move can be found online and are not education specific.

**Impact.** The research review did not identify evidence on the impact of relocation incentives except for studies that showed that the moving bonuses of up to \$10,000 in Tulsa, OK, and Vermont had benefited the economy. The Vermont program was cost-effective within two years of implementation.

### References.

Table 7: Relocating, examples from Alaska

Region	Amount	Recipients	Timing	Funding source
SC	If moving from inside Alaska: – \$1,000 without receipts – Up to \$2,000 with receipts If moving from outside Alaska: – \$2,000 without receipts – Up to \$3,000 with receipts	Newly hired certified staff	Included in the teacher's September paycheck	
SW	\$1,500	Teachers	At the time of arrival	General funds
SE	Up to \$2,000	Certified staff	Once they have moved	
SC	\$2,000	Teachers		<a href="#">Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES)</a>
SC	\$2,500	New teachers who move into the community to teach at one of the districts' most remote sites	With the first month's salary as a lump sum (no receipts are required); it has to be paid back if the teacher leaves before the end of the school year.	Discretionary funds
N	\$3,000	New certified staff who make a two-year commitment	Within the first three months of employment, half is to be repaid if the employee leaves after their first year.	General funds
SW	\$3,500	Teachers	At the time of arrival	General funds
SW	\$4,000	Teachers	At the time of arrival	General funds
SE	Up to \$5,000 depending on receipts	Newly hired certified staff	Depends on receipts	Title II for up to three teachers and general funds for the rest

## Housing

**Overview.** To promote recruitment and retention, districts nationwide have experimented with housing subsidies such as offering or helping find rentals at below-market rates, paying for relocation,

supporting teachers with down payments, and subsidizing home ownership and teacher housing. The housing landscape in Alaska is multi-faceted. Housing incentives may be part of benefit package or teachers may be on their own to find housing, hoping at best for advice on good realtors and with no option to purchase land. Some districts own buildings and make them available to teachers, sometimes for a limited time period. Some districts focus housing opportunities for teachers based on what and where they teach. Districts or developers can lead housing initiatives. Some districts can sell or lease unused space to developers under the condition that affordable housing for teachers will be included. Districts may partner with other organizations that may own the space and the debt for construction and manage the properties. There are also developers who help provide affordable housing for teachers without the district's direct involvement although the district providing property is an incentive for developers to keep rents low. There are also opportunities to partner with local banks.

**Rationale.** Housing is a basic need. Not finding a home and not being able to afford one to rent or buy, and ultimately build roots in a community, is one reason teachers leave their district and /or teaching. Supporting housing is also a way of communicating to teachers that administrators understand the high cost of living at some locations.

#### Examples from Alaska

The [Teacher Next Door Program](#) provides housing grants around the nation. In Alaska, grants from \$1,000 to \$4,170 are available to teachers in grades Pre-K through 12 (as well as administrators and staff) towards the purchase of a home. These grants are non-repayable. Teachers may also be eligible for down payment assistance of up to \$10,681.

**Table 8: Housing, examples from Alaska**

Region	Amount	Recipients	Timing	Funding source
SE	\$200 per month towards rent	Certificated staff	Monthly	
N	\$500 per month for 10 months	Certified teachers in outlying villages, those in the hub who have been teaching for one year, and certified staff who do not live in the district	Monthly	District-funded program built into the negotiated agreement
SW	Discounted rent with extra \$500-a-month discount for teachers in the district's two smallest sites	Teachers		General funds
N	\$5,000 yearly housing allowance	Teachers and administrators employed by the district and not provided housing by the district		

- One Southeastern school district offers housing at no cost to long-term substitutes for the length of their contract.

- Another, where long-term rentals are not available and housing prices are beyond the means of educators, is exploring a partnership with their local economic development corporation to purchase an apartment complex that could be shared across government entities.
- One Southwestern school district charges teachers a discounted rent. There is an extra \$500-a-month discount for teachers in the district's two smallest sites. General funds cover this initiative.
- One Interior school district that is unable to subsidize housing instead supports it by providing a stipend for fuel.
- One Southwestern school district supported utilities with grant funding but had to discontinue the program when the grant ended, and the district was unable to sustain funding.

#### Examples from the nation

- [Example projects](#) include developer and district projects run in rural areas (pp. 19 and 34). Different projects have different eligibility criteria (e.g., teachers or all staff) and can be limited in duration.
- Districts can identify banks that provide loans at very low interest rates and keep teachers informed of available tax credits (e.g., [New Markets Tax Credit](#) for low income areas, the [Historic Tax Credit](#) to renovate historically designated buildings, the [Low Income Housing Tax Credit](#) to support the provision of rental housing to lower-income households.)
- In July 2022, the East San Jose school district was planning to ask voter approval to modify the language of an existing bond to reallocate some leftover funds to build below-market rate housing for teachers and staff.
- A 2020 Washington proposal advocated for allowing all school districts to use property taxes to issue tax-exempt bonds to fund teacher housing on underused district property. This would provide teachers with below market rents and districts with additional income.
- In the early 2000s, Santa Clara (CA) Unified School District provided five-year, interest-free secondary mortgage loans with monthly payments of up to \$500 and subsidized teacher mortgage payment at \$500 per month for five years for local homes. After five years, teachers started repaying the district, generating monies to support additional teachers. The district funded the initiative by selling a \$10 million bond to a large corporation at below-market interest rates.
- In the mid-2000s, New York City provided housing incentives of up to \$14,600 to mathematics, science, and special education teachers with at least two years of experience who agreed to teach in high-needs middle or high schools for three years. The estimated cost was \$15,000 per teacher.
- A Connecticut [Teachers Mortgage Assistance Program](#) offers below-market interest rate loans to help teachers in some school districts and subject areas become homeowners. Additional incentives to promote the recruitment of teachers of color.
- The Mississippi Housing Assistance for Teachers (HAT) program allocates \$6,000 in housing assistance to teachers teaching in hard-to-staff rural areas for three years and provides additional incentives to promote the equitable distribution of teachers.
- In a Montana school district, a partnership with the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity is set to provide housing for staff in its three schools at rents on a sliding scale. For example, two teachers sharing a unit pay \$1,000 per month, increasing to \$1,500 for a teacher sharing a unit with a non-school employee. A teacher living by themselves would pay a little over a quarter of their salary. In terms of funding, “the Big Sky Resort Tax Board gave \$400,000 to help fund the construction of the housing units. In 2019, voters also approved a \$600,000 mill levy to help fund the triplexes,

located near Lone Peak High School... The school district, which acts as housing landlord, put out applications among its staff earlier this year" (Weber, 2020).

- In a Utah school district, top performing teachers (with at least 70 percent of students experiencing higher than average learning and growth) who taught in high-poverty schools received a \$5,000 housing bonus. The bonus was paid in half by the state and half by the district.

**Impact.** Research on housing incentive programs is limited. Yet it suggests that housing initiatives may be associated with higher teacher recruitment and retention rates. Santa Clara believes its program reduced turnover. A small town, low performing school district in New Mexico reports almost eliminating vacancies the past few years by subsidizing rents in a neighborhood of small, affordable homes built specifically for its teachers. Offering housing and promoting a community for teachers both helped. A North Carolina school district states that it recruited enough teachers by offering affordable housing to launch a foreign language program. In a national survey, almost a quarter of teachers who stopped teaching and were thinking about coming back mentioned housing support as a decisive factor. A little over half of about 300 teachers surveyed in Texas in 2010 agreed that low-interest housing loans their district offered was an incentive to stay in their school district while only about a third felt the same way about subsidized rents.

## References.

## Childcare

**Overview.** Childcare benefits may include offering free or subsidized space with staff onsite, covering part of the cost of childcare offsite, and identifying local childcare providers and nonprofit organizations that offer scholarships and low rates. Districts can enhance these financial benefits with non-financial ones such as partnering with a nearby childcare facility to prioritize staff children. The provided childcare can be ongoing, occasional, or last-minute. One Alaska stakeholder suggested that districts provide childcare to students who are parents.

**Rationale.** Providing or sponsoring childcare is one way to reduce cost of living for teachers and contribute to making up for low salaries. It may reduce anxiety that teachers with children may have about leaving their children alone during the workday, contributing to productivity and self-efficacy. It may increase teacher appreciation for their current job and/or entice them to consider a different job where those benefits are offered.

**Examples from Alaska.** None of the district leaders who responded to the survey reported a childcare or daycare incentive.

## Examples from the nation

- As an incentive to return to school in the 2021-22 school year, the Los Angeles Unified School District announced a \$500 monthly allowance for staff who need childcare.
- The Plano School District in Texas provides teachers with childcare and charges 10 percent below the market rate.

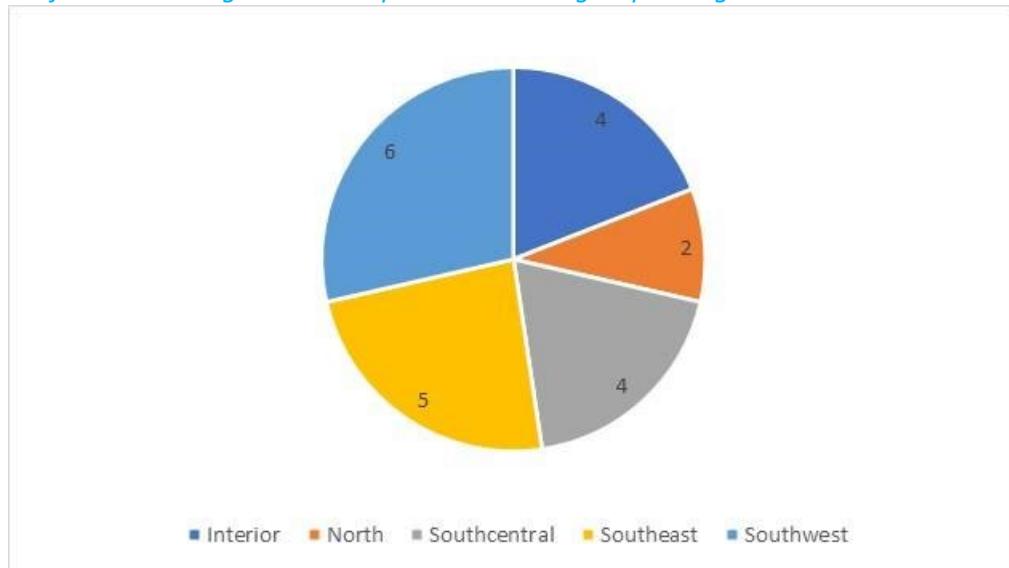
**Impact.** A review of research on financial opportunities to augment teacher salaries did not identify childcare incentives or any impact they may have, except for a 2010 survey of about 300 Texas teachers, almost two-thirds of whom agreed that the district offering childcare was a reason to stay.

## References.

## Appendix: Survey highlights

The financial opportunities survey was sent to all Alaska school district Superintendents and/or their designee if a Superintendent had identified one in addition or instead of them (56 recipients). The survey remained open for two weeks and two reminders were sent. We received 22 responses (39 percent response rate), 16 of which were complete (29 percent of total responses). One additional school district provided information verbally. Twenty-one respondents identified their district or region (Figure 1).<sup>9</sup>

*Figure 1: All of the state's regions were represented among responding districts*



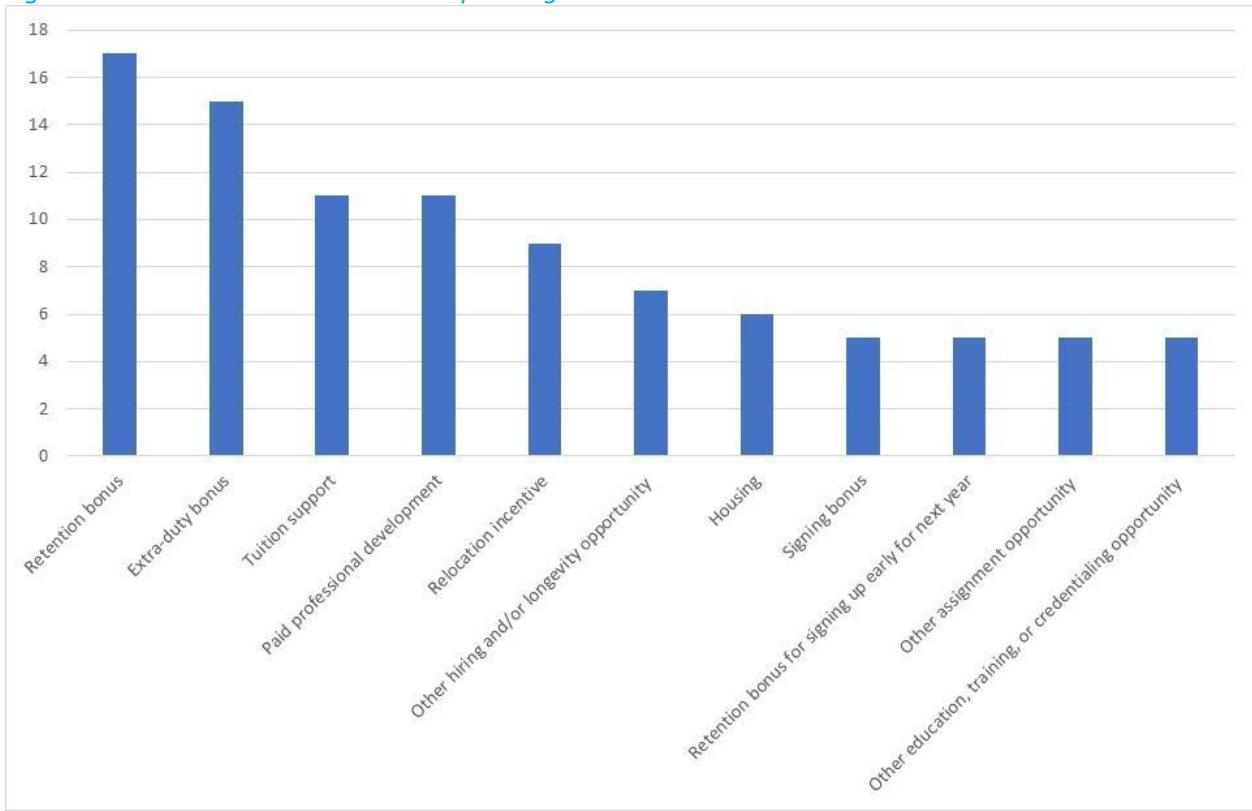
Source: Author's calculations

Retention bonuses were most common (17 districts), followed by extra-duty bonuses (15 districts), and tuition support and paid professional development (11 districts each; Figure 2). No district reported using pay for performance based on evaluations or factors such as student enrollment or attendance. Other financial opportunities listed in the [survey protocol](#) were in use in fewer than five districts. Details about each financial opportunity are reported in the main body of the report.

<sup>9</sup> As stated earlier in this document, we use five regions as displayed on p. 7 of this report: Vazquez Cano, M., Bel Hadj Amor, H., & Pierson, A. (2019). *Educator retention and turnover under the midnight sun: Examining trends and relationships in teacher, principal, and superintendent movement in Alaska*. Education Northwest, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest.

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/Products/Publication/60186>

*Figure 2: Most common bonuses in responding districts*



Source: Author's calculations

## About Verite Educational Services

Verite Educational Services (VES) is a subsidiary of Verite Group Inc (VGI). VES is a technology and education consulting company that builds collaborative partnerships with constituents. We have supported federal government missions and private sector enterprises for more than 18 years, and states/schools for more than six years. Our team of consultants brings years of experience as education practitioners in early learning and K-12 in the context of state and local agencies and nonprofits, as well as expertise in program evaluation, research, and grant writing.

## Acknowledgments

The author is grateful to Laura Capelle of NEA-Alaska, Bill Burr of Wrangell Public Schools, Joy Cogburn-Smith of Northwest Arctic Borough School District, and Cassee Olin of the Juneau Schools for providing rich feedback during a focus group and to the members of the Teacher Retention and Recruitment organizational health committee who made very helpful suggestions to improve on the report. I appreciate the district leaders who took the time to respond to the survey. I acknowledge Sondra Meredith of the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development and Dr. Barbara Adams of Adams Analytic Solutions for their guidance in focusing the report, their input, and their feedback. I would like to thank my colleagues Erin Kupferberg for feedback and logistical support, Dr. Margareth Legaspi for advice, and Seth Taylor for programming the survey that collected information from district leaders on financial opportunities Alaska school districts use. This report would not be possible without the thorough and thoughtful literature scan by research librarian Ira Pollack.

## Suggested citation

Bel Hadj Amor, H. (2022). *Come, stay, earn: Financial opportunities to augment teacher salaries*. Verite Educational Services.

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1A2xPZobQRc9ohGWPiBzGiwlc57uKREIF/edit?usp=share\\_link&oid=113328134262697843009&rtpof=true&sd=true](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1A2xPZobQRc9ohGWPiBzGiwlc57uKREIF/edit?usp=share_link&oid=113328134262697843009&rtpof=true&sd=true)

Cover photo by Kanchanaprat, N. (2017). Pixabay. <https://pixabay.com/photos/money-home-coin-investment-2724245/>