



ActOne
Government Solutions

CHALLENGES IN ATTRACTING AND RETAINING TEACHERS AND STAFF IN PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS

BY

DR. MILTON J. PERKINS, SHRM-SCP, SPHR, CF-APMP, CPC
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, ACTONE GOVERNMENT SOLUTIONS

DR. JERRY BELL

FOUNDER AND CEO, JBJ BUSINESS GROUP, INC.



Introduction

Public school systems across the United States are grappling with significant challenges in attracting and retaining qualified teachers and staff. Despite recent activities related to decreased public school funding, potentially impacting staffing within public schools, since 2021, the education sector has seen a notable increase in teacher resignations, leading to widespread vacancies and exacerbating existing shortages. Factors such as low compensation, high workloads, and limited professional development opportunities contribute to this ongoing issue. As student enrollment continues to rise and educational standards evolve, these challenges are expected to intensify. Act One Government Solutions and JBJ Business Group, with its extensive network of staffing offices, talent experts, award-winning technology, innovative HR consulting solutions, and experience, offers a comprehensive approach to addressing these critical issues. By enhancing employment branding, attracting highly skilled talent, creating a supportive work environment, and developing measurable solutions to help better manage budgets, these companies aim to partner with you to create a robust, rewarding, and productive workplace for the benefit of students, parents, employees, taxpayers, and communities.



Current Challenges

Teacher Shortages: Since 2021, approximately 8% of public-school teachers have left the profession each year (García & Weiss, 2020). This has led to significant shortages, particularly in subjects like STEM, special education, and bilingual education. The departure of these teachers has created numerous vacancies that are difficult to fill. The impact of these current and forecasted shortages is impacting the national average student-to-teacher ratio in US public schools. Currently the ratio ranges from 22:1 in states like Utah to 11:1 in New England. Current trends are forecasted to have a significant impact on teacher and student experiences: fewer resources, larger class sizes, higher student-to-teacher ratios, diminished support services, increased dropout rates, and increased disengagement.

A lower student-to-teacher ratio generally leads to better outcomes for teachers. It allows them to provide more individualized attention, reduces workload, and minimizes burnout. Teachers can engage more effectively with each student, tailor their teaching methods to diverse learning styles, and foster stronger relationships. This personalized approach enhances job satisfaction and retention rates among educators. For students, a lower ratio translates to more personalized instruction and support resulting in higher academic achievement, better test scores, and improved graduation rates. Additionally, minority, low-income, and special needs students particularly benefit from lower ratios, as they receive the tailored support necessary to thrive.

Workload and Stress: As teachers and staff in public schools deal with high workloads, large class sizes, and insufficient resources, stress levels associated with these conditions can lead to burnout, further contributing to the attrition rate. Contemporary trends indicate that while some districts have seen an increase in the number of teachers relative to students, others, particularly in states like Alaska, Illinois, Nevada, and Florida, have experienced higher student-to-teacher ratios. This variation is influenced by factors such as changes in student enrollment and staffing levels.



Low Compensation: Public school teachers often receive lower salaries compared to their counterparts in private schools or other professions requiring similar levels of education and expertise. This disparity makes it difficult to attract new talent and retain experienced educators. Considering the demographic makeup of the cadre of developing and young teachers, it is important to note what they are seeking.

As of the 2020-21 school year, the teaching workforce skews younger compared to the overall U.S. workforce. About 8% of K-12 public school teachers are at least 60 years old, while 56% are in their 30s and 40s (Pew Research Center, 2024). The teaching workforce is expected to see a gradual increase in younger teachers as older generations retire. This shift will bring changes in teaching styles, technology use, and educational priorities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). Young teachers and educational staff have several key employment desires that significantly influence their decision to enter and remain in the profession. Here are some of the most crucial factors:

- **Competitive Compensation:** Young educators seek salaries that reflect their qualifications and the demands of the job. Competitive pay is crucial for attracting and retaining talent (García & Weiss, 2020).
- **Professional Development:** Opportunities for growth and advancement are highly valued. Young teachers want access to ongoing training, mentorship programs, and career development resources (Teacher Task Force, 2019).
- **Supportive Work Environment:** A positive and collaborative work culture is essential. Young educators appreciate environments where they feel supported by colleagues and administrators, and where their contributions are recognized (Teacher Task Force, 2019).
- **Work-Life Balance:** Managing workload and stress is a significant concern. Young teachers desire reasonable class sizes, adequate planning time, and support to maintain a healthy work-life balance (García & Weiss, 2020).



- **Job Security:** Stability and job security are important. Young educators prefer positions that offer long-term prospects and clear pathways for career progression (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019).
- **Impact and Purpose:** Many young teachers are motivated by the desire to make a meaningful impact on students' lives. They seek roles where they can see the direct results of their efforts and contribute to the community (Teacher Task Force, 2019).
- **Innovative Teaching Tools:** Access to modern technology and resources that enhance teaching effectiveness is a priority. Young educators want to work in environments that embrace innovation and provide the tools needed to succeed (García & Weiss, 2020).

Young educators prioritize competitive compensation, professional development, and a supportive work environment. They seek salaries that reflect their qualifications, opportunities for growth through training and mentorship, and a positive, collaborative culture. Additionally, they value work-life balance, job security, and the ability to make a meaningful impact. Access to innovative teaching tools and resources is also crucial for enhancing their teaching effectiveness.



Forecasted Challenges

As the population grows, public schools will face increasing student enrollment, which will further strain existing resources and exacerbate teacher shortages. Additionally, the integration of technology, like AI, in education requires teachers to continuously update their skills. Without adequate support and training, this can become a significant burden. Teachers are also facing changing educational standards. Frequent changes in educational standards and policies can create uncertainty and instability, making it difficult for teachers to adapt and feel secure in their roles. Lastly, budget constraints (current, pending, and forecasted) and economic downturns can lead to cuts in education funding, affecting salaries, resources, and support systems for teachers and staff.

Considering the contentious contemporary discussions related to federal educational funding to states and municipalities, it is important to note federal educational funding is essential for enabling state and local school districts to offer competitive compensation and maintain adequate staffing levels. By addressing funding disparities, stabilizing budgets, and supporting professional development, federal funds help create a more equitable and effective education system without having a negative impact on the local taxpayer population.



Vacancy Levels

Nearly half (44%) of public schools reported having full- or part-time teacher vacancies as of early 2022 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). The leading cause of these vacancies was resignation, accounting for 51% of the cases (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). Special education positions had the highest vacancy rates, followed by general elementary teaching positions and substitute teachers (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022).

While specific vacancy projections are subject to various factors, including economic conditions, policy changes, and demographic shifts, the trend suggests that teacher vacancies may continue to be a significant issue. Factors such as increasing student enrollment, ongoing teacher retirements, and challenges in attracting new educators are likely to contribute to sustained or even increased vacancy rates.

Efforts to address these vacancies will require comprehensive strategies, including competitive compensation, improved working conditions, and enhanced professional development opportunities to attract and retain qualified teachers.



How Act One Government Solutions & JBJ Business Group Can Help

Act One Government Solutions and JBJ Business Group offers a comprehensive approach to addressing these challenges through its extensive network and innovative solutions:

- **Extensive Network:** With 225 staffing offices nationwide and over 3,000 talent experts, we can provide public school systems with access to a vast pool of highly skilled educators and staff. This network ensures that schools can quickly fill vacancies with qualified candidates.
- **Award-Winning Technology:** Our technological solutions streamline the recruitment process, making it easier to identify and attract top talent. Their advanced systems also support ongoing professional development and training, helping educators stay current with technological advancements and educational standards.
- **Next-Practice HR Consulting Solutions:** Our HR consulting services focus on employment branding, attracting highly skilled talent, and creating a robust, rewarding, engaging, and productive workplace. These solutions help public school systems build a positive reputation, making them more attractive to potential employees.
- **Employment Branding:** By enhancing the school's employment brand, we can help public school systems stand out as desirable places to work. This includes highlighting the benefits of working in public education, such as the impact on students and the community.



- **Creating a Positive Work Environment:** Our consulting solutions emphasize the importance of a supportive and engaging work environment. By fostering a culture of recognition, professional growth, and collaboration, schools can improve job satisfaction and retention rates.
- **Managing Change:** Integrating JBJ's Prosci Change Management and Organization Development (OD) frameworks into any of our solutions approach can significantly enhance efforts to attract and retain teachers and staff in public schools. Utilizing Prosci's structured ADKAR model addresses resistance to change by ensuring educators are aware of and desire proposed solutions, possess the knowledge and ability to adopt new processes, and receive reinforcement to sustain improvements. Prosci tools will streamline stakeholder communication, reduce resistance, and promote sustained adoption of innovative employment branding and HR solutions.
- **Strengthening Culture:** The organization development framework complements our human capital approaches by conducting comprehensive diagnostics, uncovering deeper organizational issues, and facilitating collaborative interventions to build buy-in among educators. OD strategies emphasize strengthening organizational culture and climate, enhancing team cohesion through leadership and team development, and employing systems thinking to address root causes of staffing challenges. Continuous improvement loops further allow adaptive and resilient solutions. Together, Prosci and OD frameworks deliver measurable results, optimize budget utilization, improve staff retention, and create adaptive, resilient public-school environments that effectively address teacher shortages and burnout, maximizing return on investment.



Benefits of Proactively Addressing These Challenges

Developing innovative solutions to address the challenges faced by public school systems can significantly enhance their ability to manage limited and strained budgets, as well as create a better workplace for a better world. Embedding some of the solutions we have presented can benefit your school district by -

- Providing the public-school systems with access to a vast pool of highly skilled educators and staff. This extensive network ensures that schools can quickly fill vacancies with qualified candidates, reducing the costs associated with prolonged vacancies and recruitment efforts.
- By encouraging using the Award-Winning technologies offered by these companies, the school district can streamline the recruitment process, making it easier to identify and attract top talent. Their advanced systems also support ongoing professional development and training, helping educators stay current with technological advancements and educational standards. This efficiency in recruitment and training reduces administrative costs and improves overall budget management.
- Enhancing and leveraging your newly developed employment brand resulting in your ability to better attract highly skilled talent by creating a robust, rewarding, engaging, and productive workplace will help public school systems build a positive reputation, making them more attractive to potential employees. By attracting and retaining top talent, schools can reduce turnover rates and associated costs and reduce stress leading to better budget management, and student/teacher outcomes.



- Helping your cabinet and senior staff consistently communicate what can be done with the district's employment brand to better stand out amongst other employers as desirable places to work. This includes highlighting the benefits of working in public education, such as the impact on students and the community. A strong employment brand attracts high-quality candidates, reducing recruitment costs and improving budget efficiency.
- Utilizing our iterative partnership to create a supportive and engaging work environment. By fostering a culture of recognition, professional growth, and collaboration, districts can improve job satisfaction and retention rates. Higher retention rates mean lower costs related to hiring and training inexperienced staff, contributing to better budget management.

This holistic approach ensures that schools can continue to provide high-quality education despite financial constraints, benefiting students, teachers, and the broader community. These approaches not only provide immediate budgetary relief but also contribute to long-term financial sustainability, allowing schools to allocate resources more effectively and improve overall educational outcomes (Harvard University, 2023). Furthermore, these solutions can help school districts better manage challenging budgets by optimizing resource allocation, enhancing operational efficiency, and fostering a culture of innovation and adaptability. These holistic approaches ensure schools can continue to provide high-quality education despite financial constraints, benefiting students, teachers, and the broader community.



Conclusion

The challenges faced by public school systems in attracting and retaining teachers and staff are significant and multifaceted. However, with the support of Act One Government Solutions and JBJ Business Solutions, schools can leverage a vast network of talent, innovative technology, and innovative HR consulting solutions to create a workplace that is robust, rewarding, engaging, and productive. By addressing these challenges head-on, public school systems can ensure they have the skilled educators and staff needed to provide high-quality education for the benefit of students, parents, employees, taxpayers, and the communities they serve.



About ActOne Government Solutions

ActOne Government Solutions is a division of the ActOne Group, a global enterprise that provides comprehensive employment, workforce management, and procurement solutions. Founded by Janice Bryant Howroyd in 1978, ActOne Group is the largest privately held, woman- and minority-owned workforce management company in the United States. Services Offered by ActOne Government Solutions include:

Talent Acquisition and Staffing: A1GS offers efficient and effective staffing solutions, leveraging its network of award-winning staffing agencies to provide federal, state, municipal, and quasi-governmental clients with top talent. **Workforce Management:** They provide secure and cost-effective workforce management solutions, ensuring that clients can manage their human capital efficiently. **Human Capital Technology Solutions:** A1GS utilizes advanced technology to streamline HR processes, from recruitment to employee management, enhancing overall productivity and effectiveness. **HR Consulting:** Their consulting services focus on employment branding, attracting highly skilled talent, and creating a robust, rewarding, and engaging workplace environment. **Organizational Workplace Transformation:** ActOne Government Solutions is committed to leveraging the complexity of today's labor market by helping clients create merit-based environments that are robust, engaging, efficient and productive. **Mission and Vision:** The mission of ActOne Government Solutions is to provide efficient, effective, secure, and cost-effective talent and workforce management solutions to their clients, serving the American people. Their vision is to become the most forward-thinking talent resource management solution provider for government and business communities.



About JBJ Business Group

JBJ Business Group is a company that specializes in high-risk organizational development situations with critical deadlines. Established in 2004, JBJ Business Group offers a range of services including:

Organizational Development: They help improve strategy, people practices, structure, reward systems, and processes to minimize confusion, friction, and low performance. Computer

Systems Design: They plan and design computer systems that integrate hardware, software, and communication technologies, including analysis, customization, programming, and implementation.

Professional and Management Development Training: They offer short-duration courses and seminars for management and professional development, customized for business, government, and nonprofit organizations.

JBJ Business Group has a diversified past performance, including procurement in the federal, state, and commercial sectors. Their innovative solutions have resulted in minimizing turnover, increasing the adoption of technology, and improving employee efficiency.



References

García, E., & Weiss, E. (2020). A policy agenda to address the teacher shortage in U.S. public schools. Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.epi.org/publication/a-policy-agenda-to-address-the-teacher-shortage-in-u-s-public-schools/>

Harvard University. (2023). Improving efficiency in school budgeting and spending. Retrieved from <https://sdp.cepr.harvard.edu/files/cepr-sdp/files/sdp-fellowship-capstone-efficiency-budgeting-spending.pdf>

National Center for Education Statistics. (2022). Teachers and Staff. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/annualreports/topical-studies/covid/theme/elementary-and-secondary-education-teachers-and-staff/>

Mittha, C. (2021). Six creative solutions for managing school budget cuts. Retrieved from <https://business.adobe.com/blog/perspectives/six-creative-solutions-for-managing-school-budget-cuts>

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2019). 4 Trends and Developments in the Teacher Labor Market. Retrieved from <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/25603/chapter/6>

Schneider Electric. (2023). Solving school budget shortfalls with creative funding solutions. Retrieved from <https://www.k12dive.com/spons/solving-school-budget-shortfalls-with-creative-funding-solutions/649637/>

Teacher Task Force. (2019). Young teachers are the future of the profession. Retrieved from <https://teachertaskforce.org/blog/young-teachers-are-future-profession>



HIGH S

www.actonegovernment.com