

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NCTQ Calls For More Nuanced Approach to Discussion of Teacher Shortages

NCTQ states that the current narrative on teacher shortages is “stuck in the past” and needs to change, with discussion informed by localized data.

“We do not have a national teacher labor market -- we have 50 different teacher labor markets.”

– Dan Goldhaber, Professor in Economics, University of Washington

Washington DC — Today, the Learning Policy Institute (LPI), led by Stanford University education professor Linda Darling-Hammond, released a [series of reports](#) focusing on teacher shortages in the US. The reports estimate a 60,000 teacher shortfall that will grow to 112,000 by 2018 and suggests that hiring and retention are the ways to put a stop to the perceived national teacher shortage.

In response to the reports, Dan Goldhaber, Director, Center for Education Data & Research at University of Washington Bothell, stated:

“One’s view about whether we face a teacher shortage crisis is shaped a good deal by how long a view one takes in the production of new teachers. The picture over the last couple of decades, for instance, looks quite different from the picture from 2009 to 2014. Moreover, we certainly need more nuance in the way we talk about teachers and staffing classrooms. We do not have a national teacher labor market -- we have 50 different teacher labor markets. It is definitely the case that it’s harder for some schools to recruit and retain teachers than others, and that it is harder to find teachers with particular skill sets, e.g. STEM and special education, but these are not new problems. Much of the discussion today about the teacher shortage makes it seem like it’s 1999 again. I would argue that talking about teachers and the teacher labor market in very generic terms, a “national teacher shortage crisis,” does not move us in the direction of solving real issues that exist with teacher staffing in particular areas.”

NCTQ has studied teacher shortages in the [past](#) in an attempt to provide a more nuanced perspective. Kate Walsh, NCTQ President, stated “Using a broad brush to describe the supply and demand of teachers and cast shortages as a national crisis does no service to the profession. In reality, teacher shortages are localized by type (STEM, special education, and

ELL) and geography (rural areas, the Las Vegas school district). They exist in times of high and low levels of national production. And there is chronic overproduction of elementary teachers in many areas. We need to take a more nuanced approach when analyzing this issue, and that starts at the local level.”

Supply and Demand for Elementary Teachers, 2012-2103

State	Supply of New Elem Teachers	Openings (Demand)	Oversupply
Pennsylvania	6,769	1,474	359%
Arkansas	1,166	318	267%
Indiana	2,645	747	254%
Louisiana	1,312	380	245%
Montana	369	113	227%
New Mexico	792	243	226%
Nebraska	940	301	212%
Rhode Island	306	100	206%
Vermont	210	70	200%
South Dakota	382	129	196%

Note: Supply data is from U.S. Department of Education Title II and refers to program completers in AY 2012-13. For some states, this data includes early childhood teachers. Demand data is from state labor bureaus and reflects projections of growth in the number of classrooms, people leaving the profession or leaving the state's classrooms.

NCTQ finds that while the professional working conditions associated with the teaching profession and the salary of effective teachers need to be improved as a whole, solving *chronic* teacher shortages means acknowledging a fact about labor markets that the profession has yet to acknowledge, which is that paying relatively more for the knowledge and skills of individuals who are in short supply – such as STEM teachers and special education teachers – is the only long-term solution to shortages in teaching.

For more information on NCTQ’s analysis of the teacher shortage issue, visit [here](#).

About the National Council on Teacher Quality:

The National Council on Teacher Quality is a nonpartisan research and policy group committed to modernizing the teaching profession based on the belief that all children deserve effective teachers. We recognize that it is not teachers who bear responsibility for their profession's many challenges, but the institutions with the greatest authority and influence over teachers. To that end we work to achieve fundamental changes in the policy and practices of teacher preparation programs, school districts, state governments, and teachers unions. Our [Board of Directors](#) and [Advisory Board](#) come from a broad range of backgrounds and perspectives, and they all believe

that policy changes are overdue in the recruitment and retention of teachers. More information about NCTQ can be found on our website, www.nctq.org.