**TEACHER RETENTION AND SALARY**

**A position statement by the Louisiana Reading Association**

**adopted March 14, 2022**

**The Issue**

The teacher shortage is a real and growing concern across America. Tied to the issue of teacher recruitment and retention is the problem of teacher salary. Louisiana is losing experienced teachers, is not producing sufficient novice teachers, and is having difficulty increasing teacher pay to reach the southern regional average. While teacher salaries are only one component of teacher recruitment and retention, it is a significant one.

**2019-2021 Statistics**

* Student enrollment in teacher preparation courses is down 30%. Of the students enrolled, the number that finish has fallen 15%.
* Nearly one in four teachers is either uncertified or working outside their field of expertise.
* 73% of teachers in Louisiana are White, 23.5% are Black; 60% are White women; Black males are 5% of the total number of Louisiana teachers.
* Average teacher pay in Louisiana ranks 12th of the 16 southern states.
* Louisiana teacher pay has fallen to more than $4000 below the southern regional average.
* Louisiana teacher pay averages $51,566; the southern regional average is $55,205; the U.S. average is $64,133. The southern regional average is 16% below the national average.
* When measured in constant dollars, the southern region’s average teacher salary is still lower than the national average in the 1980s.
* Monthly health insurance premiums for teachers with families rose by 0.8% in 2020-2021. Those costs were substantial already; $629 is the average monthly premium for a teacher and his/her family. Teachers average monthly costs for premiums covering only themselves rose by 4.5%. The cost of group benefits for teachers is expected to continue to rise.

**LRA’s Position**

While improving teacher compensation is not enough to correct the issues surrounding teacher recruitment and retention, it is an imperative step toward strengthening our profession. A strong professional workforce would then result in higher student achievement. Therefore, the Louisiana Reading Association is in strong support of legislation that would raise teacher salaries. It is time for Louisiana legislators to show commitment to educators by increasing teacher base salaries at least to the southern average, if not more. At the rate the state is losing teachers, time is of the essence.

**Resources**

Sentell, Will, The Advocate, December 15, 2021. “Aspiring Teachers Down 30% in Louisiana as State Faces Shortage, Lack of Diversity in Classrooms.” <https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/education/article_d7596c8c-5d30-11ec-8b60-ef0ae6e86f99.html>

Sentell, Will, The Advocate, January 25, 2022. “Educators Call Governor’s $1,500 Teacher Pay Raise Proposal a Start, But Well Under Target.” <https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/education/article_726ef69a-7df9-11ec-aaf8-db72aaa18413.html>

SREB News Release, November 22, 2021. “Rises in Teacher Compensation in the South Not Enough to Ease Many States’ Shortages.” <https://www.sreb.org/news/rises-teacher-compensation-south-not-enough-ease-many-states-shortages>