

2016-2017 Teacher Vacancy Survey Report Summary

The 2016-2017 Teacher Vacancy Survey was conducted in the fall of 2016 by the Nebraska Department of Education. This is the third year that the nonpublic school systems and Educational Service Units (ESU) have been included in the collection of data. For purposes of this report, the ESU data has been combined with the public school data (district) while the nonpublic data (system) is combined with them into the total counts. This summary shows the totals, for the separate district and system counts, see the full report.

The survey of all 450 Nebraska districts/systems (245 PK-12 public school districts, 17 ESUs, and 188 nonpublic school systems) in the state requested the following information:

- The number of district/systems that could not find fully qualified teachers* to fill teacher positions;
- The endorsement areas of the positions that were unfilled**;
- The reasons why the applicant pool was not sufficient; and
- What the district/system did to address the unfilled positions.

The overall response rate (89%) was up from last year with an 8% increase in response from the nonpublic systems. The response rate for districts (96%) was comparable to past years, while the nonpublic systems rate was (80%). Based upon these response rates, the completed surveys are regionally representative of PK-12 districts and systems in the state. The endorsement areas with the largest number of unfilled positions were:

| Endorsement Area | Unfilled** | | Vacant*** | Endorsement Area | Unfilled** | | Vacant*** |
|---|------------|------|-----------|---|------------|-----|-----------|
| | % | # | # | | % | # | # |
| Special Education | 23.7 | 55.0 | 16.0 | Business Marketing or Information Technology (BMIT) | 4.1 | 9.7 | 1.0 |
| Speech-Language Pathology | 11.7 | 27.1 | 15.4 | Agriculture Education | 3.4 | 8.0 | |
| Language Arts | 8.4 | 19.4 | 1.75 | Family and Consumer Science | 2.9 | 6.7 | |
| Mathematics | 5.6 | 13.0 | 2.0 | Early Childhood Education | 2.7 | 6.5 | |
| Industrial Technology/Skilled and Technical Science | 4.5 | 10.5 | 3.0 | Health and/or Physical Education | 1.7 | 4.1 | |
| Science | 4.5 | 10.5 | 1.0 | School Library | 1.5 | 3.5 | 1.0 |
| World Languages | 4.5 | 10.4 | | Art | 1.2 | 2.7 | 0.8 |
| School Counselor | 4.3 | 10.0 | 1.0 | ESL/ELL† | 1.3 | 3.0 | 1.0 |
| School Psychologist | 4.3 | 10.0 | 3.0 | Bilingual† | 0 | 0 | |

†Bilingual and English as a Second Language/English Language Learners are traditional shortage areas for federal programs so are recognized by Nebraska as well.

A total of 2821 positions were reported as available in 2016-2017. A total 232 positions were reported as unfilled, 47 of which were left vacant. Of those 232 positions, 88 positions (40%) were in district/systems with less than 500 students and 101 positions (44%) were in district/systems with over 2500 students.

For the purposes of this survey:

***Fully qualified teacher** is an individual who holds an Initial, Standard, or Professional, Nebraska teaching certificate with the appropriate endorsement for the assigned class, and the professional attributes sought by the school district.

****Unfilled** refers to a position that was filled by someone other than a fully qualified teacher or a position that was left vacant.

*****Vacant** refers to a position that was not filled at all – i.e. in Special Education of the 55 unfilled positions, 39 have teachers and 16 were left vacant.

2016-2017 Teacher Vacancy Survey Report Summary Continued

There were 112 district/systems (28% of the completed surveys) with unfilled positions at the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year.

| Region | District/Systems with Unfilled** Positions | | Number of Unfilled** Positions | | Vacant*** | |
|--------------|--|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| | No. | % of Total | No. | % of Total | No. | % Unfilled for Region |
| Central | 30 | 27% | 45 | 20% | 2 | 7% |
| Metro | 16 | 14% | 65 | 28% | 24 | 11% |
| Northeast | 25 | 22% | 46 | 20% | 12 | 13% |
| Southeast | 17 | 15% | 42 | 18% | 4 | 7% |
| West Central | 12 | 11% | 16 | 7% | 3 | 13% |
| Western | 12 | 11% | 19 | 8% | 2 | 11% |
| Total | 112 | 100% | 232 | 100% | 47 | |

District/systems were allowed to identify multiple reasons for unfilled** positions. The top reasons were: “No fully qualified applicants based on endorsement area” (36%); “No applicants” (25%); and “Preferred a specific non-fully qualified applicant over fully-qualified applicant(s)” (15%). Nonpublic systems had a larger portion of “Qualified applicant refused offer for position” than did the districts (19% compared to 8%). While the districts had a larger number of “No applicants” than the nonpublic systems (29% compared to 8%).

The survey offered solutions for district/systems to choose from when identifying how it solved the dilemma of unfilled** positions. The three most reported solutions were: “Hired a person who holds a transitional certificate” (22%); “Hired a person who holds a provisional endorsement in the content area” (19%); and “Hired a person who holds a provisional or temporary certificate” (19%). Districts had a larger number of “Position was not filled” (13% compared to 7%). While the nonpublic systems had a larger portion of “Utilized existing staff not appropriately endorsed in the content area” (17% compared to 3%).

Of the 18 endorsement shortage areas, six have been designated shortage areas each year for the last 14 years; Language Arts, Science, Special Education, World Language, Math, and Speech Language Pathology. In addition to these, five others have been designated shortage areas in, at least, each of the last five years; Early Childhood Education, BMIT, Family and Consumer Science, School Counselor, and School Psychologist.

The full report can be found at <https://www.education.ne.gov/EducatorPrep/TopPages/TeShortage.html#Info>. Tables included in the Report Summary combine public and nonpublic system responses. The full report provides an analysis of public and nonpublic as separate tables as well.

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