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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## SOUNDING THE ALARM ON NEED FOR TEACHERS

Professional Educators of Tennessee has been sounding the alarm for years on the need for more educators. We have a dire need to recruit and retain teachers in Tennessee. Teachers are leaving education, and there is a shortage looming. It takes a special type of person to choose to become a teacher.

The [2021 Educator Preparation Report Card](#) shows a continuing decline in the number of Tennesseans completing educator training programs. There were 3,034 Tennessee teacher preparation completers in the 2019-20 school year compared to 3,702 completers in the 2014-15 school year, an 18 percent decrease.

Everyone sees or hears the news: public school teachers earn low wages.

There is too much politics in the classroom along with angry parents and taxpayers. To this add long hours, low morale of teachers, poor school climate, discipline issues in the classroom, and increasing teacher assaults. Who wants to be part of that?

It is no surprise that fewer students are applying for degrees in education. Today's college students are not as interested in going into education as they once were, both in Tennessee and nationally. Specialty areas like special education, math, science, and English Language Learners (ELL) are the most difficult positions to fill and are needed by almost every school and district in the nation.

We need to examine how we prepare students in Colleges of Education. We know researchers have raised [questions about edTPA](#). They have stated they have "serious concerns about scoring design, the reliability of the assessments, and the consequential impact on decisions about edTPA candidates." The amount of work required to complete the edTPA requirements at an undergraduate level drives many prospective college students away from choosing education as a major. We should look at that requirement from a policy perspective as soon as possible.

Our state is in a downward spiral by losing about 700 prospective educators. It proves the point, **our state is going to have to help make teaching a more lucrative career choice**. We are going to have to explore many new pathways to get people into teaching. Some people are launching second careers such as ex-military or people returning to the workforce like stay-at-home mothers with college degrees. We must remove barriers to entry for teaching. We need to make it easier for teachers in other states to come and teach in Tennessee. We have to make it more desirable to become an educator.

### SUMMARY

*In Tennessee, we have a dire need to recruit and retain teachers as many are leaving the field and there is a looming teacher shortage.*

Teachers' salaries are an imperative problem, especially during a period of economic growth. Our teachers deserve to be paid as the professionals that they are. Moreover, in areas like math or science, someone with those degrees can make twice as much doing something in their specific field. What can be done to recruit more people to become teachers?

We know that the essential ingredient in the education system is our personnel, and they are a critical investment. Teachers are continuously forced to reinvent themselves with ongoing professional development and advanced degrees to better serve students. Educators are key to the success of our children and the prosperity of our state.

Policymakers must join together with educators, parents, and all concerned stakeholders to figure out how we can recruit, retain, and serve current educators. This is too important to not get it right.

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