

21st Century Teaching and Learning—Part 3 of 5

Quality Teachers—Essential to Student Achievement



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The Colorado Education Association has over 38,000 members most of whom are K-12 public school teachers and other public school employees. CEA is affiliated with the 3.2 million member National Education Association.

Colorado is fortunate to have many great teachers in our public schools. Our challenge is to ensure that we continue to have the teachers our children need to succeed in the 21st century.

Half of all new teachers, both in Colorado and across the country, are likely to quit within their first five years. In addition, the number of teachers retiring is growing. In Denver, Colorado Springs District 11 and Grand Junction about 1 in 6 teachers are reaching retirement age.

Every business manager knows it is much more cost effective to retain employees rather than continually recruit new ones. According to the Alliance for Quality Teaching, it costs about \$70 million annually in Colorado school district resources to replace teachers who leave the profession.

Attracting and Retaining

The profession attracts individuals who want to make a difference for children as they grow and become successful adults. This is a great foundation for building a career. However, in today's competitive world, that passion is not enough. We can't expect thousands of top quality people to choose a career that is notorious for low compensation and a stressful working environment. Recruiting and retaining quality teachers is critical to student achievement now and in the future.

To attract teachers, Colorado needs to:

- Advocate for competitive, professional salaries;
- Develop an external program to promote teaching as a career, emphasizing the need for racial and ethnic diversity;
- Support programs that offer scholarships and college loan forgiveness for those who agree to teach in our public schools; and
- Provide for teacher mobility across all Colorado school districts.

Studies show that to keep quality teachers in the profession, Colorado must provide:

- Comprehensive and effective support systems for teachers in their first three years that pair them with accomplished teacher-mentors;
- Time during the school day for planning and relevant professional development, such as observing master teachers teaching;
- Collaborative peer assistance programs;
- Equitable access in every school to resources, training and technology that meet the needs of 21st century learners and help advance student achievement; and
- Additional training, accountability and support for school administrators, especially in school districts with high teacher turnover.

Colorado needs quality teachers who:

- Want to make a difference in their student's academic achievement and in their lives;
- Demonstrate in-depth professional and content knowledge;
- Understand that students have a variety of learning styles which require different teaching strategies for students to be successful; and
- Are committed to and understand teaching and learning for the 21st century.

There are a number of issues challenging public education today. Key to dealing with many of these is making sure we have a quality teacher in every classroom.

To learn more,
visit www.coloradoea.org and click on
21st Century Teaching and Learning



No one knows education better.