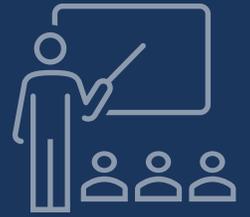


EDUCATORS

Tennessee strives to be a top state to become and remain a teacher. The state has developed a range of initiatives to support the recruitment and preparation of new teachers, such as the [Grow Your Own](#) apprenticeship program, the [Tennessee Future Teacher Scholarship](#), and raising [teacher salaries](#). The TES gathers insight from teachers and school leaders on areas of growth or challenges within recruitment and preparation.



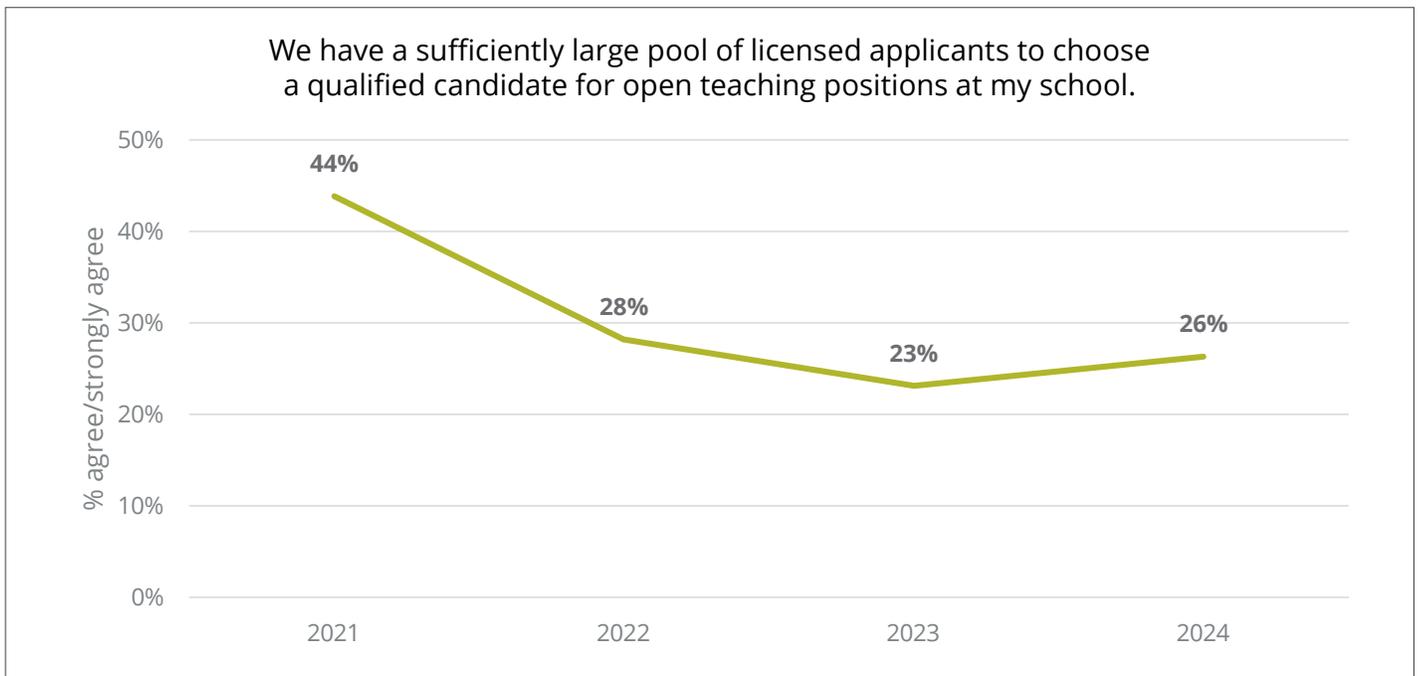
Educator Preparation and Teacher Pipelines



Many school leaders reported significant challenges with recruiting teachers to their schools.

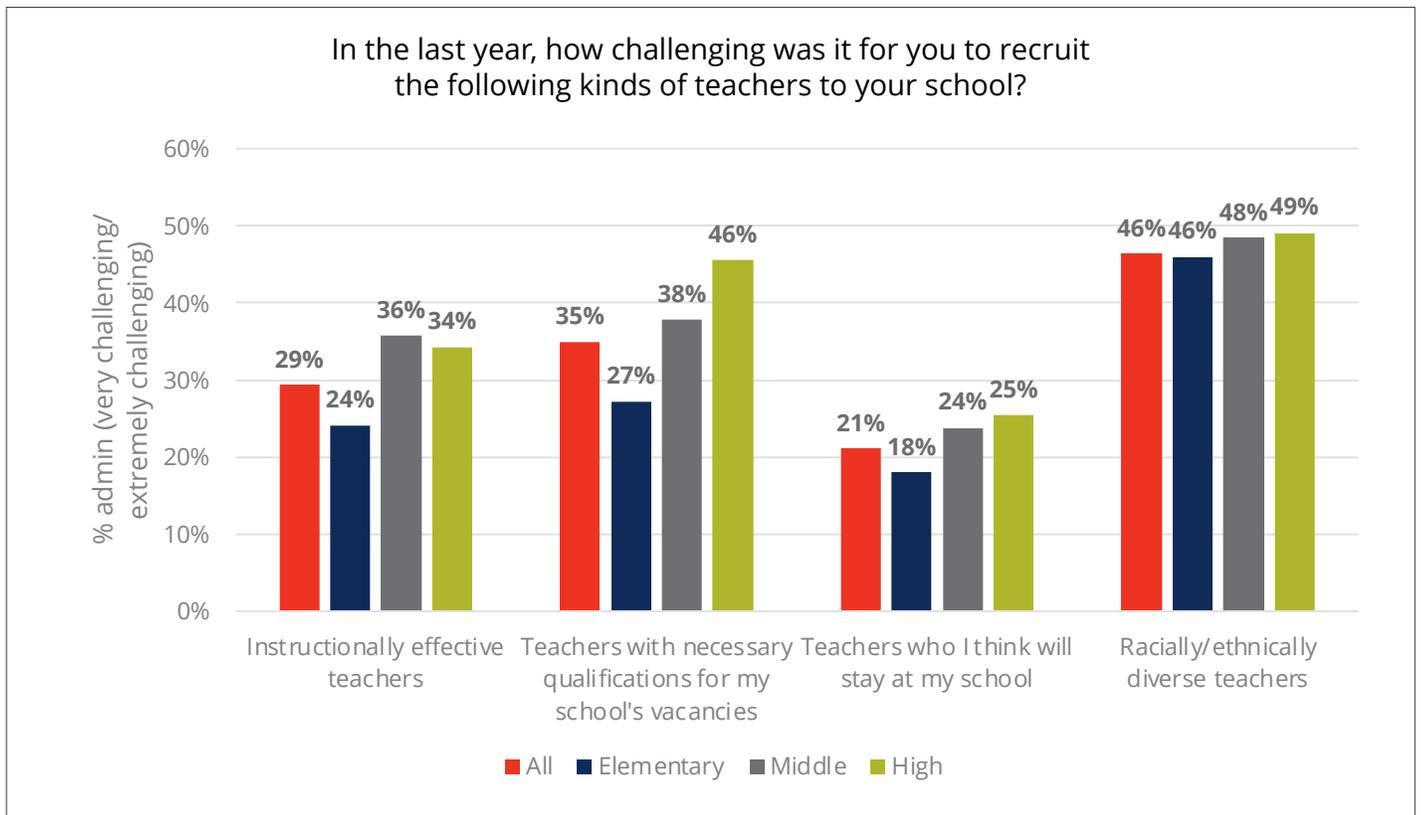


In 2024, 26% of school leaders agreed or strongly agreed that they have a sufficiently large pool of licensed applicants to choose a qualified candidate for open teaching positions at their schools. Elementary school leaders (33%) and leaders in schools with fewer economically disadvantaged (ED) students (lowest ED quartile, 30%) were slightly more likely to agree that they have a sufficiently large pool of licensed applicants. In 2021, 44% of administrators were satisfied with their teacher applicant pool, but this percentage has hovered around 25% for the past three years.





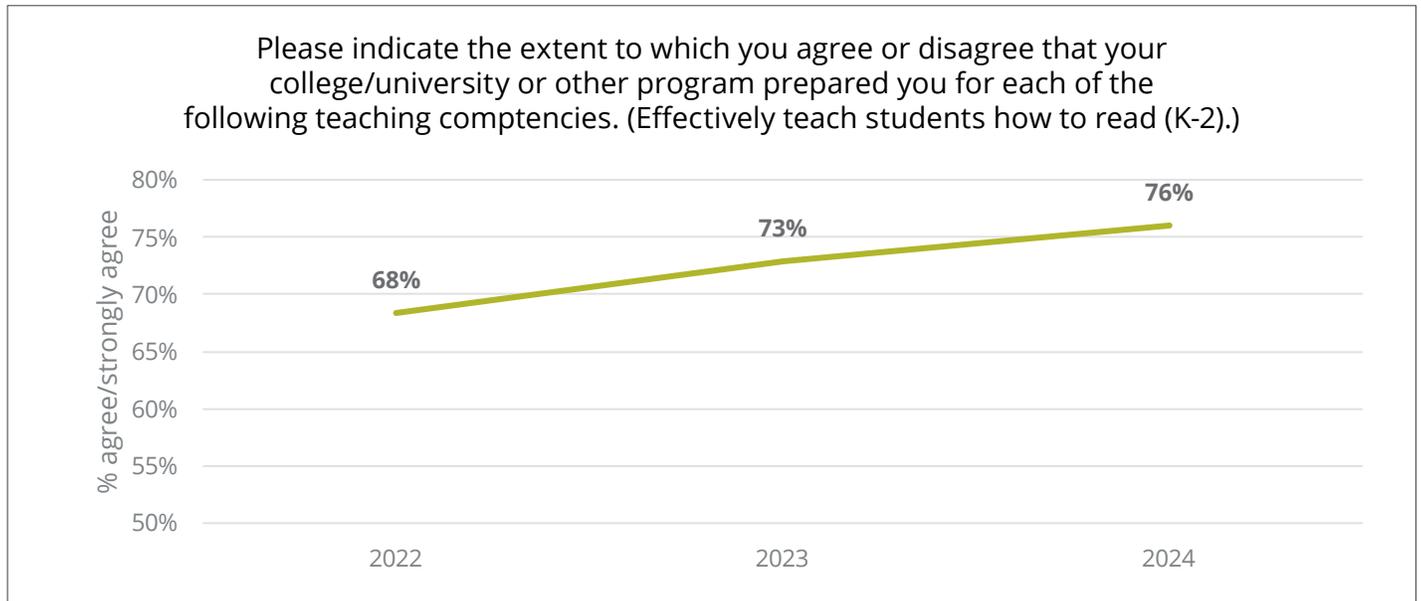
When asked about how challenging it was in the past year to recruit a variety of teachers to their schools, school leaders identified racially/ethnically diverse teachers as the most challenging to recruit – **46% of school leaders reported that this was very challenging or extremely challenging.** High school leaders reported the greatest challenges in recruiting teachers with necessary qualifications for their school's vacancies – nearly half (46%) of high school leaders said this was very challenging or extremely challenging, compared to 27% of elementary school leaders and 38% of middle school leaders.



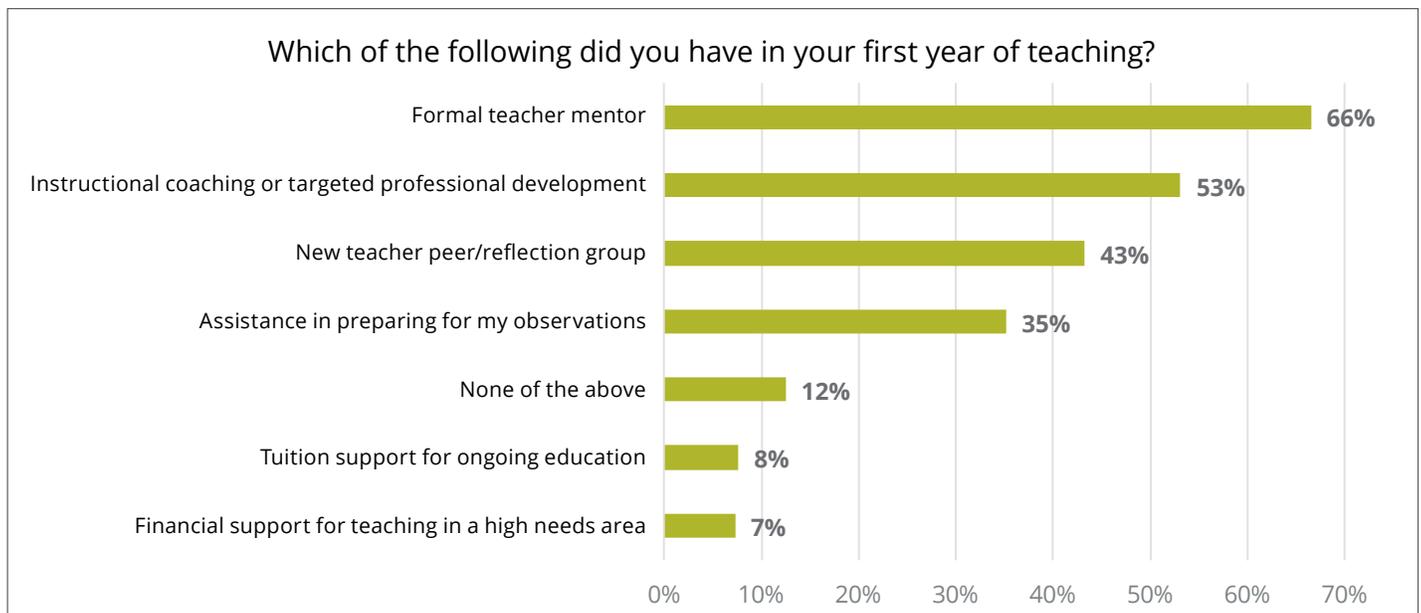


A high percentage of early-career teachers reported that they feel well-prepared for their roles, and most receive mentorship support as new teachers.

Early-career teachers in their first three years of teaching reported that their educator preparation programs (EPP) prepared them for a variety of teaching competencies, such as incorporating principles of engaging students in critical thinking (86%) and supporting all students’ academic development (84%). While only 64% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their preparation program prepared them to effectively teach students how to read, this number was much higher for kindergarten teachers (84%) and K-2 teachers (76%). **Further, the percentage of K-2 teachers who said they were prepared to effectively teach students how to read has climbed since 2022, from 68% to 76% in 2024.**



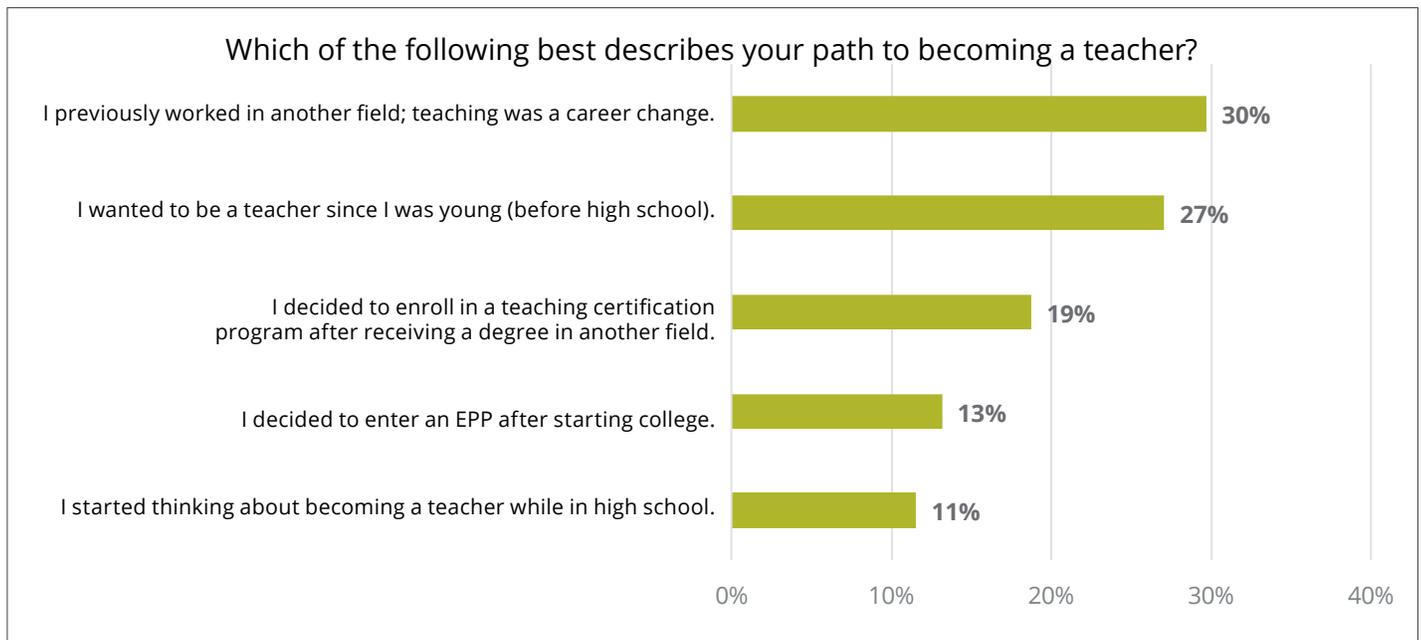
About 66% of early-career teachers (teachers in their first three years of teaching) reported that they received a formal teacher mentor in their first year of teaching, and 62% said they had a formal teacher mentor in the 2023-24 school year. 53% of early-career teachers reported that they received instructional coaching or targeted professional development in their first year of teaching, and 43% said they participated in a new teacher group. Twelve percent of early-career teachers reported that they did not receive any of the new teacher supports in their first year.





The largest share of early-career teachers reported that they entered teaching as a career change. Pathways and motivations to teach tend to differ by grade level taught.

In 2024, the largest share (30%) of early-career teachers in their first three years reported that they entered teaching via a career change and had previously worked in another field, an increase from 27% in 2023. Another 27% of early-career teachers said they wanted to be teachers since before entering high school.



High school teachers in grades 9-12 were the most likely to say that they entered teaching through a career change (43%), compared to 30% of teachers in grades 6-8, 23% of teachers in grades 1-5, and 14% of kindergarten teachers. Conversely, kindergarten teachers were the most likely to say they knew they wanted to be a teacher since they were young (43%), compared to 36% of teachers in grades 1-5, 22% of teachers in grades 6-8, and 13% of teachers in grades 9-12.

Early-career teachers most frequently identified enjoying working with kids in other settings and positive experiences in school among their top reasons for wanting to become a teacher. Kindergarten and first grade teachers were more likely to say they were influenced to teach because they enjoy working with kids in other settings (69% and 65%, respectively). Middle and high school teachers were more likely to say they felt motivated to teach because they wanted to share their passion for their content area (46% and 54%, respectively).

Half of early-career teachers reported that they did some or all of their student teaching in the district in which they currently work, an increase of 11% in the past year. This number was higher for kindergarten teachers (59%) and teachers in grades 1-5 (55%), compared to 47% of teachers in grades 6-8 and 40% of teachers in grades 9-12.

