

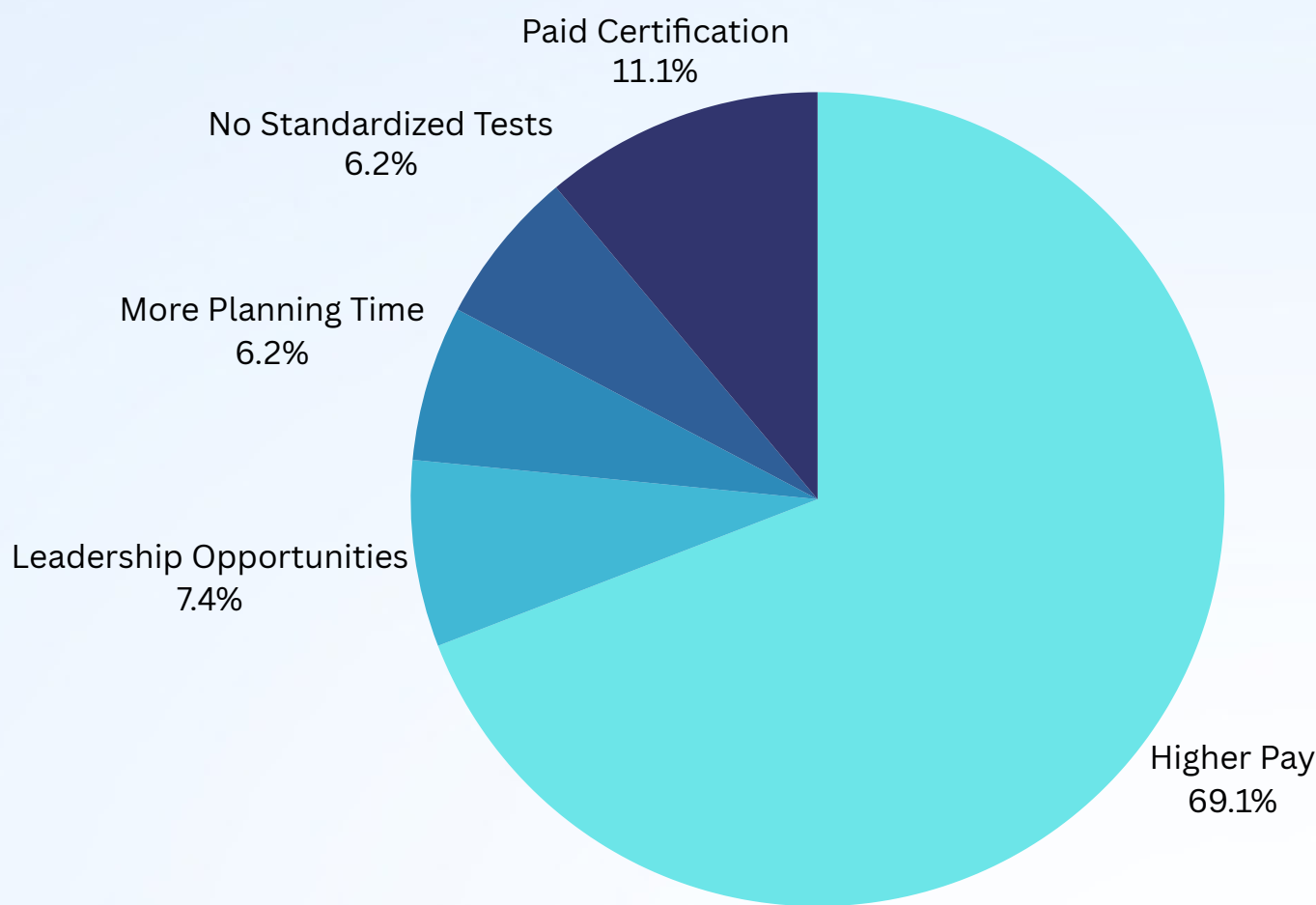
Why is it important to focus on mid-career teachers?

We define “mid-career” teachers as those who’ve been in the profession for 6 or more years, but not yet approaching retirement. Although they are the lifeblood of elementary and secondary schools, mid-career teachers are historically left out of Michigan educational legislation. Past legislative efforts have mostly focused on recruiting new teachers into the profession. While recruiting new teachers is an integral part of supporting the profession, mid-career teachers have already demonstrated resilience and dedication to students. Furthermore, research shows that teacher experience “is positively associated with student achievement gains throughout a teacher’s career” and that as “teachers gain experience, their students are also more likely to do better on other measures of success beyond test scores, such as school attendance” ([Learning Policy Institute](#)). Because of a lack of focus on mid-career teachers, many of them are leaving the profession which impacts students, families and the very state of education.

What is the data telling us?

We surveyed mid-career teachers across Michigan and here’s what we discovered...

Sixty-nine percent of mid-career teachers believe **higher pay** would increase job satisfaction



We asked teachers to share what would make their job more satisfying. Sixty-nine percent of respondents said an increase in compensation would bring a higher degree of job satisfaction. Respondents also highly ranked state financial support for re-certification and more leadership opportunities beyond moving to administration as solutions that would support retention. We used our findings as well as our own experiences to provide direction to our campaign.

How legislators can increase job satisfaction for mid-career teachers:

- **Increased Compensation**-- Recent legislation impacts new teachers & retirees, not mid-career educators. In our survey of mid-career teachers across Michigan, a majority of respondents cited higher pay as the number one way to increase job satisfaction. A \$3000 salary increase for every six years served in the profession would indicate a sense of value and respect to mid-career teachers. The state should set aside funds in the FY25 budget to cover these costs.
- **Expanded Leadership Opportunities**-- Most leadership opportunities are limited to administrative roles such as principal, or assistant principal. For those educators who aren't inclined to move into administration, there are very few alternative pathways for career advancement or professional growth. We want to see an increase in roles that support and empower teachers to use their expertise such as teacher coaches, professional development leads, and curriculum developers. These roles communicate a clear appreciation of mid-career teacher's knowledge and skills, although not every district has the funds to support such roles. We propose that the state allocate financial resources to districts to expand teacher leadership opportunities.
- **State Financial Support for Recertification**-- Recertification for other professionals (doctors, nurses) is fully paid for by their place of employment. To eliminate the financial burden on mid-career teachers, the state of Michigan should pay for all mid-career teacher recertification costs. This would increase the prestige of the profession and communicate the state's commitment to retaining mid-career teachers by honoring their experience.

The impact of supporting mid-career teachers through policy: students, families and schools

The teaching profession must be acknowledged as a field equal in respect and regard to that of others. We believe every child in our state deserves to reach their highest potential, and we can achieve this goal through supporting mid-career teachers and keeping them in the classroom with increased compensation, expanded opportunities for teacher leadership, and a fully paid-for teacher recertification process. These issues cannot wait and our children and schools cannot afford to lose any more great educators. Our recommendations, if implemented, would not only serve mid-career teachers, but students will benefit from contact with skilled practitioners, families can confidently entrust schools with educating their children and schools will be better able to retain teachers.

Additional Resources:

- [Tutors, teacher retention at the top of Governor Whitmer's list of as school goals and priorities](#)
- [Governor Whitmer signs legislation to recruit and retain educators](#)
- [Teacher recruitment and retention in Michigan---challenges and potential solutions](#)
- [Mentor/mentee opportunities for expanded leadership at Oakridge Schools](#)
- [Why teachers leave---or don't. A look at the numbers](#)