

March 12, 2026

To: Michigan Lawmakers

From: Teach Plus Michigan Teacher Policy Fellowship  
Educator Workforce & Support Working Group



## Michigan Teacher Retention: A Workforce Stability Issue

### Who We Are

We are educators from across Michigan and members of the Teach Plus Michigan Teacher Policy Fellowship, a selective leadership program that elevates teacher voices in education policy. Our work centers on ensuring Michigan students—especially those in high-need districts—have consistent access to experienced, qualified teachers.

### Policy Goal

By July 2026, the Michigan legislature will pass a series of policy and budget bills that strengthens Michigan’s educator workforce through fair compensation, workload protections, licensure flexibility, and a teacher tax incentive.

### Why This Issue Is Important

- + **Michigan faces a [persistent teacher retention crisis](#)** driven by low pay, increasing workload demands, and declining job sustainability.
- + **Teacher compensation has [not kept pace with inflation or fields with comparably educated professionals](#)**, contributing to early-career attrition.
- + **High turnover disproportionately impacts [urban, rural, and high-poverty districts](#)**, increasing inequities and destabilizing student learning.
- + **[Constant turnover](#) forces districts into costly recruitment cycles instead of investing in instruction and student support.** Currently, 5 percent of positions are filled by noncertified teachers.

### What the Evidence Shows

- + Michigan teachers earned [21 percent less than similarly educated professionals in 2025](#).
- + [10 percent of Michigan teachers left the profession in 2022–23](#), exceeding the national average.
- + [Michigan lost 8,000 educators](#) last year and was able to replace 5,000 educators, addressing only 68 percent of attrition.
- + Replacing one teacher costs \$12,000–\$25,000, totaling [\\$120–\\$250 million per year statewide](#).

### We Recommend

#### Adopt a comprehensive teacher retention strategy

**Immediate legislative actions: Support and pass legislation already introduced in Michigan that reduces barriers to entering and remaining in the profession.**

- + **Pass House Bill 4150**, which would eliminate fees related to applications for teaching certificates, endorsements, and permits. Ensure that the fiscal year 2027 budget accounts for the resulting lost revenue to Michigan Department of Education.
- + **Pass House Bill 4151**, which will expand testing pathways for additional endorsements by allowing veteran teachers to add content areas by passing state-approved exams without additional coursework.

**Additional policy recommendations: Strengthen Michigan’s long-term teacher retention strategy by addressing compensation, workload, and career sustainability.**

- + Set a statewide salary floor of [\\$50,000 for first-year teachers](#) in order to improve student achievement, graduation rates, and college enrollment.
- + **\$2,500 refundable Teacher Retention Tax Credit** for full-time Michigan teachers (modeled after [Georgia HB 32](#)). This tax credit will strengthen Michigan’s ability to recruit and retain qualified teachers who support student success.
- + **Protect educator time and ensure fair compensation** (modeled after [Louisiana Act 311](#))
  - **Compensate teachers when planning time is lost.**  
Require districts to pay teachers at their effective hourly rate when uninterrupted planning time is forfeited.
  - **Require pay for duties beyond contracted responsibilities.**  
Mandate compensation for any work assigned outside a teacher’s defined job description.
  - **Establish transparent supplemental pay schedules.**  
Require districts to publish uniform supplemental salary schedules that clearly outline compensation rates for additional duties performed by educators.
  - **Clarify job scope to prevent unpaid labor.**  
Require districts to define instructional and non-instructional duties in teacher job descriptions and prohibit vague “other duties as assigned” language that can allow unlimited uncompensated work.

## Potential Impacts

- + A stronger and more stable educator workforce that reduces costly turnover and ensures classrooms are led by qualified educators.
- + Greater math and reading achievement driven by access to consistent, experienced educators who deliver high-quality instruction.
- + Reduced spending on recruitment, hiring, and training costs caused by chronic teacher turnover.
- + Stronger school communities and family confidence driven by continuity in teacher-student relationships.
- + Improved staffing flexibility in hard-to-fill subject areas.
- + Reduced time lost to unpaid labor caused by interrupted planning schedules and undefined job expectations.

Respectfully submitted,

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