



**Comments of the Texas Classroom Teachers Association  
to the House Public Education Committee  
May 24, 2022  
By Paige Williams, Director of Legislation**

TCTA appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony on the interim charges for this committee relating to the monitoring charge of HB 3, HB 1525 and HB 4545.

- In a nutshell, TCTA urges lawmakers to continue refining the reading academy and HB 4545 accelerated instruction/tutoring programs in the upcoming legislative session to reduce the burdens on teachers and mandate that teachers be paid for any additional required time; and they must ensure that when any new proposals will be implemented in a manner that will avoid increasing teacher workloads.

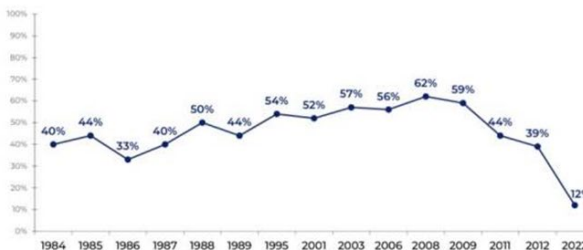
**Teacher Satisfaction and Attrition**

While monitoring the implementation of several bills, as required by interim charge #1, we would be remiss if we failed to include information regarding “big picture” of the teacher experience and teacher satisfaction.

## Declining Teacher Satisfaction

- 12% of teachers are very satisfied with their jobs (the lowest level since the mid-1980s).
- 74% of teachers do not think their salary is fair for the work that they do.

Percentage of K-12 teachers who say they are 'very satisfied' with their jobs



\*The 2022 results are from the Merrimack College Teacher Survey.  
The 1984-2012 results are from the MetLife Survey of the American Teacher.

Source: Merrimack College, 2022



**THE TEACHER SALARY PROJECT**

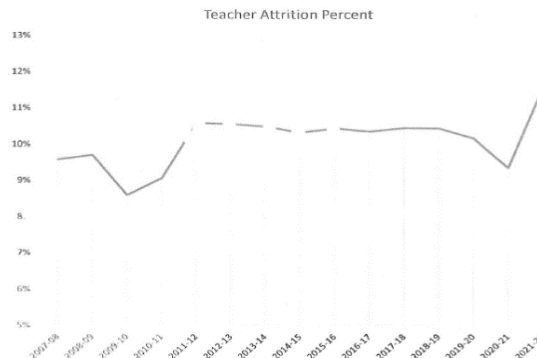




High stress levels are causing teachers to leave the profession, which creates instability among staff, students, and the community.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Texas teachers are leaving the profession at rates not seen since the great recession, causing schools to face significant staffing shortages.



COVID has caused a significant disruption in teacher attrition, not seen since the great recession



Replacing teachers is time-consuming, costly, and disruptive to student learning. Although the financial costs within a district or school can vary substantially – more than \$20,000 per teacher in an urban district – the most significant costs are those associated with separation, recruiting and hiring new teachers, and training replacements.<sup>2</sup>

***“What people want is to be able to teach and teach well, and if they can’t do it because they can’t afford to do it or because they have a toxic work environment, that discourages them from acting as teachers who are learning and growing and getting better and increasing their commitment to the work, that’s the side of satisfaction we need to pay attention to—it’s not just keeping people in their positions.”***

Susan Moore Johnson, Harvard University professor of education

<sup>1</sup> Greenberg, M. T., Brown J. L., Abenavoli, R.M. (2016). “Teacher Stress and Health Effects on Teachers, Students, and Schools.” Edna Bennett Pierce Prevention Research Center, Pennsylvania State University. [https://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue\\_briefs/2016/rwif430428](https://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2016/rwif430428))

<sup>2</sup> Barnes, G., Crowe, E., & Schaefer, B. (2007). *The cost of teacher turnover in five school districts: A pilot study*. Washington, DC: National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future. Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/b4ab/6eaa2ac83f4721044e5de193e3e2dec07ac0.pdf>



Two programs included in HB 3 (reading academies) and HB 4545 (accelerated instruction/tutoring for students not passing required standardized tests) have played a significant role in increasing teacher workloads and leading to higher levels of dissatisfaction. While well-intended, their implementation resulted in overwhelmed teachers as they were required by their districts to work many more hours without any guarantee of receiving appropriate additional compensation.

TCTA conducted an informal survey of our members last fall and received more than 2,300 responses. Approximately half of the respondents indicated that they were being required by their districts to work more hours by virtue of the reading academies and required tutoring, while fully 80% were working more hours that were not specifically required by their districts. Of those required to work more hours, 69% said that they were not receiving additional pay for the required extra hours.

Although we appreciate that Commissioner Morath has made changes to the reading academy requirements to try to mitigate some issues, we remain concerned that HB 1525's extension of the reading academy completion deadline by another year will not have its intended effect. For example, TEA's upcoming changes to the reading academies do not help teachers who were not able to finish the entire 11-month program this year. They will still be required to redo the whole reading academy rather than completing only the part they did not get to the following year.

We also appreciate that Commissioner Morath has pointed out to districts the various funding sources that could be used for stipends to pay teachers for their additional hours. However, in the absence of legislative direction requiring additional compensation, it is clear that, as usual, the available funds did not get used to appropriately compensate teachers.

These added requirements, and the lack of required pay for the additional responsibilities, were likely the last straw for many educators who have chosen to retire or resign. **Lawmakers should continue to refine these programs in the upcoming legislative session to reduce the burdens on teachers and mandate that teachers be paid for any additional required time; and they must ensure that when any new proposals will be implemented in a manner that will avoid increasing teacher workloads.**

This principle must continue to guide legislators when examining eliminating barriers to providing mental health services in a traditional classroom setting. Classroom teachers are not trained mental health professionals, nor do they wish to be. It would be to the detriment of students and teachers to add even more to a teachers already overwhelming workload, particularly without additional compensation, that they now must serve as mental health providers. Teachers have long asked for direction as to whom on campus they can refer a student to provide or coordinate care for students rather than having to provide that care directly. TCTA believes both students and teachers will be better served by an approach that provides coordinated communication of resources and a member of campus personnel to whom a student may be referred.