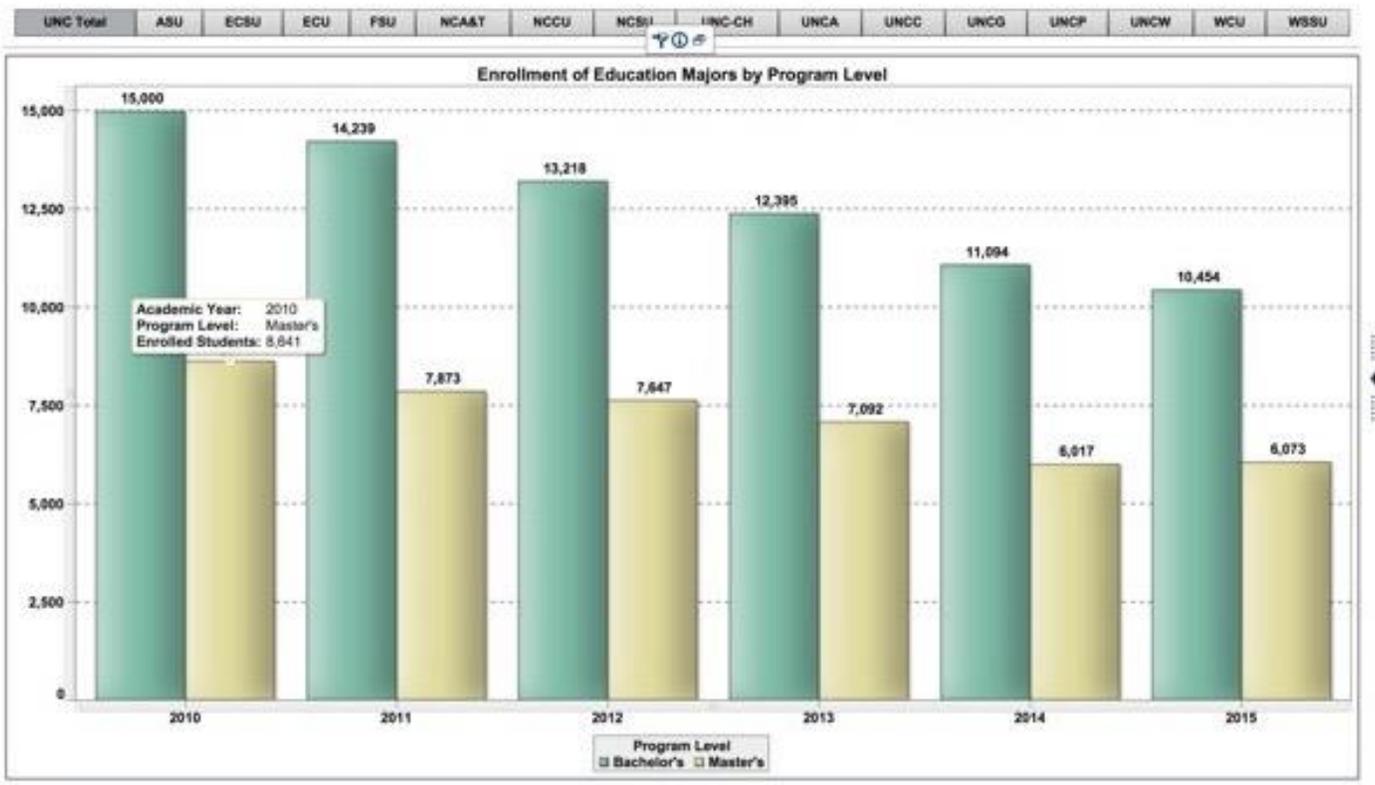


If we don't treat teaching as a profession, we won't have professionals in our classrooms.

North Carolina's teachers are dedicated and hardworking. Their professionalism has made our public school system a jewel among Southern states. With teacher pay at 42nd in the nation, per-pupil spending at 46th, little job security, and no incentive to get advanced degrees, the appeal of a teaching job has been significantly reduced in North Carolina.

Teacher Pipeline Shrinking

[Enrollment in education programs](#) across the UNC system is down **30 percent since 2010 (from 23,641 to 16,527)**. There are 15 UNC system schools with teacher preparation programs, and all are reporting declines in enrollment in their degree and licensure programs. The severe shortage of math and science teachers and middle school teachers for all subjects is a critical problem. At least 10,000 new teachers will be needed next year.



Teacher pay in North Carolina is below every neighboring state, making our ability to recruit teachers from other states highly unlikely. When North Carolina was closer to the U.S. median in teacher pay, they had considerable success in recruiting teachers. Now, out of state recruitment has dried up along with our homegrown supply of teachers, even as school enrollments grow. This year, North Carolina legislators did give a 2 percent raise to beginning teachers; however, experienced teachers only received a \$750 one-time-only bonus.

Turnover Adds to Teacher Shortage

The NC Department of Public Instruction [reported](#) a teacher turnover rate of nearly 15 percent last year -- which means teachers moving on to other jobs. Noteworthy is that 1,082 North Carolina teachers took jobs in other states last year, roughly triple the number who moved away in 2010. There are many factors involved in recruiting and retaining teachers. Being 42nd in teacher pay is certainly a large factor but equally

important is the loss of professional respect and job security benefits such as career status (replaced with one-year contracts) and the numerous threats against other benefits like family health insurance. Funds for professional development were fund along with deep cuts to classroom resources (teacher assistants, textbooks, supplies and technology).

Finally, teachers and administrators see [phasing out extra pay](#) for advanced degrees as unfair and as demonstrating a lack of professional respect. People who invest in education and expertise specifically to use in service to our children deserve to be compensated commensurately for their professional development and experience.

Schools Our Students Deserve Need Experienced, Certified Teachers

The pipeline is leaking at both ends in North Carolina. We are seeing a significant decline in enrollment in education degree programs coupled with the loss of current classroom teachers as retention has become more difficult. The state's inability to recruit teachers from out-of-state just compounds the supply problem. All of these issues are directly attributable to changes in how teachers are paid and their loss of job security benefits. Currently, the average teacher salary in North Carolina (**\$47,783**) is lower than in any of our neighboring states (**Virginia: \$50,620; Tennessee: \$48,503; Georgia: \$53,382; South Carolina: \$48,709**).

Ways to Recruit and Retain

The UNC system is so concerned about the teacher pipeline shortage that they have launched a new recruitment website called [TEACH NOW](#) to reach out to high school juniors and seniors, community college students, undecided majors at all UNC schools, and mid-career professionals. The effort even targets military personnel and their spouses. State superintendent Dr. June Atkinson recently proposed a new effort to retain experienced teachers. In addition to a 10 percent raise for all teachers, she [proposed a \\$10,000 bonus](#) for experienced teachers willing to work in low-performing classrooms or in content areas with teacher deficits, or coach new teachers.

Perfect Storm Brewing

Failing to pay teachers a professional salary and one of the nation's lowest per-pupil spending levels are decimating our teacher supply. Young people who came of age during the Great Recession will not choose a career they know to be unstable and uncondusive to family and future. Thus, our teacher pipeline is running dry. Our great public school system, built by so many dedicated and inspired professionals will not have enough quality teachers to lead our classrooms and help our students succeed academically. More college students are questioning if the teaching profession is a good personal and financial choice for their future.

Having dedicated, experienced, career teachers is critical for our students' strong academic success. Fostering a work environment where teachers are respected as professionals, with working conditions that enable them to have positive impacts on their students is critical to keeping teachers in the classroom. This includes providing teachers with: adequate compensation, job security and stability, ongoing staff development, a clear career path, a fair evaluation system not based primarily on student test scores, and providing adequate classrooms resources like supplies, textbooks, teacher assistants and technology. Treating teachers like professionals is essential if we are going to have strong schools our students deserve. If we don't treat teaching as a profession, we won't have professionals in our classrooms.

Visit our website for additional resources. Last updated March 16, 2016