

## Teach and Delete: A Meta-Analysis of an Education Benefit for Career Teachers

### *Abstract*

This action research study is a meta-analysis to explore existing research to determine if there is a need for an education benefit for career teachers motivated by policy changes for highly qualified teachers. Policy recommendations will be made based on the results of a Return on Investment (ROI) analysis based on teacher salary and graduate education costs.

### *Context*

School reform has publically evaluated teacher preparation, certification and education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The outcome is federal mandates for each state to set standards for highly qualified teachers. According to NCLB, to be deemed highly qualified teachers must a bachelor's degree, full state certification or licensure, and prove they know each subject they teach (U.S. Department of Education). In addition to proof of knowledge of subjects taught, states also have the option of High, Objective, Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) to develop additional ways for current teachers to demonstrate subject-matter competency and meet highly qualified teaching standards.

The federal and state pressure has raised the expectations for school districts as well. Although the minimum requirement to teach in a bachelor's degree, most school districts have a preference and expectation for teachers in their district to have at least a graduate degree in education or their certified subject area. This is a step in the right direction as far as professionalism and teacher quality, yet a roadblock in regards to salary expectations. Most school districts do not offer tuition assistance or support, so most teachers are left with the burden of graduate tuition fees and stagnant pay.

### *Literature Review*

The national struggle to retain quality teachers has sustained a trend in alternate teaching programs such as Teach for America (TFA), and other programs that promote temporary teaching positions, or teaching as stop on the pathway to a "real career". There is a lack of investment of supporting and sustaining program that promotes career teachers. Since the stakes have been raised for teacher qualification in regards to education, there must be a pathway to support such an investment. According to *The Journal*, "it takes many educators a decade or even longer to become truly effective at their craft," (Schaffhauser). Teachers have no incentive to stay in the classroom, therefore unable to perfect their craft. Career teachers need incentives.

Teachers are not the only profession that has needed coaxing to attract a qualified body of professionals. Similarly, the concept of an education benefit was introduced during President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration with the signing of the G.I. Bill in 1944. President Roosevelt cited:

“For they have been compelled to make greater economic sacrifice and every other kind of sacrifice than the rest of us, and are entitled to definite action to help take care of their special problems,” (U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs).

Teachers are considered public servants, and with the cost of education to be highly qualified and low wages there is a similar economic sacrifice and a special problem arising with student loan debt. The average graduate of a master's in education finished with more than \$50,000 in debt (Education by the Numbers).

#### *Research Question*

Should career teachers receive education benefits?

#### *Methodology*

A variety of quantitative and qualitative studies were analyzed to collect data to determine a need for an education benefit for teachers. The data source was a comparative analysis of careers that most contribute to our well being determined by *Fortune* magazine. The cost of tuition and median salary were analyzed using the ROI formula for a career in teaching, law, engineering and medicine.

#### *Discovery*

The outcome of the ROI revealed career teachers need education benefits. A career in teaching is not a strategic investment. The return on this professional investment is negative. A career in teaching was not the only career with a negative return or low profitability, yet a career teaching was the worst investment compared to the other careers analyzed.

#### *Policy Recommendations*

1. Improve educator benefits for lending to attract and retain more teachers.
2. Amend ESSA to provide teacher loan cancellation for career teachers.
3. Low cost graduate program in education
4. Accountable and responsible federal and private lending guidelines

### References

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