

# A POSSIBLE DREAM

## RETAINING CALIFORNIA TEACHERS

SO ALL STUDENTS LEARN

### KEY FINDINGS:

***California faces a shortage of teachers. Keeping more teachers in the classroom is essential to resolving the teaching shortage.***

- In 2005, 21 percent of teachers in California's high-minority schools lacked a teaching credential.
- Without new actions, the overall annual shortage of teachers in California is projected to increase from 20,000 to 33,000 by 2015.

***Too many teachers leave the profession prematurely. Too few remain teaching in our most challenging schools.***

- 22 percent of California teachers leave the profession after the first four years.
- Ten percent of teachers in high poverty schools transfer away to other schools each year.

***The loss of good teachers is expensive, inefficient and unfair.***

California spends more than \$455 million each year to recruit, hire, and prepare replacement teachers.

The most serious consequence of high teacher turnover is the loss of continuity, experience and expertise that negatively impacts the educational experience of students.

***Critical problems in the teaching and learning environment are driving teachers from the classroom.***

Dissatisfied teachers who left the profession cited serious problems with their working environment. More than half expressed concerns over inadequate supports, such as a lack of time for planning or professional development, and bureaucratic impediments such as classroom interruptions, unnecessary meetings, and too little say over the way their schools are run. Teachers pointed frequently to a lack of collegiality as a key reason for leaving the classroom.

***The problems hit hardest at high-poverty schools.***

In schools with high concentrations of underprivileged students, teachers were more likely to encounter shortages of instructional materials, unsupportive principals, poor support for special education students, disruptive bureaucracies, and unclean and unsafe work environments.

***Meaningful changes to the teaching and learning environment can increase teacher retention and encourage teachers to return to the profession.***

Teachers who planned to stay in the classroom most often pointed to having meaningful input in the decision-making process at their schools and to strong, collaborative relationships with their colleagues. These teachers also cited the importance of effective "system supports" such as adequate time for planning, and resources for classroom learning materials. When these positive conditions were in place, many of these teachers viewed their compensation as adequate and a reason for staying in the profession.

Twenty-eight percent of those who have left teaching say they would come back if improvements were made to the teaching and learning environment.

Compensation matters, but monetary incentives alone would be less effective in luring teachers back.

If California could reduce the attrition rate among its qualified and experienced teachers by 30 % and the current rate at which teachers return to the profession could be increased by 30%, California could reduce its projected annual teacher shortage by nearly one-third.

If current transfer rates away from high-poverty schools were cut from 10% to 7.5%, 2,000 fewer teachers would transfer to other schools each year.