



TEACHING AS A SECOND CAREER

Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc.

September 2008

conducted on behalf of



THE WOODROW WILSON
National Fellowship Foundation



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by

Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc.

*with commentary by
David Haselkorn, Senior Fellow,
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FOREWORD

The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation identifies and develops leaders and institutions to address critical challenges in education. To accomplish this, the Foundation awards fellowships to enrich human resources, works to improve public policy, and assists organizations to enhance practice in the U.S. and abroad.

The Foundation has historically recruited teachers, scholars, and leaders for American colleges and universities. Today, the United States' key educational challenges lie in its public schools, particularly those that serve low-income, high-need students. To help narrow the nation's achievement gap, Woodrow Wilson is now focusing on the need to attract talented individuals to secondary school teaching and to build colleges' and universities' capacity to prepare them for success in the schools that need them most.

The Foundation has created a new Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship to carry out this work. It will also periodically conduct and publish research that complements this Fellowship, focusing on ways to improve policies and practices for teacher recruitment and development in high-need schools, and on developing a deeper understanding of public attitudes toward teaching.

In 2007, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, with support from the Lehman Brothers Foundation, commissioned Public Agenda to conduct a series of focus group interviews around the country. Interviewers explored interest in teaching careers among academically outstanding college students, recent graduates still undecided in their careers, and potential career changers.

Upon the completion of these interviews, MetLife Foundation, concerned specifically with understanding the human resource potential of prospective career changers in teaching, funded Woodrow Wilson to expand its research with two projects. Results of the first, a review of what is and is not known about career changers in teaching, have been published as a companion volume to this document. The second was a public opinion survey aimed at gauging interest in teaching among the general college-educated population in the United States, and assessing what would be required to tap its potential more fully for the nation's classrooms.

This report contains the findings from that public opinion survey, conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates for the Foundation in February 2008. Their findings are supplemented by an introduction and commentary by David Haselkorn, Senior Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, offering additional educational policy context, perspectives, and insights that draw upon the Foundation's previous MetLife-Foundation-supported research.

The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation expresses its deep appreciation to MetLife Foundation and its president, Sibyl Jacobson. Through the annual *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* and other studies, MetLife and MetLife Foundation have made invaluable contributions to current understandings of both veteran and new teachers' attitudes and experiences, supporting positive change in preparation, induction, professional development practices, and policies. The present work seeks to add the perspectives of a substantial pool of prospective career changers to this important body of first-person and policy-focused research

on teachers. The support of Lehman Brothers for the companion study conducted by Public Agenda has also greatly benefited Woodrow Wilson's work on these issues, and thanks are due to Richard S. Fuld, Jr., the chairman and chief executive officer of Lehman Brothers Inc. and Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc., as well as to Francine Kittredge, president of the Lehman Brothers Foundation.

The Foundation also extends its thanks to Geoff Garin, chief executive officer, and Jeff Horwitt, senior research analyst, of Peter D. Hart Research Associates. Their enthusiastic collaboration helped overcome a number of methodological challenges, and brought to bear both broad-ranging opinion research expertise and a deep sensitivity to the issues of teaching in America throughout this project.

The Woodrow Wilson Foundation aspires to make its policy research relevant and useful not only to its own efforts to shape and implement new programs, but also to the work of leaders and colleagues throughout American education. We trust that this report and its companion volume, as the first in a series of occasional publications, will achieve this aspiration.



Arthur Levine
President

INTRODUCTION

Talented, well-prepared, and effective teachers are the key to improved educational outcomes. But such teachers are often in scarce supply for the students that need them the most. According to the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, low income and minority students in at-risk and hard to staff schools “consistently have teachers with little experience or marginal qualifications.”¹ Moreover, high initial teacher turnover and an imminent retirement bulge within the teacher workforce will exacerbate the challenge to recruit and retain a sufficient number of committed and highly effective teachers for these and other schools in the years to come.²

The Business-Higher Education Forum (BHEF) has projected that our nation will need more than 280,000 new mathematics and science teachers by 2015, for example. To address chronic teacher shortages in math and science, national reports such as *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*, the BHEF report *An American Imperative*, and the Glenn Commission report, *Before It's Too Late*, have called for expanded recruitment of mid- and second-career teachers from professions such as engineering, computing, health sciences, and accounting because of their content knowledge and expertise in these fields.

Across these and a variety of other subjects and grade levels, mid- and second-career teacher candidates offer a prospective talent pool for the nation's schools. This pool's potential, however, has yet to be fully tapped, despite substantial growth in the number of programs targeting such candidates in recent years. In addition to their presumed subject-matter backgrounds in high-demand disciplines, midcareer professionals who choose to enter teaching can bring new maturity and experience to the nation's talent base of educators and help connect teaching and learning to expanded applications in the world of work. They also offer a pool of prospective teachers that is potentially more diverse—racially, ethnically, and by gender—than current enrollment trends in undergraduate teacher education. However, there is a great deal we do not know about the size of the pool of potential teachers among college-educated adults, their views of the teaching profession, their motivations for considering a career change, the incentives and deterrents they perceive to career transition, what they seek in a prospective preparation program, and more.

In 2007, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation launched a new teaching fellowship designed to recruit and prepare a new generation of top teacher talent for the nation's schools. Aimed at both traditional-age *and* midcareer candidates, the initiative offers \$30,000 Fellowships to individuals with strong records of academic performance, professional accomplishment, and community contribution, along with the opportunity to enroll in specially designed master's degree programs of teacher preparation. Seeking to tap as broad a talent pool as possible for the initiative, the Foundation asked the survey research firm of Peter D. Hart Research Associates to probe interest in teaching careers among a representative national sample of college educated men and women, ages 24 to 60.

This report examines their views on a potential career change to teaching. It offers directions for policy makers, preparation programs, and researchers by examining their motivations and opinions of a potential career change in depth. Further perspective is provided in observations and commentary that highlight key findings and place them in the context of the nation's most critical teacher recruitment and development challenges and trends. An additional section, drawing on both these

¹ “Emerging Strategies to Improve Teacher Quality in At-Risk and Hard to Staff Schools and Subject Areas” Rowland, Courtney, Web Presentation, October 2007.

² Over the next decade it is estimated that the nation will need to hire two million teachers to replace substantial numbers of current baby-boom generation teachers nearing retirement and replenish novice teacher ranks perennially depleted by high levels of new teacher attrition.

findings and previous research, sets forth recommendations to strengthen the programs designed to recruit and prepare potential second-career teachers for classroom careers.

The report's central findings and analyses were prepared by Peter D. Hart Research Associates. Additional observations and commentary representing the perspectives of David Haselkorn, Senior Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, supplement these findings, and are incorporated in the text, but clearly identified typographically.

I. METHODOLOGY

From February 5 to 25, 2008, Hart Research conducted a total of 2,292 interviews on behalf of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation. Screening interviews were designed to identify a target audience of college-educated adults who would consider teaching as a potential career. To be eligible, respondents had to be 24 to 60 years old and have had obtained at least a bachelor's degree. A total of 2,000 telephone interviews were conducted among this population, and an additional 292 interviews were conducted online among harder-to-reach groups, including 24- to 29-year-olds, Hispanics, and African Americans. The online interviews were included to increase the sample sizes for these groups among the target population for this research, college educated adults who would consider teaching as a potential career choice in the future. The combined telephone and online interviews resulted in the identification of 1,110 target audience respondents for the complete survey, defined throughout this report as potential teachers.

Weights were applied to the general cross-section interviews to ensure that the data reflect Census data on race, age distribution, gender, and college attainment. The results also were compared to Census data for field of study for undergraduate degree. While the definitions of undergraduate degree type are categorized differently between the Census and this survey instrument, the results are similar when combining categories. Weights also were applied to the potential teacher sample to ensure that the proportion of 24- to 29-year-olds Hispanics, and African Americans reflect what was found in the general cross-section sample.

The margin of error for the 2,000 cross-section interviews is ± 2.2 percentage points and ± 2.9 percentage points for the sample of 1,110 potential teachers.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following is a summary of the key findings from the survey research among 24- to 60-year-olds who have at least a bachelor's degree.

Overall the research results find that a significant proportion of college-educated Americans would consider teaching as a potential future career. Respondents who would consider becoming a teacher are attracted to the idea because they like the idea of giving back to the community through teaching and they enjoy working with children. Their own personal financial interests or how others view teaching are not as great motivators as are the more altruistic aspects of teaching.

Even more respondents, however, might consider becoming a teacher but are deterred by the expectation that teaching would not pay them enough. The perception of low pay turns some people off to teaching completely, while some potential teachers indicate they are not considering teaching in the short term in part due to the salary issue.

Potential teachers offered their preferences for types of teaching positions both in terms of type of school and the geographic location of the school. Potential teachers prefer high schools or elementary schools in general, compared with other more challenging, and non-traditional settings. In terms of geography, a large plurality of respondents said that they do not have a preference for whether the school is in an urban, suburban, or rural area, though those with a preference do seem to prefer suburban schools over urban or rural.

Those in the potential teacher pool know little about teacher preparation programs and what is involved in becoming certified. However, when they hear details, they find the location of the program, training, real classroom experience, and programs tailored to adults with experience in the working world to be the most important aspects of a prospective program.

Potential teachers also offer advice to state policymakers about ways to encourage them to become a teacher. Respondents indicate that ensuring that teacher salaries are adequate and competitive and improving conditions of schools are the best ways to encourage them to pursue a teaching position. Consider the following findings:

A significant proportion of 24- to 60-year-olds with at least a bachelor's degree would consider becoming a teacher in the future. And nearly an equal proportion has considered teaching in the past, which indicates that this is a decision to which they have given significant thought.

- Fully 42% of all respondents say that they would consider teaching in the future.
- Nearly the same proportion (43%) have considered becoming a teacher in the past, including two in three (66%) potential teachers.
- Potential teachers are more likely to have a postgraduate degree and also are more likely to have attended selective schools and to report having received above-average grades.

While a significant proportion of respondents would consider becoming a teacher, a majority would not consider teaching in the future. While some just are not interested in teaching at all, others are interested, but cite specific reasons why they would not consider teaching in the future.

- A majority of respondents (58%) are not interested in teaching in the future.
- Three in 10 (30%) respondents who are not interested in teaching in the future say that teaching has some appeal, but that there are specific aspects of teaching that keep them from considering becoming a teacher.

- Among those who are interested in teaching but for whom something is preventing them from seriously considering it, poor pay is by far the biggest reason cited. Fully 44% volunteer this in an open-ended response.

The qualities that potential teachers are looking for in a job match their view of teaching. Potential teachers are looking for a job that is personally rewarding and allows them to give back to society and make a difference. Significant majorities of them also ascribe these qualities to teaching.

- Fully 68% of potential teachers say that finding a job personally rewarding is an extremely important job quality for them. And 84% rate finding the job personally rewarding as a very appealing aspect of teaching.
- Contributing to society and making a difference ranks second on the list of important job qualities, as 54% of potential teachers say this is extremely important and 78% rate this as a very appealing aspect of teaching.

In looking at specific teaching positions, both in schools and in geographic settings, potential teachers favor more traditional schools and schools in suburban areas.

- Four in nine (45%) potential teachers find teaching in a high school to be extremely appealing, while 37% feel similar about teaching in an elementary school.
- Roughly three in 10 potential teachers find a school with children from low-income or disadvantaged backgrounds to be extremely appealing (32%), as well as a charter school (31%), or a low-performing school where there is a special need for quality teachers (30%). And only 15% of potential teachers say that they would find a teaching position working with special education students that have special needs to be extremely appealing.
- A large plurality of potential teachers indicates that the area that the school is in does not make a difference (47%) to them. However, 35% would prefer a suburban school, with just 11% indicating their preference for an urban school and 6% for a rural school.

While salary is not a top quality that potential teachers look for in a job, nor one that they ascribe to teaching, ensuring that they receive enough money is important. And potential teachers do have concerns about whether or not teaching will pay enough.

- Low pay is the biggest concern that potential teachers volunteer in their concerns about becoming a teacher.
- Fully 68% of potential teachers believe that a career in teaching will decrease their salary.
- Only 36% of potential teachers say that a salary under \$50,000 would be an acceptable salary for them.

Potential teachers know little about teacher preparation and licensure. After hearing descriptions of various possible features of preparation pathways, potential mid- and second-career teachers place the greatest import on programs being close to where they live, being tailored to mature adults with work experience, and moving them quickly into the classroom, with experienced teachers available for mentoring and support.

- Nearly three in four (73%) potential teachers know just some (35%) or very little (38%) about teacher certification programs and only 27% say they know a great deal or quite a bit.

- The most important aspects of a teacher preparation program to these respondents are the location of the program (68% very important), the program's offering real classroom experience (65%), and its being tailored to adults who have been in the working world (63%). Another 56% of respondents say that ongoing mentoring and support would be a very important aspect of a teacher preparation program.

COMMENTARY: For those outside of teaching, the processes of preparation and licensure are often confusing. Like the moving staircases in Harry Potter's Hogwarts, licensure requirements seem to be constantly shifting. Developing clearer pathways to teaching, that are time-shortened but do not shortchange quality, will be essential to tap the pool of potential teachers. Prospective midcareer teachers also realize their likelihood of success in the first years of teaching will be enhanced if they can count on the support of experienced mentor teachers.

Potential teachers were asked what steps policymakers in their state could take to encourage them to teach, and the top responses were ensuring teacher salaries are adequate and competitive, and improving school conditions.

- Fully 43% of potential teachers say that making sure teacher salaries are adequate and competitive with other fields is the most important step that leaders in their state can take to encourage them to become a teacher.
- Three in 10 (30%) potential teachers say that improving school conditions so that the teaching environment is more conducive to successful education is most important to them.

COMMENTARY: Taken together these findings suggest a substantial potential human resource pool available to be tapped for teaching among college-educated adults. They are realists about the challenging conditions and low pay they are likely to encounter in teaching. For many, these are significant deterrents to pursuing a teaching career. However, the intrinsic satisfactions that teaching offers align powerfully with the features these respondents indicate they most strongly seek in a career. Moreover, teaching's attractiveness as a career choice increases with education level; and individuals of color, who are severely underrepresented in teacher preparation and the teaching profession today (in comparison to the nation's increasingly diverse student population), are more likely to respond favorably to various reasons to become a teacher.

Policymakers concerned about current trends in teaching—substantial impending retirements, unacceptably high levels of turnover among novice teachers, chronic maldistribution of qualified teachers between affluent and low wealth schools, issues of diversity—would do well to pay heed. Although there has been an upsurge in programs to tap career changers in the past 20 years, much more needs to be done to create programs that meet the needs of experienced adult learners, provide the financial incentives that can overcome the practical concerns that respondents' indicate, and create improved programs of preparation and support for prospective career changers. Tapping their potential will require more than just alternative routes to certification and accelerated routes to the classroom. It will take a more thoughtful approach to identifying and nurturing talent for teaching, and to developing and deploying teaching expertise in the schools where it is needed most. However, there are more than enough examples of programs that do this well. The policy changes that would open teaching to a far broader talent pool are well within the nation's grasp if the public and political will to implement them can be effectively mobilized.

III. OVERVIEW OF THE SAMPLE

A large proportion of all respondents would consider teaching in the future, and an equally large proportion has considered teaching in the past.

Overall, 42% of 24- to 60-year-olds with at least a bachelor's degree would consider becoming a teacher. This is a surprisingly high proportion and suggests that there is a large pool of potential teachers available. Those working in engineering/scientist (48%) and IT (49%) professions are somewhat more likely to say they would consider teaching in the future, while those in the medical profession (26%) are less likely to say they would consider teaching.

Not only do two in five respondents say they would consider teaching in the future, but 43% also say that they have considered becoming a teacher in the past, including two in three (66%) potential teachers. This suggests that potential teachers (those who say they would consider becoming a teacher) are not making this decision casually.

Fully 83% of potential teachers have a friend, family member, or both who are teachers. While we did not ask this question of those who are not interested in teaching and therefore we do not have this as a point of comparison, the data indicate that knowing someone who teaches is a positive factor. In

fact, 35% of potential teachers say the experience of a close friend or family member has made them more likely to want to be a teacher, while 18% say their experience has made them less likely (45% say this has not made a difference either way.) Those who would consider teaching now or in the next few years are much more likely to say that the experience of a close friend or family member has made them more likely to want to be a teacher.

Experience of Friends/Family Members

| | More Likely to Become a Teacher % | Less Likely to Become a Teacher % |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| All potential teachers | 35 | 18 |
| Consider teaching now | 47 | 10 |
| Consider in a year or two | 45 | 18 |
| Consider in three to five years | 38 | 16 |
| Consider in six to ten years | 33 | 19 |
| Consider in eleven years or more | 31 | 18 |

The table on the next page compares all survey respondents, all potential teachers, and potential teachers that would consider teaching within the next five years. Potential teachers are more likely to have a postgraduate degree and also are more likely to have attended selective schools and received above-average grades (self-reported). Nearly half of potential teachers (27% of all respondents) say they would consider teaching in the next five years, as 21% say they are considering teaching either now, or in the next year or two, and another 28% say they are considering teaching in the next three to five years. This group generally is more female (61%) and is also more likely to comprise 50- to 60-year-olds and fully 74% considered becoming a teacher in the past. It is reasonable to consider that this group is the "low-hanging fruit"—the most promising segment of the potential teacher pool from a near-term recruitment perspective.

Profile of Respondents

| | <u>All Respondents</u> | <u>All Potential Teachers</u> | <u>Potential Teachers: Consider Within 5 Years</u> |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| | % | % | % |
| All respondents | 100 | 42 | 27 |
| Men | 48 | 46 | 39 |
| Women | 52 | 54 | 61 |
| Age 24 to 29 | 13 | 14 | 13 |
| Age 30 to 39 | 30 | 28 | 22 |
| Age 40 to 49 | 30 | 31 | 31 |
| Age 50 to 60 | 27 | 27 | 34 |
| Whites | 79 | 81 | 79 |
| African Americans | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Hispanics | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Bachelor's degree | 68 | 58 | 62 |
| Some postgraduate work | 3 | 5 | 6 |
| Postgraduate degree | 22 | 28 | 26 |
| Doctoral/law degree | 7 | 9 | 6 |
| Considered becoming a teacher in past | 43 | 66 | 74 |
| Selective school: Above avg. grades | 30 | 38 | 38 |
| EMPLOYED | 82 | 82 | 76 |
| NOT EMPLOYED | 18 | 18 | 24 |
| Household Income: Less than \$75K | 18 | 22 | 24 |
| Household Income: \$75K-\$100K | 16 | 18 | 19 |
| Household Income: More than \$100K | 45 | 44 | 42 |

Further refining the target group, we find that 46% of potential teachers who would consider teaching in the next five years say a salary of under \$50,000 would be acceptable to them. This group is also much more likely to be women (69%), have a bachelor's degree rather than a postgraduate degree (70%), and are more likely to have a household income of less than \$75,000 (35%).

Another target group to consider are potential teachers who find teaching in a high school to be extremely appealing. Four in nine (45%) potential teachers fall into this category. Compared with all potential teachers, they are more likely to be men (55% vs. 46%), have a postgraduate degree (50% vs. 42%), attended selective colleges and received above average grades (44% vs. 38%), and have a STEM major/postgraduate degree (37%), compared with 33% of all potential teachers.

Overall, 50% of potential teachers say they want to try teaching for a few years and then make a decision about whether it is right for the long-term. For these respondents, teaching is a career experiment and something that they want to try rather than completely commit to. Twenty-four- to 34-year-olds (61%) and Hispanics (66%) are more likely to feel this way. Another 22% say that teaching is what they want to do for the rest of their full-time work life, and those who would consider teaching now (47%) are much more likely to feel this way. One in four (24%) potential teachers would like to teach and then pursue another career in education (14%) or outside of education (10%).

While 42% of all respondents indicate that they would be interested in teaching in the future, a majority of respondents (58%) are not interested. For those who would not consider teaching, a plurality (39%) say it is because they would not pursue any new career at this stage in their life. And this is more of an issue for older respondents, as fully 54% of 50- to 60-year-olds say this is the case. Another 22% say that teaching is not something that they are interested in. However, three in 10 (30%) respondents who would not consider teaching say teaching has appeal, but there are specific aspects of teaching why they would not consider teaching. Respondents that are more likely to fall into this category include 24- to 34-year-olds (38%) and unmarried women (35%).

Among those that are interested in teaching but some aspect is preventing them from seriously considering it, poor pay is by far the biggest reason cited. Fully 44% volunteer this in an open-ended response. This suggests that there are many more potential teachers that are being left on the table due to salary considerations. In the open-ended response, low pay is much more of a perceived problem for men than women (56% to 33%) and 24- to 39-year-olds (54%) than 40- to 60-year-olds (34%). Pay also is more of a problem for those with a postgraduate education than a four-year college degree (53% to 40%). While the sample sizes are small, there does appear to be a correlation with household income, where the higher the respondents income, the more pay becomes a reason for not pursuing a job in teaching. We will explore the economics of teaching, and the role of teacher pay in greater detail later in this report. It is a subject that cannot be overlooked when trying to find ways to attract new teachers to the profession.

COMMENTARY: The data on potential teachers, and on the subset that Hart Research have called low-hanging fruit, is heartening. It shows that a sizable segment of the college-educated population would be willing to consider a career change to teaching within the next five years, particularly if there were a more favorable set of incentives and appropriate programs of training and licensure to prepare them. Individuals in this group are more likely to have obtained post-graduate degrees, and (by self-report) attended selective universities and attained above-average grades than those in the general population, another encouraging sign.

In addition, the survey specifically probed potential interest in teaching among individuals with STEM backgrounds, given the shortage of science and mathematics teachers and growing policymaker interest in STEM education. The strong interest among individuals with scientific, engineering and IT backgrounds is another reason why the human resource pool represented by potential career changers is critical teacher potential ready to be tapped. The somewhat more tepid response from individuals with medical backgrounds is understandable, given the extent of education and commitment that physicians need to demonstrate, the salary disparities that exist between medicine and teaching, and the growing trend in nursing to set market-based compensation rates that well exceed those of teachers.

IV. THE APPEAL OF TEACHING

Potential teachers are looking for a job that is personally rewarding and allows them to give back to society and make a difference. These are qualities that significant majorities ascribe to teaching. Part of this is undoubtedly self-selection; that is, these are reasons why these respondents said that they would consider teaching in the first place. Still, what is encouraging is that their view of teaching still matches up nearly identically with the job qualities that they are looking for.

In volunteered, open-ended responses, positive reasons most cited by potential teachers about becoming a teacher were mostly focused on inspiring children and making a difference. A sampling of these open-ended, verbatim responses provides a look at what potential teachers find so appealing about teaching in their own words:

“The ability to help children and impact their lives.”

“Help to mold children and help them become better members of society.”

“Building the future for children. Feeling worthwhile.”

“Give back to children and to be a part of changing the education system and what the children would give to me.”

“Making a great contribution to the children’s future.”

Fully 68% of potential teachers say that finding a job personally rewarding is an extremely important job quality for them. And 84% rate finding the job personally rewarding as a very appealing aspect of teaching. Contributing to society and making a difference ranks second on the list of important job qualities, as 54% of potential teachers say this is extremely important and 78% rate this as a very appealing aspect of teaching. There are economic differences here, as 64% of those who say the minimum salary they would need to consider teaching would be less than \$40,000 say that contributing to society is an extremely important job quality, while only 43% of those who say that they would need at least a salary of \$80,000 feel similarly. It is also worth noting that potential teachers that are committed to making teaching a career are more likely than potential teachers overall to find altruistic aspects of a job to be extremely appealing. This includes finding the job personally rewarding (76% among those who say teaching would be a career, 68% overall) and contributing to society and making a difference (62% compared to 54%).

Job qualities that focus on salary or how the job is viewed are not as important among all potential teachers—26% say salary is extremely important. And even lower proportions feel similarly about the job being held in respect by society (18%) and friends and family respecting the job (14%). However, there are divisions on salary, as potential teachers who are African-American (59%), Hispanic (45%), 24- to 39-year-old men (39%), and say they need a minimum salary of at least \$80,000 (44%) are more likely to find salary to be important. In addition to salary, there are also several other areas where there are differences by race. Perhaps related to salary, African-American (58%) and Hispanic respondents are also more likely than white respondents (34%) to say that retirement benefits are extremely important. Another notable divide by race are that both African-American (61%) and Hispanic (53%) respondents are more likely than white (27%) respondents to say that opportunities for professional growth is an extremely important aspect of a job.

There are also two areas where younger potential teachers, those 24-29, differ from potential teachers overall in terms of job qualities. Younger potential teachers place greater importance on health care benefits (85% say extremely or quite important, compared to 72% overall) and family and friends respecting the job (55% compared to 36%).

Importance of Job Qualities Matched With Perceptions of Teaching

| | Extremely Important | Very Appealing Aspect of Teaching ("6/7") |
|--|--------------------------------|--|
| | % | % |
| Finding the job personally rewarding | 68 | 84 |
| Contributing to society and making a difference | 54 | 78 |
| Having a schedule that allows you greater free time for family and personal benefits | 46 | 66 |
| Health care benefits | 46 | 56 |
| Having the freedom to do the job in your own way | 35 | 54 |
| Retirement benefits | 35 | 50 |
| Opportunities for professional growth | 31 | 39 |
| Salary | 26 | 39 |
| Opportunities to collaborate with coworkers | 20 | 33 |
| The job being one that is held in respect by our society | 18 | 33 |
| Your friends and family respecting the job | 14 | 28 |

Potential teachers also were presented with a series of reasons why they might be interested in teaching. Again, we find that potential teachers are much more motivated by altruistic and community-driven aspects of teaching than reasons that are focused solely on their personal fulfillment. Nearly two in three (65%) potential teachers say that a very important reason in considering becoming a teacher is that they enjoy working with young people. This includes 73% of 40- to 60-year-old women. And 58% of potential teachers say that giving back and helping improve society is a very important reason to consider becoming a teacher, including 71% of African Americans. Still, this is not to suggest that teachers are solely focused on others when considering teaching, as a majority (53%) also say that a very important reason for them when considering teaching is the flexibility that teaching allows, including summers off. Subgroups that are more likely to say that flexibility is very important include homemakers (77%) and married women (65%).

Important Reasons to Consider Becoming a Teacher

| | Very Important |
|--|-----------------------|
| | % |
| I enjoy working with young people and want to help them succeed | 65 |
| Teaching would give me a way to give back and help improve society | 58 |
| I like the flexibility that teaching would allow, including having summers off | 53 |
| Teaching would be a new challenge that I would enjoy taking on | 41 |
| I am particularly interested in a specific subject and would enjoy the opportunity to learn more about it and share this knowledge with others | 40 |
| Teaching would offer personal satisfaction and fulfillment that I have not experienced in other fields | 35 |
| The health and retirement benefits are appealing to me | 35 |
| A teacher changed my life, and I would like to have that impact on others | 31 |
| The job security is appealing to me | 27 |
| A close friend or family member told me that I would make a good teacher | 20 |

COMMENTARY: These data provide key insights into the motivations of potential mid- and second-career teachers. Historically, teaching has always offered powerful intrinsic rewards, appealing to both the altruistically-oriented and to individuals' desire to make a difference in children's lives, the welfare of their community, or the future.

These factors remain vital attractions for potential career changers, as well. However, money matters, and for those with higher incomes, in particular, the potential impact on household incomes ranks as a serious concern, often outweighing teaching's intrinsic rewards.

Getting the incentives right is a matter of social policy. It is also a matter of societal economic self-interest, and social justice. The unequal distribution of qualified teachers too often reflects income distribution, with more affluent communities that are able to provide better working conditions and salaries, outbidding low-wealth districts for top teacher talent. This unfairly penalizes low-income children, and creates a kind of rigged casino in public education, in which the house odds of family background and economic advantage are further sweetened by better schools and better teachers.

In terms of international comparisons, U.S. starting salaries are among the lowest of OECD countries, at 81% of per capita GDP, according to a 2007 report by McKinsey & Company. Starting teachers in South Korea and Germany, for example, earn 141% of their nation's per capita GDP levels. In the best-performing education systems around the world, the status and conditions of the teaching profession are high, and are directly linked to the education and training required for career entry. The intrinsic call to teaching is still a powerful attraction, but money matters, too. And in the increased global competition to develop mindpower, innovation, and creativity, it will come to matter more and more.

V. THE APPEAL OF SPECIFIC TYPES OF TEACHING POSITIONS

Potential teachers were asked their preference about different types of teaching positions both in terms of type of school and the geographic location of the school. Respondents tended to prefer high schools or elementary schools in general, compared to more challenging and non-traditional settings. In terms of geography, a large plurality of respondents said that they do not have a preference for whether the school is in an urban, suburban, or rural area, though respondents do seem to prefer suburban schools (35%) over urban (11%) or rural (6%) schools.

Overall, 45% of potential teachers rate teaching in a high school as extremely appealing to them (a "6" or "7" on a 7-point scale). Men (55%), engineers/scientists (59%), and those with a postgraduate degree (55%) are more likely to find teaching in a high school to be extremely appealing. Working in an elementary school is extremely appealing for 37% overall including 51% of women and 43% of those with a bachelor's degree. Men are much more likely to prefer high school to elementary school (55% to 20%), while women are the opposite (37% to 51%). Those who would consider teaching now are more likely to find all of the options extremely appealing.

More challenging or non-traditional teaching positions are less appealing to potential teachers. Roughly three in 10 potential teachers find a school with children from low-income or disadvantaged backgrounds to be extremely appealing (32%), as well as a charter school (31%), or a low-performing school where there is a special need for quality teachers (30%). Those who are more likely to find a school with low-income children extremely appealing include unmarried women (39%) and those who prefer working in an urban school setting (45%). Thirty- to 39-year-old potential teachers are more likely to find a charter school extremely appealing (40%). Nearly two in five 40- to 60-year-old women find a low-performing school to be extremely appealing (39%).

Only 15% of potential teachers say that they would find a teaching position working with special education students to be extremely appealing. Hispanics (33%) are more likely to find working with special needs students to be extremely appealing.

Appeal of Teaching in Various Positions

| | Extremely Appealing ("6/7") % | Those Who Are More Likely to Find This Position Extremely Appealing |
|--|--|--|
| A high school | 45 | Men (55%), Engineers/scientist (59%), postgraduates (54%) |
| An elementary school | 37 | Women (51%), 4-year college (43%) |
| A school with children from low-income/disadvantaged backgrounds | 32 | Unmarried women (39%), prefer Urban (45%) |
| A charter school | 31 | 30- to 39-year-olds (40%) |
| A low-performing school where there is a special need for quality teachers | 30 | Women/40 to 60 (39%), prefer Urban (46%) |
| A position involving special education for students with special needs | 15 | Hispanics (33%) |

In terms of the geographic location, a large plurality of potential teachers indicates that the area that the school is in does not make a difference (47%) to them. However, 35% would prefer a suburban school, with just 11% indicating their preference for an urban school and 6% for a rural school. Among those who would prefer working in an urban school, fully 75% say that opportunities for professional growth is extremely or quite important to them which indicates the potential for more of a need with this group than all potential teachers (59%).

There is some correlation between school preference and where respondents live. For example, while 35% overall prefer a suburban school, among potential teachers who live in a suburban area, this proportion increases to 50%. Similarly, while 11% overall indicate a preference for an urban school, 19% of urban dwellers prefer this setting. African Americans (30%) and Hispanics (31%) are more likely to prefer urban schools. And respondents who live in a rural area are more than three times as likely as all potential teachers to prefer teaching in a rural school (21% to 6%).

COMMENTARY: These findings echo a consistent theme in the research literature (see *Encore Performances*, a companion volume to this study published by the Woodrow Wilson Foundation): Location is one of the program features that matters most to midcareer teacher candidates, with respect to both their preparation programs and first teacher placements (Boyd *et al.*, 2005; Johnson *et al.*, 2005).

For instance, Johnson *et al.* (2005) argue that one of the major draws for candidates in alternative programs was the relative convenience of the program—the degree to which the program was designed to be close to where candidates lived and worked. A similar “homing instinct” plays a role in teachers’ choices of where to teach. Research by Boyd *et al.* (2005) reveals that most teachers in New York state take jobs very close to their hometowns (the towns which they attended high school). In fact, they found that 61% of teachers entering teaching from 1999-2002 took a job within only 15 miles of their hometown. Fully 85% took jobs within 40 miles of their hometowns. These findings held true for both older teachers (born before 1963) and younger teachers (84.6% and 84.8% respectively).

Taken together, these findings suggest that geographical convenience/proximity is as important to midcareer teacher candidates as it has been traditionally in the profession as a whole, where “teaching close to home” has been a strong pattern in teacher labor markets historically.

VI. THE ECONOMICS OF TEACHING

It is clear that many respondents find the idea of teaching to be a personally rewarding, fulfilling, and attractive career opportunity. However, the economics of teaching are a significant obstacle for many, including a large proportion of those who say they would not consider teaching in the future. Even among potential teachers, a group that states that salary is not one of their top qualities to look for in a job, ensuring that they receive enough money to make teaching a feasible proposition is important. While potential teachers are not looking for teaching to make them rich financially, they do need reassurance that they can provide for themselves if they decide to pursue a teaching position. In fact, low pay is the biggest concern that potential teachers mention in open-ended responses about becoming a teacher.

The following table reinforces that salary does in fact play a factor in whether or not potential teachers may consider actually pursuing a teaching position. Those with lower incomes and lower

| The Economics of Teaching I (At What Point Would You Consider Becoming A Teacher?) | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| | Now/ 1 to 2 years | 3 to 5 years | 6 to 10 years | 11 to 20 years |
| | % | % | % | % |
| All potential teachers | 21 | 28 | 22 | 14 |
| Adults whose income is: | | | | |
| Less than \$75K | 25 | 28 | 19 | 8 |
| \$75K to \$100K | 23 | 28 | 20 | 11 |
| More than \$100K | 18 | 28 | 24 | 17 |
| Adults who want a minimum teaching salary of: | | | | |
| \$20K to \$39K | 33 | 38 | 16 | 5 |
| \$40K to \$49K | 26 | 32 | 17 | 11 |
| \$50K to \$59K | 19 | 29 | 20 | 15 |
| \$60K to \$79K | 14 | 27 | 28 | 15 |
| \$80K or more | 11 | 13 | 30 | 28 |

expectations for a minimum salary for teaching are more likely to consider becoming a teacher in the shorter term. Conversely, those with higher incomes and higher expectations for a minimum salary are more likely to say that they will consider teaching in the longer term. While it is impossible to know for sure, those who say they are more likely to consider teaching sooner are probably more "recruitable," and more likely to actually pursue a teaching position. As such, the table shows how important a factor salary is.

Fully 68% of potential teachers believe that a career in teaching will decrease their salary. This belief is much stronger among those with a spouse who is not employed (88%), married men (86%), engineers/scientists (91%), those with a postgraduate degree (76%), and those with a STEM major or postgraduate degree (81%). As the table on the next page indicates, again we find that the expectations for a minimum teacher salary, household income, and how soon respondents would

The Economics of Teaching II
(I Expect That A Career In Teaching Would Mean...)

| | <u>A Salary Increase</u> % | <u>A Salary Decrease</u> % |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| All potential teachers | 15 | 68 |
| Adults whose income is: | | |
| Less than \$75K | 23 | 48 |
| \$75K to \$100K | 14 | 68 |
| More than \$100K | 11 | 80 |
| Adults who want a minimum teaching salary of: | | |
| \$20K to \$39K | 33 | 34 |
| \$40K to \$49K | 18 | 60 |
| \$50K to \$59K | 12 | 74 |
| \$60K to \$79K | 9 | 80 |
| \$80K or more | 4 | 93 |
| Consider teaching now | 23 | 59 |
| Consider in a year or two | 25 | 50 |
| Consider in three to five years | 15 | 66 |
| Consider in six to ten years | 10 | 75 |
| Consider in eleven years or more | 7 | 89 |

consider teaching are major factors in whether respondents believe they will see an increase or decrease in salary.

Respondents were asked what the minimum annual salary would have to be for them to consider teaching, assuming that the position came with good health and retirement benefits. The following table shows that those with a lower household income are more likely to be satisfied with a lower annual salary. Additionally, there are significant breaks by gender, as women, particularly those 24 to 39 years of age, are more likely to cite a lower income threshold.

The Sweet Spot: Salary Would Need To Be....

| | <u>\$20,000- \$39,000</u> | <u>\$40,000- \$49,000</u> | <u>\$50,000- \$59,000</u> | <u>\$60,000- \$79,000</u> | <u>\$80,000 or More</u> |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| All potential teachers | 12 | 24 | 21 | 24 | 13 |
| Men/24-39 | 3 | 17 | 24 | 28 | 23 |
| Men/40-60 | 8 | 21 | 18 | 27 | 17 |
| Women/24-39 | 23 | 32 | 18 | 17 | 6 |
| Women/40-60 | 13 | 25 | 23 | 26 | 7 |
| Unmarried men | 11 | 36 | 21 | 22 | 8 |
| Married men | 5 | 16 | 20 | 29 | 23 |
| Unmarried women | 19 | 28 | 22 | 21 | 7 |
| Married women | 17 | 28 | 21 | 22 | 7 |
| Income: Less than \$75K | 25 | 36 | 16 | 16 | 2 |
| Income: \$75K to \$100K | 16 | 27 | 23 | 22 | 10 |
| Income: More than \$100K | 6 | 17 | 23 | 30 | 18 |
| 4-year college | 15 | 28 | 19 | 22 | 10 |
| Postgraduates | 8 | 19 | 24 | 27 | 16 |
| Consider teaching now | 20 | 30 | 17 | 18 | 9 |
| Consider in a year or two | 20 | 30 | 21 | 15 | 5 |
| Consider in three to five years | 16 | 27 | 21 | 24 | 5 |
| Consider in six to ten years | 9 | 19 | 19 | 31 | 17 |
| Consider in eleven years or more | 3 | 18 | 23 | 26 | 25 |

By 56% to 40%, potential teachers say it is more unlikely than likely that teaching might actually pay their minimum salary that they would need to consider teaching. We continue to see breaks by household income, as well as by what respondents said their minimum salary would need to be.

How Likely Will Teaching Position Pay Your Minimum Salary?

| | <u>Likely</u> % | <u>Unlikely</u> % |
|---|--------------------|----------------------|
| All potential teachers | 40 | 56 |
| Minimum Teaching Salary: \$20K to \$39K | 76 | 17 |
| Minimum Teaching Salary: \$40K to \$49K | 56 | 42 |
| Minimum Teaching Salary: \$50K to \$59K | 33 | 61 |
| Minimum Teaching Salary: \$60K to \$79K | 21 | 76 |
| Minimum Teaching Salary: \$80K or more | 12 | 87 |

VII. TEACHER CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

By definition, potential teachers are interested in teaching. However, they know little about teacher preparation and certification programs. Once potential teachers are presented with various aspects of such programs, they place the greatest importance on these programs being close to where they live, include clinical training in real classrooms with experienced teachers, are tailored to mature adults with work experience, and provide ongoing mentoring and support during their initial years in the classroom.

Overall, nearly three in four (73%) potential teachers know just some (35%) or very little (38%) about teacher certification programs and only 27% know a great deal or quite a bit. Those who would consider teaching now (36%) are somewhat more knowledgeable.

When it comes to aspects of a teacher preparation program, 68% say that the location of the program is very important. Married women (78%) are significantly more likely to say location is a very important aspect, as are those who say an elementary school would be an extremely appealing place to teach (77%), and those who would prefer teaching in a suburban setting (73%) or rural setting (74%). Beyond that, real classroom experience (65%), and a program that is tailored to adults who have been in the working world (63%) also are high on the list as important aspects of a teacher preparation program. Real classroom experience is more likely to be a very important aspect of a program for homemakers (80%), married women (78%), those who prefer an elementary school (75%), and potential teachers that favor teaching in a rural school (74%). Tailoring the training program to adults with working experience is the most important aspect for men (63% very important) and is viewed as more important among older respondents than among younger potential teachers (ages 24-29: 49%; ages 50-60:72%). While 56% of potential teachers say that ongoing mentoring and support is a very important aspect of a teacher preparation and licensure program, there is a definite gender gap here as 63% of women say this is very important to them, but only 47% of men agree.

COMMENTARY: This kind of gender gap has also been observed in previous qualitative research on mid career changers. Some men adopted what Helen Freidus termed a “facade of confidence”, an attitude that was equated with competence in their former work lives but could serve to block their receptivity to feedback from more experienced colleagues in the classroom.

While providing health insurance during training is not at the top of the list overall (45% say very important), among potential teachers with incomes of less than \$75,000, three in five (60%) indicate that this is very important to them. Those with a lower income also are more likely than average to say that providing monetary incentives during training is very important (45%).

Aspects of Teacher Preparation and Licensure Program

| | Very Important % |
|--|---------------------------------|
| The geographic location of the program is close to where you live | 68 |
| The program includes clinical training in real classrooms with experienced teachers | 65 |
| The training program is tailored to adults who already have experience in the working world, and builds upon their experience and maturity | 63 |
| Ongoing mentoring and support would be available to you throughout your initial years in the classroom | 56 |
| The institution where the program is being offered has a strong academic reputation | 53 |
| The program provides health insurance coverage for both individuals and families during training | 45 |
| You could start teaching after going through a six-week intensive training program | 44 |
| The program is designed to help you be successful in promoting academic achievement with educationally disadvantaged students | 38 |
| The program provides monetary incentives during training | 33 |

Potential teachers also were asked to select from four broader categories about which one is the most important factor for them in deciding to go through a teacher preparation program. The overall findings show that potential teachers are divided, as 32% indicate that the most important factor is that the program be of a high quality and include classroom training with experienced teachers. Another 26% say that the most important factor is a program that is long enough to provide sufficient training, but allows you to begin teaching in a reasonable time. Potential teachers who would consider teaching now are more interested in a program that would allow you to begin teaching in a reasonable time (34%). One in four (24%) potential teachers says that the most important aspect is that the program be tailored to adults and their experiences in the working world. The older respondents are the more likely they are to prefer a program that is tailored to adults with working world experience. Providing financial incentives and health benefits did finish lower on this measure overall (15%), however, African Americans (35%), 24- to 29-year-olds (25%), unmarried women (24%), and those with household incomes of less than \$75,000 (24%) are more likely to cite this.

Potential teachers were read the following description of a teacher preparation program, drawn from a new Teaching Fellowship established by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, and the reaction was largely favorable.

This program would be a highly selective fellowship that would last for one year and result in the awarding of a master's degree in education. As part of the program, each participant would receive a thirty-thousand-dollar stipend to attend graduate education programs at a select group of leading universities across the country, including in your own state. Following the completion of the program, you would be required to teach for three years in a well-functioning, but high-need, urban or rural school. You would have an expert mentor to work with you during this period.

Nearly two in three respondents find the description to be appealing (64%). As the table on the next page indicates, women, particularly women 24 to 39 (74% appealing), African Americans (76%), Hispanics (76%), and those with lower incomes and lower expectations for a teaching salary are more likely to find the program appealing. Also, 81% of those who would consider teaching now find the program to be appealing.

Reaction to Teacher Preparation Program

| | Very/fairly appealing | Just somewhat/ not that appealing |
|---|----------------------------------|--|
| | % | % |
| All potential teachers | 64 | 35 |
| Men/24 to 39 | 64 | 36 |
| Men/40 to 60 | 55 | 45 |
| Women/24 to 39 | 74 | 25 |
| Women/40 to 60 | 68 | 31 |
| Whites | 65 | 34 |
| African Americans | 76 | 24 |
| Hispanics | 76 | 24 |
| Spouse Employed | 68 | 32 |
| Spouse Not Employed | 53 | 47 |
| 4-year college graduate | 69 | 31 |
| Postgraduate | 59 | 40 |
| STEM Major/Postgrad. | 63 | 37 |
| Minimum Teaching Salary: \$20K to \$39K | 83 | 17 |
| Minimum Teaching Salary: \$40K to \$49K | 70 | 29 |
| Minimum Teaching Salary: \$50K to \$59K | 67 | 32 |
| Minimum Teaching Salary: \$60K to \$79K | 61 | 39 |
| Minimum Teaching Salary: \$80K or more | 48 | 52 |
| Income: Less than \$75K | 74 | 25 |
| Income: \$75K to \$100K | 75 | 25 |
| Income: More than \$100K | 62 | 38 |
| Consider teaching now | 81 | 19 |
| Consider in a year or two | 76 | 24 |
| Consider in three to five years | 70 | 30 |
| Consider in six to ten years | 57 | 42 |
| Consider in eleven years or more | 55 | 44 |

VIII. ACTIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS

The data show that there are a significant proportion of 24- to 60-year-olds with at least a bachelor's degree who are open to becoming a teacher. While 42% say they would consider teaching in the future, it is an open question as to how many of them will actually step foot in the classroom.

Potential teachers were asked what steps policymakers in their state could take to encourage them to teach, and 43% say that making sure teacher salaries are adequate and competitive with other fields is an important step—the top selection. An even greater proportion of those under 40 say this is an important step for state policymakers to take. Perhaps related, among those who would consider teaching, but not for 11 years or more, 53% say salaries are an issue that needs to be addressed. Overall, 19% of potential teachers cite another economic aspect, providing financial incentives to make the transition to teaching more affordable. Among those who would consider teaching now, 28% say that providing financial incentives to ease the transition to teaching is one of the most important steps to take.

Three in 10 (30%) potential teachers say improving the conditions of schools would be one of the most important steps that policymakers could take to encourage them and 23% feel similarly about developing the right kind of certification programs that ease new teachers into the career. At the same time, paying teachers more based on their ability to improve student performance—i.e. merit pay, only garnered a tepid response (21%) among potential teachers, although 30% of Hispanic respondents cited this as one of the most important steps that leaders in their state could take to encourage a career change to teaching.

How To Encourage Potential Teachers To Teach (One or two most important steps)

%

| | |
|---|----|
| Make sure that teacher salaries are adequate and competitive with other fields | 43 |
| Improve the condition of schools, so that the teaching environment is more conducive to successful education | 30 |
| Develop the right kind of training and certification programs that ease the transition into a teaching career | 23 |
| Pay teachers more based upon their ability to improve student performance or teach in high need fields or disciplines | 21 |
| Provide financial incentives to make the transition to teaching more affordable | 19 |
| Provide continuity of health benefits during the transition to teaching | 10 |
| Promote respect for teachers and teaching, as a valued profession | 10 |

Throughout the survey, respondents have made it clear that while many find teaching to be appealing and rewarding, the issue of pay has to be addressed. It is worth noting that 42% of those who say that the minimum salary that they would need to consider teaching would be between \$40,000 to \$49,000 say this is an unlikely salary to receive as a teacher. And according to the American Federation of Teachers' Survey and Analysis of Teacher Salary Trends published last year, they are right. In the 2004-05 school year, no state had a beginning teacher salary of \$40,000. However, twelve states had

a beginning salary of at least \$35,000, and thirty states had a beginning salary of at least \$30,000. So matching our survey results with actual salary data does show that school systems could attract significantly more teachers by increasing teacher salaries by modest levels.³

COMMENTARY: There has been a significant increase over the past two decades in programs designed to bring mid- and second-career professionals and other delayed entrants into teaching. Research indicates that these programs have the ability to attract a more diverse pool of potential teachers in terms of age, gender, race, ethnicity, and prior experience. However, more targeted efforts are needed to attract candidates with the most desirable mix of skills, expertise, and content knowledge and develop programs that effectively tap their potential for promoting better learner outcomes.

Greater incentives (in the form of stipends, partial salary support, and loan forgiveness) are needed to support midcareer changers in making successful transitions to teaching. At the same time, teacher educators and school district leaders should expand opportunities for prospective mid- and second-career candidates to explore teaching through short-term or part-time roles in schools.

Finally, prospective mid- and second-career teachers want to be effective in the classroom. Their success hinges upon excellent, targeted teacher preparation, as well as supported positive initial teaching experiences. Current programs of teacher preparation may require considerable reengineering to accomplish this.

³ <http://www.aft.org/salary/2005/download/AFT2005SalarySurvey.pdf>