

Summary

College scholarships are one incentive states use to encourage individuals with the potential to be excellent teachers to pursue careers in education. Many states, including Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Virginia, use scholarships to recruit high-quality candidates who are committed to teaching in-state. The Teaching Fellows legislation is designed to provide 4-year college scholarships to high-achieving high school seniors committed to preparing to teach in the state's high-need public schools. Scholarships are converted to loans if recipients fail to meet their teaching obligation—which stipulates that within 6 years of graduation, the recipient must teach for 4 years in a high-need state public school.

Modeled after the North and South Carolina Teaching Fellows programs, this legislation requires participating teacher preparation programs at institutions of higher education to provide professional development, community engagement, and leadership opportunities to help Fellows develop their capacity to become advocates for themselves, their schools, and the teaching profession. Such enrichment opportunities will also provide Fellows with the skills and motivation to become education leaders and to remain in the state's public schools.

Rationale

States should invest in systemic approaches to improving the educator workforce, such as by enacting policies that support the recruitment of high-quality educators. Although such work can be complex, it can result in a significant and sustained return on investment including increased P-12 student learning, increased persistence of educators in the workforce, and reduced district expenses for training new educators.ⁱ

In North Carolina, students taught by Teaching Fellows have significantly outperformed those students taught by other teachers, particularly in elementary and middle-grade math and across all high school subject areas, based on value-added evaluation models.ⁱⁱ In both North and South Carolina, the Teaching Fellows have higher retention rates than other teachers. Recent data show that in North Carolina, after completing their 4-year teaching obligation, 75% of Fellows continued into a 5th year, compared with 68% of all other teachers.ⁱⁱⁱ In South Carolina, 85% of Fellows chose to stay in the classroom after completing their teaching obligation.^{iv} This stability is noteworthy, as research shows teacher turnover undermines school stability, is harmful to school culture, and has a significant and negative impact on student achievement.^v

Resources

North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program: <http://www.teachingfellows.org/>
North Carolina Policy Manual: <http://www.teachingfellows.org/theprogram/PolicyManual.cfm>
North Carolina White Paper: <http://www.teachingfellows.org/userfiles/file/TeachingFellowsPolicyBrief-Final%203-28.pdf>
South Carolina Teaching Fellows Program: <http://www.cerra.org/teachingfellows/>
South Carolina White Paper: <http://cerra.org/media/documents/2013/8/TFREPORT.pdf>

ⁱ Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2009). Teacher education and student achievement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 31(4), 416-440. Retrieved from <http://epa.sagepub.com/content/31/4/416.abstract>

ⁱⁱ Henry, G., Bastian, K., & Smith, A. (2012). *The North Carolina Teaching Fellows program: A comprehensive evaluation*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, Education Policy Initiative at Carolina. Retrieved from <http://www.teachingfellows.org/userfiles/file/TeachingFellowsPolicyBrief-Final%203-28.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Garrett, J., & Hallman, J. (2011). *The South Carolina Teaching Fellows program: Successfully recruiting and retaining teachers*. Rock Hill, SC: Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement. Retrieved from <http://cerra.org/media/documents/2013/8/TFREPORT.pdf>

^v Ronfeldt, M., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2013). How teacher turnover harms student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 50(1), 4-36. Retrieved from http://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/4.full_.pdf