



Delaware Excellent Educator Hiring Practices Survey

Executive Summary

The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) is committed to developing a sustainable educator workforce that supports equitable access to excellent teaching and leadership for all students.

The annual Delaware Excellent Educator Hiring Practices Survey, also known as the Talent Practices Survey, serves as a critical tool to gather insights into the recruitment, selection, and retention practices employed across Delaware's Public Schools. The findings highlighted in this executive summary represent district responses about the most recent hiring season (February 2024 to October 2024).

Purpose of the Survey

1. Capture Innovative Practices
2. Facilitate Knowledge Sharing
3. Pinpoint Opportunities for Improvement
4. Develop Support Resources

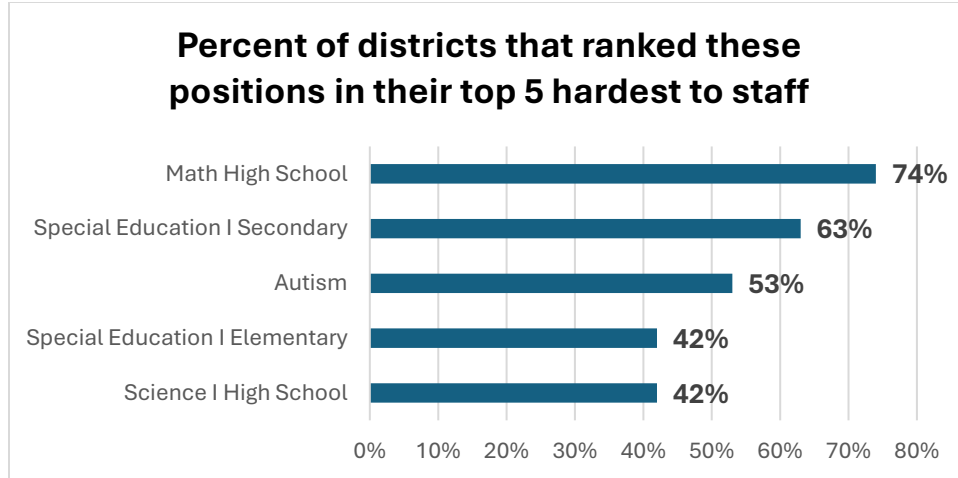
Key Findings

Overall Staffing

- Overall, 259 staff positions (instructional and non-instructional) remained unfilled at the end of the most recent hiring season. This marks a 52% decrease compared to the previous hiring season. These unfilled positions represent approximately 2.5% of the total educator workforce, which includes 10,178 instructional and non-instructional staff members.
- The top five talent pools most frequently recruited by HR leads are: (1) ARTC programs, with nearly all districts actively recruiting from the University of Delaware (95%) and Wilmington University (89%); (2) student teachers already teaching in the district (79%); (3) Wilmington University graduates (79%); (4) year-long teacher residency programs (74%); and (5) Delaware State University graduates (63%).

Instructional Staffing

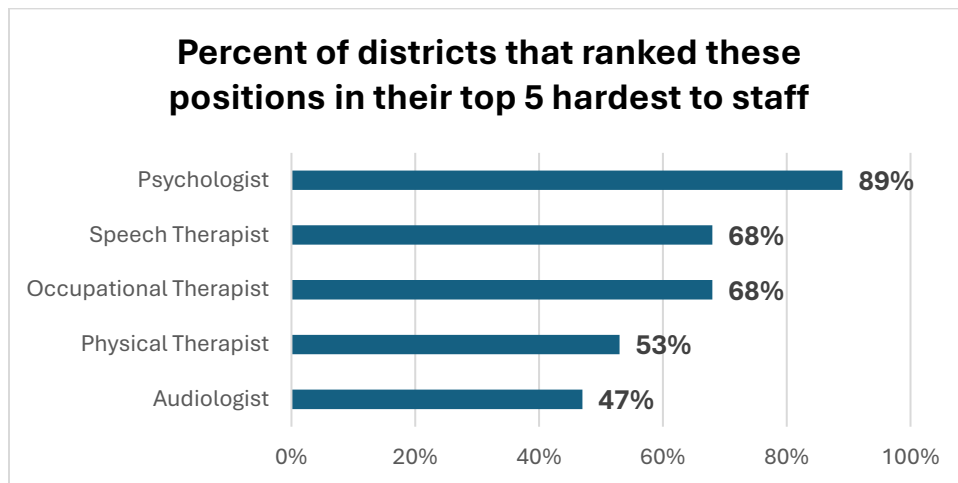
- 189 instructional positions remain open – this is a 47% decrease from the previous hiring season.
- High School Mathematics, Secondary Special Education, and Autism Teacher certification areas were among the hardest to staff this past hiring season.



Math High School	Special Education Secondary	Autism	Special Education Elementary	Science High School
74%	63%	53%	42%	42%

Non-Instructional Staffing

- 70 non-instructional positions remain open – this is a 61% decrease from the previous hiring season.
- Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, and Speech Therapists were among the hardest to staff this past hiring season.



Psychologist	Speech Therapist	Occupational Therapist	Physical Therapist	Audiologist
89%	68%	68%	53%	47%

School Leaders

- 69 School Leader contracts were offered this past hiring season – this is a 19% decrease from the previous hiring season.
- 89% of districts reported frequently recruiting Leaders from Teachers and Administrators in their district. A majority of districts also reported frequently recruiting from Wilmington University’s Graduate School (68% of districts) and other districts in the state (63% of districts).

Policy Implications

Delaware’s ability to fill educator positions continues to improve, yet unfilled positions persist, underscoring the importance of sustaining and scaling investments in workforce development. The state’s progress in educator workforce growth—leading the nation in percentage increase since the pandemic—demonstrates that targeted initiatives are effective. To build on this success, the following legislative actions are recommended:

1. **Expand Proven Investments:** Continue to support and grow initiatives such as year-long teacher residencies, registered apprenticeships for teachers, and Grow Your Own grants to fund preparation programs. Continue the investment in the reimbursement programs for tuition payments that support educators who currently hold an Emergency Certificate or a Certificate of Eligibility in high-need areas, covering coursework completed when they pursued their certification. These efforts have demonstrated their impact in increasing recruitment and improving hiring outcomes, addressing critical shortages in high-need fields.
2. **Enhance Entry Pathways:** Address barriers to entering the teaching profession by investing in pre-apprenticeship programs, paraprofessional apprenticeships, and partnerships that strengthen the pipeline from high school to educator preparation programs. These strategies can help broaden access to teaching careers, particularly in underserved communities.
3. **Strengthen Partnerships to Diversify and Deepen the Educator Pipeline:** Focus on building and sustaining partnerships that support targeted outreach and tailored programming to attract and retain candidates from underrepresented backgrounds and high-demand certification areas. Collaboration between school districts, higher education institutions, and community organizations should aim to identify and remove barriers to entry.
4. **Focus on Retention:** Retaining current educators remains critical to maintaining a sustainable workforce. Ensure high-quality induction and mentoring programs, provide professional development aligned with educator growth goals, and explore policies that improve working conditions and incentivize long-term retention.
5. **Strengthen Data-Informed Decisions with a Longitudinal System:** Develop and implement a comprehensive longitudinal data system to track educator candidates from high school through preparation programs and into their teaching careers. This system will provide critical insights into recruitment strategies, preparation programs, and workforce retention efforts. By identifying trends in candidate progression, certification areas, and career pathways, the system will allow Delaware policymakers and districts to make informed decisions to address gaps, improve program quality, and strategically align investments with workforce needs.

These recommendations build on Delaware’s existing momentum and provide a framework for scaling successful strategies while addressing remaining challenges in educator workforce development.