

What Is the Issue and Why Does It Matter?

Providing teachers with data-driven feedback, aligned professional development and opportunities for advancement may help limit attrition, contribute to more effective teaching and improve student learning.¹ However, research shows that much of the professional development teachers currently receive does not improve either teacher or student performance.² While professional teacher organizations have worked with educators to develop and articulate a clear vision for quality professional learning, many districts are not yet implementing systems in alignment with best practices.³

Teacher reflections mirror these research findings. A 2014 national survey found that few teachers are “highly satisfied” with the ongoing professional training they receive.⁴ A 2016 survey found that though district and school leaders are committed to professional learning, teachers lack decision-making authority over their own professional development and are not receiving adequate time for job-embedded professional development.⁵ Over time, poor professional development may affect retention, and some teachers cite job dissatisfaction and limited opportunities for professional advancement or leadership as important factors in their decision to leave the profession.⁶

Though district and school leaders drive teacher professional development and advancement, state policymakers can create structures and incentives to support high-quality systems by:

- Adopting rigorous standards for teaching and professional development.
- Holding professional development providers accountable for teaching standards-aligned courses and incorporating evidence-based practices.
- Ensuring evaluations are used to support meaningful feedback and connect teachers to targeted professional learning opportunities.
- Creating structures and providing dedicated funding streams to support teacher recognition and advancement, such as:
 - Providing opportunities for teachers to serve as peer observers, coaches and mentors.
 - Providing incentives for National Board Certification and/or connecting board certification to the state licensing process.
 - Offering master teacher designations or certification endorsements.
 - Creating tiered systems of licensure and pay, based in part on a valid measure of teacher effectiveness.
 - Removing statutory and regulatory barriers to allow for local policies that advanced professional learning and teacher leadership.

Though district and school leaders drive teacher professional development and advancement, state policymakers can create the structures and incentives that support high-quality systems.

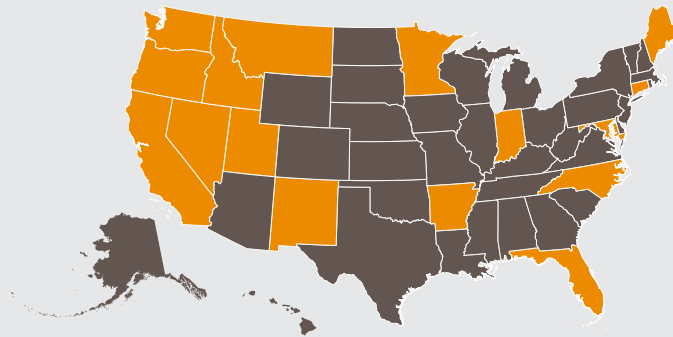


How Many States Enacted Legislation in 2017?

Based on a review of 2017 legislative activity concerning professional development and advancement for teachers:

- At least 21 bills were enacted in 14 states to provide teachers with opportunities for targeted professional development, career advancement and leadership.
- Four bills were vetoed; one was partially vetoed.

Which States Enacted Legislation in 2017?



State	Legislation	Status
Arkansas	H.B. 1154	Enacted
	H.B. 1424	Enacted
	H.B. 1425	Enacted
	H.B. 1646	Enacted
	S.B. 555	Enacted
California	A.B. 1035	Enacted
Connecticut	H.B. 7205	Enacted
	S.B. 953	Enacted
Florida	H.B. 7069	Enacted
Idaho	H 300	Enacted
Indiana	H.B. 1449	Enacted
Maine	L.D. 1569/H.P. 1080	Enacted
Maryland	H.B. 978	Enacted

State	Legislation	Status
Minnesota	H.F. 140	Vetoed
	H.F. 2	Enacted
Montana	S.B. 115	Enacted
Nevada	A.B. 77	Enacted
	S.B. 300	Enacted
New Mexico	H.B. 105	Vetoed
	H.B. 124	Vetoed
	S.B. 30	Vetoed
North Carolina	S.B. 599	Enacted
Oregon	H.B. 2763	Enacted
	S.B. 182	Enacted
Utah	H.B. 231	Enacted
Washington	H.B. 1341	Partially vetoed

Connected Systems and Targeted Supports


States are making efforts to connect teacher evaluation systems to professional development offerings so that teachers receive the targeted, personalized supports they need to improve and excel. Thirty-six states now require districts to provide formal, substantive evaluation feedback to teachers; and 30 states require that evaluations be used to inform professional development for all teachers.⁷

In 2017, at least 10 states enacted legislation to improve the connections between teacher evaluations and professional development, and/or to provide targeted supports to teachers. In these states, at least 13 bills were enacted.




State	Legislation	Status
Arkansas	H.B. 1154	Enacted
	H.B. 1424	Enacted
	H.B. 1646	Enacted
California	A.B. 1035	Enacted
Connecticut	H.B. 7205	Enacted
	S.B. 953	Enacted
Florida	H.B. 7069	Enacted
Idaho	H 300	Enacted
Indiana	H.B. 1449	Enacted
Maryland	H.B. 978	Enacted
Nevada	A.B. 77	Enacted
Oregon	S.B. 182	Enacted
Utah	H.B. 231	Enacted


Examples of Enacted State Legislation in 2017


 **Arkansas:** [H.B. 1154](#) requires additional state funding for the state education agency to develop and administer professional learning communities for the benefit of school districts. Arkansas defines a professional learning community as “educators [who] work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve.”⁸

[H.B. 1424](#) requires that, at least once every four years, public schools perform summative evaluations for all teachers with more than three years of experience. In all years other than the summative evaluation year, such teachers must follow a professional growth plan developed by the teacher and the evaluator, which includes certain professional development activities tailored to the teacher’s needs.

[H.B. 1646](#) allows a person who holds a license issued by the state board of education to obtain professional development credit through micro-credentialing approved by the department of education.⁹

 **Connecticut:** [S.B. 953](#) provides greater flexibility to districts to establish professional development activities aligned to district goals. This action was based on the recommendations of the legislatively convened Educator Professional Development Requirements Task Force to cut back on what it called the “unwieldy list of mandated trainings” and to improve professional learning for educators.¹⁰

 **Florida:** [H.B. 7069](#) requires that a third party analyze student learning growth data and provide access to a data visualization tool — enabling (1) teachers to better understand and evaluate the data and (2) school administrators to improve instruction, evaluate programs, allocate resources, plan professional development and communicate with stakeholders.

 **Oregon:** [S.B. 182](#) establishes the Council on Educator Advancement to form a system of educator networks providing every teacher in the state access to professional learning opportunities. Requires each educator network to, among other things, use professional learning plans submitted by educators to establish priorities that reflect local needs for each school and district served by the network, enhance access to high-quality professional learning, and strengthen and enhance evidence-based practices that improve student achievement.



Advancement and Leadership


To elevate the teaching profession and improve retention, a growing number of states are providing teachers with opportunities for career advancement and leadership. More than a half of all states now explicitly support career advancement options for teachers, and more than a quarter of all states require or encourage incentives for teachers participating in leadership opportunities.¹¹


In 2017, at least nine states enacted legislation supporting teacher advancement and leadership. In these states, at least 11 bills were enacted, and one was vetoed. The governors in two additional states, **New Mexico** and **Washington**, vetoed the only related legislation passed by their legislatures.


State	Legislation	Status
Arkansas	H.B. 1425	Enacted
	S.B. 555	Enacted
Florida	H.B. 7069	Enacted
Indiana	H.B. 1449	Enacted
Maine	L.D. 1569/H.P. 1080	Enacted
Minnesota	H.F. 140	Vetoed
	H.F. 2	Enacted
Montana	S.B. 115	Enacted
New Mexico	H.B. 105	Vetoed
	H.B. 124	Vetoed
	S.B. 30	Vetoed
Nevada	S.B. 300	Enacted
North Carolina	S.B. 599	Enacted
Oregon	H.B. 2763	Enacted
	S.B. 182	Enacted
Washington	H.B. 1341	Partially vetoed*

**The governor vetoed the section that created the Professional Educator Collaborative, which would have been required to examine issues related to professional learning, development and leadership (among other things), and consider what incentives and supports could be provided at each stage of an educator’s career to produce a more effective educational system.*

Examples of Enacted and Vetoed State Legislation in 2017


 **Arkansas:** [H.B. 1425](#) permits the state board of education to create rules for a tiered system of licensure that includes a teacher leader advanced license or a teacher leader endorsement to a license. The bill allows school districts to differentiate salary levels of the minimum teacher compensation schedule to provide increases based on the tiered licensure system.


 **Indiana:** [H.B. 1449](#) provides grants to school districts for programs that include instruction-focused accountability through an evaluation system based on multiple measures, including evidence of student learning and growth; ongoing professional development tied to feedback from student achievement data and the teacher evaluation process; and teacher recognition and advancement through performance-based compensation and career paths.

 **New Mexico:** [H.B. 105](#) would have created the Innovations in Teaching Program, administered by the department of education, to promote the implementation of innovative, pedagogical approaches and strategies in classrooms.




The bill, approved by the legislature but vetoed by the governor, would have allowed teachers with at least three years of experience — who met or exceeded competencies based on their most recent annual evaluation — to apply to carry out an innovative teaching project for up to three school years.¹²


 **Nevada:** [S.B. 300](#) makes an appropriation to the department of education to be allocated to school districts for teacher peer assistance and review programs.


 **Oregon:** [H.B. 2763](#) authorizes the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission to reimburse teachers for certain costs related to obtaining National Board Certification.


Examples of Legislation Introduced in 2018

Teacher professional development and advancement policies remain top of mind for state policymakers across the country. Examples of recently proposed state legislation include:

 **New Mexico:** [S.B. 116](#) would create a level four license to recognize master teachers who are primarily responsible for supporting classroom teachers and educational assistants through professional development activities, including mentoring, peer intervention and working with struggling students.

 **Kentucky:** [S.B. 73](#) would establish a pilot program for performance-based professional development projects, administered and approved by local boards of education.

 **Michigan:** [H.B. 5470](#) would provide an annual stipend for up to three years for a master teacher who mentors new teachers.

 **Virginia:** [H.B. 1119](#) would require the superintendent of public instruction to develop an anonymous school climate survey to evaluate school-level teaching conditions. The bill would require the survey be made available annually to each public school teacher and include questions regarding professional development, demands on teachers' time, teacher autonomy and teacher leadership, among other things.

Resources

- [*Mitigating Teacher Shortages: Evaluation and Feedback*](#)
- [*Mitigating Teacher Shortages: Teacher Leadership*](#)
- [*No Panacea: Diagnosing What Ails Teacher Professional Development Before Reaching for Remedies*](#)
- [*The Mirage: Confronting the Hard Truth About Our Quest for Teacher Development*](#)
- [State Teacher Leadership Toolkit](#)
- [State Policy Yearbook Database](#)



ENDNOTES

1. Emily Workman and Micah Ann Wixom, *Mitigating Teacher Shortages: Evaluation and Feedback* (Denver: Education Commission of the States, May 2016), <https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Mitigating-Teacher-Shortages-Evaluation-and-Feedback.pdf>; and Richard Ingersoll et. al., *School Leadership Counts* (Santa Cruz: New Teacher Center, 2017) <http://info.newteachercenter.org/school-leadership-report>.
2. Melissa Tooley and Kaylan Connally, *No Panacea: Diagnosing What Ails Teacher Professional Development Before Reaching for Remedies* (Washington, D.C.: New America, June 2016), https://na-production.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/NA_NoPanaceaPaper7.7.pdf.
3. Linda Darling-Hammond, Maria E. Hyler, and Madelyn Gardner, *Effective Teacher Professional Development* (Palo Alto: Learning Policy Institute, June 2017) <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/effective-teacher-professional-development-report>; “Standards for Professional Learning,” Learning Forward, accessed February 8, 2018, <https://learningforward.org/standards-for-professional-learning>; and *The State of Teacher Professional Learning: Results from a Nationwide Survey* (Oxford, OH: Learning Forward, 2017), https://learningforward.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/professional_learning_teacher_survey_2017.pdf.
4. *Teachers Know Best: Teachers’ Views on Professional Development* (Seattle: Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2015), <http://k12education.gatesfoundation.org/resource/teachers-know-best-teachers-views-on-professional-development/>.
5. *The State of Teacher Professional Learning: Results from a Nationwide Survey* (Oxford, OH: Learning Forward, 2017), https://learningforward.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/professional_learning_teacher_survey_2017.pdf.
6. Emily Workman and Micah Ann Wixom, *Mitigating Teacher Shortages: Evaluation and Feedback* (Denver: Education Commission of the States, May 2016), <https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Mitigating-Teacher-Shortages-Evaluation-and-Feedback.pdf>; Leib Sutcher, Linda Darling-Hammond, and Desiree Carver-Thomas, *A Coming Crisis in Teaching? Teacher Supply, Demand, and Shortages in the U.S.* (Palo Alto: Learning Policy Institute, September 2016) https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/A_Coming_Crisis_in_Teaching_REPORT.pdf.
7. Elizabeth Ross et al., *2017 State Teacher Policy Yearbook: National Summary* (Washington, D.C.: National Council on Teacher Quality, 2017) https://www.nctq.org/dmsView/NCTQ_2017_State_Teacher_Policy_Yearbook.
8. Ark. Admin. Code 005.01.28-2.00.
9. “Micro-credentials for Educators,” Arkansas Department of Education, accessed February 8, 2018, <http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/educator%20effectiveness/educator-support-development/professional-learning-opportunities/micro-credentials-for-educators>.
10. “Educator Professional Development Requirements Task Force Recommendations,” (Hartford: Connecticut State Department of Education, December 2016), http://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Talent_Office/PD_Task_Force/pd_task_force_recommendations_12-30-2016.pdf?la=en.
11. Elizabeth Ross et al., *2017 State Teacher Policy Yearbook: National Summary* (Washington, D.C.: National Council on Teacher Quality, 2017) https://www.nctq.org/dmsView/NCTQ_2017_State_Teacher_Policy_Yearbook.
12. “House Executive Message No. 30,” New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez, April 6, 2017, <http://www.sos.state.nm.us/uploads/files/HB105-2017-Vetoed.pdf>.



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Education Commission of the States tracks legislation on education issues from early learning through postsecondary and workforce. The team follows the bill's status from introduction through its final action, summarizes key provisions and assigns topics. The policy tracking helps keep an eye on trends, innovative policy approaches and the overall landscape of education-focused activity. This information is leveraged for several purposes, including Policy Snapshots that offer a brief background on a topic, a visual take on recent bills and summaries of selected state legislation.

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