

Administrative Memo

Date: May 4, 2021
To: School Administrators
From: Paul Katnik, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Educator Quality
Subject: EQ-21-003 — Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grants

Staffing shortages in the teaching profession have consistently been a challenge for a number of years and there is concern that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic will only exacerbate the problem. A recent [national study](#) found that:

- 77 percent of educators are working more today than a year ago
- 60 percent enjoy their job less
- 59 percent do not feel secure in their school district's health and safety precautions
- 27 percent say they are considering leaving their job, retiring early, or taking a leave of absence

An [August 2020 survey](#) by the National Education Association indicates 28 percent of educators are considering leaving their job. In data more specific to Missouri, a Missouri State Teacher Association survey in January 2021 found that approximately 57 percent of teachers surveyed said they were considering leaving the profession.

To address these challenges, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) designated more than \$50 million in state reserve funds from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund to establish a Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grant program to support efforts in all local education agencies (LEAs) over the next three school years. Additional funds are allocated to school districts and charter schools most impacted by staffing shortages, including those in both rural and urban settings serving higher numbers of students of color and students of poverty. A regional Missouri Teacher Development System (MTDS) representative will review and monitor grants and provide technical assistance on teacher retention to schools in their region; they will also provide development and professional learning opportunities to teachers in the schools in their region.

As part of this effort, a Grow Your Own (GYO) grant will also be made available to all LEAs. A GYO program builds a pipeline of future teachers for an LEA by inviting, cultivating, and supporting students to consider the teaching profession. GYO development funding of \$10,000 will be available to all LEAs to create or further develop a GYO program. In addition, a regional GYO support representative from the MTDS will be available to review and monitor grants and provide technical assistance to all LEAs in their region. GYO development funds provide an opportunity to create a greater pool of future teachers for all LEAs, particularly for the hard-to-staff content areas and geographic locations. This program also works to increase the number of diverse and male teachers in the profession.

The grant allocation information for each LEA can be found on DESE's [Recruitment and Retention](#) webpage. More information, including specific details about the application process and allowable uses, will be made available soon. Please contact the Office of Educator Quality at 573-751-2931 with additional questions.