THE EDUCATION
HIRING
Crisis

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

For the past few years, <u>our reports</u> have documented an ongoing hiring crisis in education. Educational institutions have been navigating the impacts of unprecedented turnover as a record number of educators leave the industry.

Low pay, challenging work conditions, and burnout have driven people away, and institutions have struggled to fill the rising number of job openings.

At first glance, this year's data looks hopeful. For the first time since 2020, the number of open education jobs decreased slightly, and more people viewed and applied to jobs in education overall.

Although promising, there is still work to do. Further data analysis makes it clear that the education sector's ability to attract qualified candidates remains a critical challenge.

Without immediate course correction, the cycle of overwork, burnout, and turnover will compound, making recovery that much harder. Thankfully, there are a number of strategies to help institutions improve recruitment and hiring outcomes. This report examines the hiring challenges in education more closely, and offers actionable strategies for HR professionals to strengthen recruitment and hiring.

For this report, we analyzed data from over 1.3M applications on NEOED's Insight applicant tracking system. This report also references NEOGOV data and analysis drawn from a wider analysis of 45M public sector job applications and survey responses of over 700 public sector HR professionals and job seekers.

THE STATE OF THE
EDUCATION JOB MARKET

A 4.2% decline in job openings and a 17% increase in the number of applicants-per-job suggests that institutions are starting to make progress with filling open positions. National employment statistics also show an upward job growth trend in the public sector.

Yet, 51% of the public sector agencies we surveyed say hiring has not gotten easier over the past year. We dove into the data to find out why.

Insights drawn from our data show that the average number of applicants-per-job is 22, but the bottom 25% of job postings average only 2 applicants-per-job.

Bottom line: There are simply not enough people applying to jobs in education. With these numbers, it's entirely possible some job postings receive no applications at all. To begin solving this challenge, we must first identify which hard-to-fill jobs are worth investing in.

Figure 1

Jobs & Applications Compared to 2019

Source: Applicant data from 1.3M applications in NEOED Insight

— JOBS
— APPLICANTS
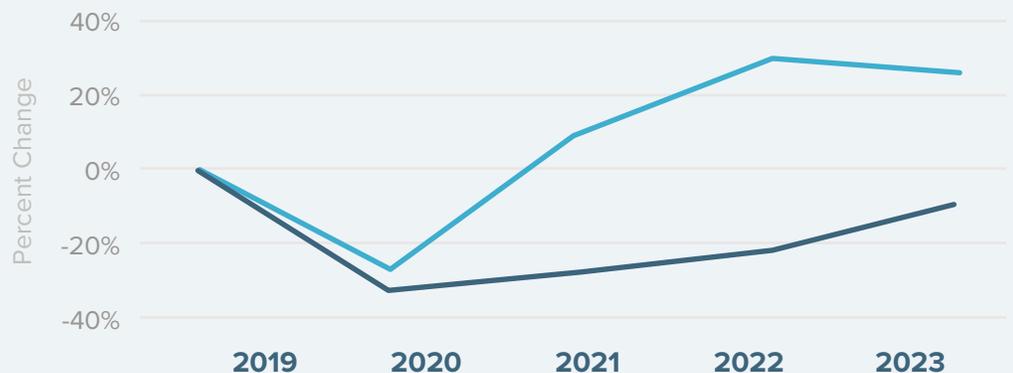
THE HARDEST JOBS TO FILL

Some roles are harder to fill than others, especially roles that require specializations or advanced degrees. Although institutions are predominantly struggling to fill teaching roles, non-teaching positions are hard to fill too.

There are a number of factors that may influence a candidate's decision to apply for a job, such as pay, benefits, experience, and personal preferences. That's why we consider the view-to-apply conversion rate as a strong indicator of job appeal.

The view-to-apply conversion rate is the number of people who actually apply for a job out of all the people who view the job posting. The higher the conversion rate, the better.

Our 2023 data shows the view-to-apply conversion rate continuing its downward trend, despite a 28% overall increase in the number of application views. Meaning, **more people are viewing education job postings, but aren't applying.**

Let's take a look at what the data reveals about the hardest roles to fill in the education sector.

Primary and Secondary Teachers

The number of job openings for **Elementary School Teacher** roles decreased by 11% since last year, but so did the number of people who viewed each posting. The view-to-apply conversion rate for Elementary School Teachers is among the lowest at 1.3%, meaning only 1.3% of people who view a job posting actually apply.

Similarly, the number of open **Middle School Teacher** jobs decreased by 27% since last year, but only 1.2% of people who view these jobs end up applying.

Kindergarten Teacher positions are more popular positions among job seekers. 2.5% of people who view these job postings apply, but this number is down from 3.6% last year. This warrants a closer look at Kindergarten roles and programs.

Special Education Teachers

While most positions saw a decrease in job openings, Special Education is the exception. **Since 2019, there has been a 64% increase in the number of job openings for Special Education Teachers.** In 2023, there were 1,130 open Special Education Teacher jobs, which is the role with the highest number of job openings in the NEOED system.

Yet fewer people are applying for Special Education Teacher roles. On average, each job posting receives 12.2 applications, down from 23 in 2019. Only 1.1% of people who view Special Education Teacher job postings apply.

Approximately 7.5 million K-12 students receive special education, accounting for 15% of all public school students. After the pandemic, districts across the country saw an increase in the number of students served by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Due to rising workloads, districts should expect even more churn as special education teachers leave to find better opportunities elsewhere.

Special Education Teacher Applications per Job, 2019 - 2023

Source: Applicant data from 1.3M applications in NEOED Insight

Career and Technical Education Teachers

There is a high demand for Career and Technical Education Teachers in postsecondary education. Since 2019, there has been a 30% increase in the number of open jobs for Career and Technical Education Teachers. There are currently 757 job openings for these roles in NEOED.

Unfortunately, the number of people viewing and applying to Career and Technical Education positions is startlingly low. Each open job receives 9.6 applications on average, and less than 1% of people who view these job listings apply.

Many industries are already feeling the effects of a skilled trade worker shortage, but studies are projecting a skilled labor crisis by 2030 due to a lack of skilled labor.

Higher Education

Although positions in higher education typically command strong pay, employees still face burnout, administrative burdens, threats to tenure, and other challenges that make higher ed jobs hard to fill.

Our data shows that several higher ed teaching positions received less than 10 applicants per job. And closer examination reveals a trend – many of these roles require specialization and experience.

- Geography
- Architecture
- Health Specialties (dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary, etc.)
- Engineering
- Agricultural Sciences

Many of these professions are also in high demand in the private sector, which adds a competitive element to recruitment. Given higher ed challenges, many postsecondary teachers are choosing to work in the private sector over education.

Management Occupations

Management roles are non-teaching positions that are often hard to fill in education. While the data seems to be trending in a positive direction, a deeper dive tells a different story.

Overall, there were fewer job openings, more applicants, and more people viewing management roles; however, the view-to-apply conversion rate is still low at 1.1%. Like roles in higher education, institutions are competing with the private sector for mid-to-senior level career candidates.

These insights present a clear opportunity for institutions to expand job sourcing and to improve the job appeal of these leadership roles.

MOST ATTRACTIVE ROLES
FOR JOB SEEKERS

While many roles are hard-to-fill, there are a few that job seekers are excited about. Jobs with higher than average applicants-per-job and strong view-to-apply conversion rates indicate these roles are popular among job seekers.

Substitute Teachers

Since 2020, there's been a **95% increase in the number of open substitute teaching roles**, which is likely a reflection of extremely high turnover rates among full-time teachers.

Substitute teaching positions are routinely in the top percentile of our job seeker data. On average, job openings for Substitute Teacher roles receive 50 applications per job.

Substitute teaching roles are often short-term and part-time, requiring less commitment and responsibility than full teaching roles. As more teachers experience burnout and leave the industry, many are seeking the flexibility substitute teaching provides.

Figure 3

Substitute Teacher (Short-Term) Applications per Job, 2019 - 2023

Source: Applicant data from 1.3M applications in NEOED Insight
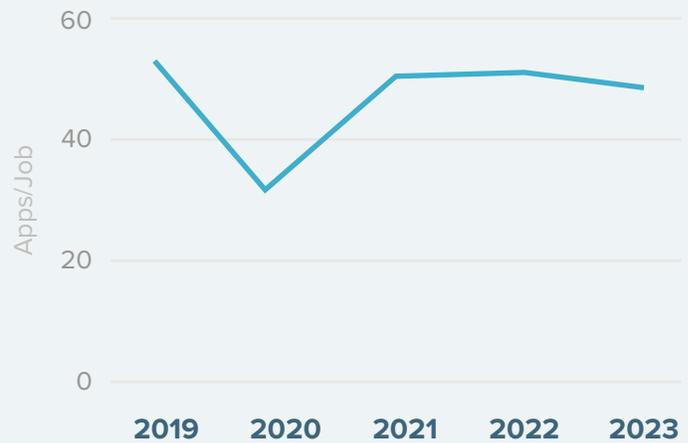

Office and Administrative Staff

Our data indicates that non-teaching, administrative roles are also in-demand among job seekers. Despite a decrease in the number of job openings for Office and Administrative Support roles, each open job received more viewership and applications than last year.

As teachers continue to leave the classroom, it's possible some may be escaping burnout by working in the school office. According to a study, 39% of former public school teachers continued to work for a school or school district in a non-teaching position. The majority leave the profession for better work life balance.

Understanding the job seeker preferences gives institutions a roadmap to improve job positioning and attract qualified candidates to challenging roles.

WHAT CAN INSTITUTIONS DO NOW?

Attracting top talent and converting them to applicants starts with understanding what job seekers want. Positioning jobs in an attractive way and simplifying the application process are also ways to increase the number of applicants per open job. These strategies not only address some of the immediate hiring challenges in education, but also build a strong foundation for future recruitment.

- **CANDIDATE SOURCING**

- **JOB APPEAL**

- **HIRING PROCESSES**

EXPAND CANDIDATE SOURCING

Sourcing qualified candidates is a proactive process. Reviewing applications is only one part of the equation.

Effectively sourcing talent involves actively searching for relevant skills on job boards, networking with industry peers, engaging on social media sites, and asking for employee referrals. Sourcing passive candidates, or people who are not actively looking for a job, is also an effective strategy.

Based on the feedback from our job seekers survey, public sector job seekers who are not actively looking for a job say that a job would catch their attention if it came as a recommendation from a friend, outreach from a recruiter, or a personal outreach from their network.

Institutions can widen the talent pool by targeting interns, retirees, past candidates, and even part-time workers. By expanding job sourcing to include a wider range of skill sets and experiences, agencies can create a more robust and adaptable hiring process.

INCREASE JOB APPEAL

Enhancing the appeal of job postings is largely dependent on the specific role and job seeker preferences. For instance, reducing minimum qualifications may work to attract candidates for some roles, but not all. Likewise, some job seekers are attracted to jobs with remote work options, while others are attracted to financial benefits.

Although it is difficult to standardize job appeal, public sector job seekers rank benefits (57%), salary (50%), job security (31%), meaningful work (24%), and career growth opportunities (20%) as the most appealing aspects of public sector jobs.

Job descriptions should showcase school culture, values, and mission, so potential candidates know how they can contribute and thrive. Highlighting growth and advancement opportunities helps candidates imagine their future with your institution.

Figure 4

Most Appealing Public Sector Benefits According to Job Seekers
Source: Survey of job seekers on GovernmentJobs.com

Category	Percent of Respondents
Benefits	57%
Salary	50%
Job Security	31%
Meaningful Work	24%
Career Growth Opportunities	20%

Percent of Respondents
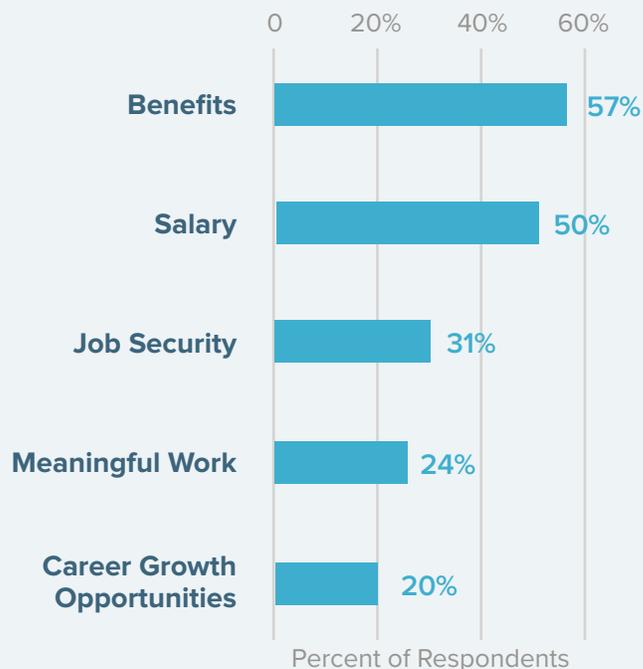
IMPROVE THE HIRING PROCESS

The candidate experience is a critical aspect of attracting qualified applicants and filling open positions, yet current hiring processes can deter candidates from applying in the first place.

Make sure the job description is written for the job-seeker, not the position. Writing the job description to focus on the benefits of employment, such as growth opportunities, comprehensive benefits packages, or work-life balance, can positively influence a candidate pool.

Once candidates are in the pipeline, make sure to create a positive experience for them. Responding to job seekers promptly, providing honest feedback to applicants, and staying in touch with talented applicants can build resilience in talent pipelines.

NEXT STEPS

The insights in this report demonstrate the magnitude of the hiring crisis in education. Although there were slight improvements to job openings and applicants this year, many critical positions remain unfilled. The continued struggle to attract qualified candidates poses a broader, more sinister threat to educational outcomes for students.

These challenges are complex, but institutions can begin to make progress by targeting recruitment and hiring efforts on the most critical roles. The solutions outlined in this report - deploying different job sourcing strategies, improving job positioning, and optimizing the hiring process - offer a path toward a more resilient and stable education workforce.

NEOED is the leading provider of a comprehensive human capital management solution for educational institutions. Dedicated to supporting the complex needs and compliance requirements of education HR teams, NEOED's suite of three integrated modules – Recruit, Develop, and Manage – provide a centralized platform for managing the entire employee lifecycle. NEOED is a division of NEOGOV, which was founded in 2001 and serves over 6,000 public sector organizations. More information at **www.neoed.com**.

300+
Schools & Colleges

20+
Years of Experience

350,000+
Employees Supported