Varied Staffing Models: A Retention Strategy

The Arizona Department of Education Educator Recruitment and Retention Task Force's final recommendations included focus areas of Teacher Voice, Induction with Robust Mentoring, and Retention Plans. Within the focus area of Retention Plans, one critical component identified was *varied staffing models* to meet student and staff needs. Typically, schools are staffed based on enrollment. This determines the number of teachers, support staff (certificated and non-certificated), and administrators at the building level. This enrollment-driven model often leads to one teacher per classroom or one teacher with 120+ student contacts daily, depending on the grade configuration.

Task Force members discussed the advantages and feasibility of differentiated staffing models to make teaching more manageable. How does a local education agency (LEA) do this effectively and efficiently? And would this assist with retention efforts?

What Does Arizona Data Say?

According to the Arizona [Classroom Teacher Attrition and Retention Dashboard](#), approximately 21% of teachers are leaving the profession within their first four years of teaching. And 16% are leaving in years five through nine. One of the top reasons teachers leave the profession in Arizona is the feeling of burnout, according to the [*2022-2023 Leaver Survey*](#) conducted by the Recruitment and Retention Team. How do we address this?

Next Steps

The Recruitment and Retention Task Force has identified *varied staffing models* as one retention strategy to address increases in attrition rates. By looking at individual school buildings and their unique needs, differentiation or strategic planning can occur in staffing models and professional learning. Local education agencies are challenged to rethink the workplace and the typical formulas that place teachers and staff in a building. Additionally, questions such as the ones below can also assist LEAs in the beginning steps to implement varied staffing models:

*What do the students at this building need?
*What do the staff members at this building need?
*How can we differentiate staff roles to meet the needs of the students?
*What does our attrition and retention data tell us about our building?
*How can we use our student data to help us make staffing decisions?

Examples of Varied Staffing Models:

Arizona State University
[**Next Generation Workforce**](#)

National Institute for Excellence in Teaching
[TAP System](#)

[**Opportunity Culture**](#)