

2020-21 Teacher Vacancy Survey Report Summary

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) conducted the 2020-21 Teacher Vacancy Survey in the fall of 2020. All public school districts, nonpublic school systems and Educational Service Units (ESU) have been included in the collection of data. For purposes of this report, the ESU data has been combined with the public school data (district) while the nonpublic data (system) is combined with them into the total counts. This summary shows the totals. For the separate district and system counts, see the full report.

The survey of all 439 Nebraska districts/systems (244 PK-12 public school districts, 17 ESUs, and 178 nonpublic school systems) in the state requested the following information:

- The number of districts/systems that could not find fully qualified teachers* to fill teacher positions;
- The endorsement areas of the positions that were unfilled**;
- The reasons why the applicant pool was not sufficient; and
- What the district/system did to address the unfilled positions.

The overall response rate (37%) was down considerably from previous years, likely due to time constraints imposed on districts/systems by the global pandemic. The response rate for districts decreased to 37%. The nonpublic systems response rate decreased to 36%. Based upon these response rates, the completed surveys are a poor representation of PK-12 districts and systems in the state. The endorsement areas with the largest number of unfilled positions were the following:

Endorsement Area	Unfilled**		Vacant***	Endorsement Area	Unfilled**		Vacant***
	#	%	#		#	%	#
Special Education	72.00	30.25%	4.00	Music Instrumental/Vocal	8.10	3.40%	2.70
Career Education Areas	12.00	5.04%	2.50	Health and/or Physical Education	8.30	3.49%	0.00
Language Arts	19.00	7.98%	6.00	Early Childhood Education	7.00	2.94%	3.00
Science	18.00	7.56%	7.00	School Library	3.50	1.47%	0.00
Mathematics	16.00	6.72%	10.00	ESL/ELL [†]	6.00	2.52%	0.00
World Languages	10.60	4.45%	2.00	Art	3.00	1.26%	2.00
Speech Pathology	8.30	3.49%	1.00	School Psychologist	9.00	3.78%	3.00
School Counselor	5.00	2.10%	0.00	Bilingual [†]	1	0.42%	0.00

[†]Bilingual and English as a Second Language/English Language Learners are traditional shortage areas for federal programs so are recognized by Nebraska as well.

Districts/Systems reported 238 positions as unfilled with fully qualified personnel, and 44 left vacant for 2020-21. Of those 238 positions, 38 positions (16%) were in districts/systems with less than 500 students.

For the purposes of this survey:

***Fully qualified teacher** is an individual who holds an Initial, Standard, or Professional, Nebraska teaching certificate with the appropriate endorsement for the assigned class, and the professional attributes sought by the school district.

****Unfilled** refers to a position that was filled by someone other than a fully qualified teacher or a position that was left vacant.

*****Vacant** refers to a position that was not filled at all – i.e. in Special Education of the 72 unfilled positions, 68 have teachers and 4 were left vacant.

2019-2020 Teacher Vacancy Survey Report Summary Continued

There were 53 districts/systems (19% of the returned surveys) with unfilled positions at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year.

Region	Districts/Systems with Unfilled** Positions		Number of Unfilled** Positions		Vacant***	
	No. of Districts/Systems	%	No. of Unfilled	%	No. Vacant	% Unfilled left Vacant for Region
Central	7	13.21%	12.00	5.04%	0.00	0.00%
Metro	12	22.64%	128.80	54.11%	34.70	26.94%
Northeast	10	18.87%	21.00	8.82%	5.00	23.81%
Southeast	13	24.53%	50.25	21.11%	2.00	3.98%
West Central	6	11.32%	18.00	7.56%	1.50	8.33%
Western	5	9.43%	8.00	3.36%	1.00	12.50%
Total	53	100.00%	238.05	100.00%	44.20	18.57%

Districts/systems were allowed to identify multiple reasons for unfilled** positions. The main reasons given were divided between “No applicants” (26%) and “Preferred a specific non-fully qualified applicant over fully-qualified applicant” (22%).

The survey offered solutions from which districts/systems could choose from when identifying how they solved the dilemma of unfilled** positions. The most reported solutions were: “Hired a person who holds a provisional permit” (25%); “Hired a person who holds a transitional permit” (14%); “Position was not filled” (14%); and “Used substitute teachers” (13%). For further information, see Tables 10a-c in the full report.

Of the 16 endorsement shortage areas, six have been designated shortage areas each year for the last 15 years: Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Special Education, Speech Language Pathology, and World Language. In addition to these, 9 others have been designated shortage areas each of the last five years: Career Education Areas; Art; Early Childhood Education; Health and/or Physical Education; School Counselor; School Library; School Psychologist; and Music/Instrumental/Vocal.

Find the full report at <https://www.education.ne.gov/educatorprep/teacher-shortage-survey/>. Tables included in the Report Summary combine public and nonpublic system responses. The full report provides an analysis of public and nonpublic in separate tables as well.

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