

Education

Teachers: Students' Greatest Resource Remains Scarce

(NAPS)—The role of teachers in children's lives cannot be understated. Beyond children's parents, their teacher is often the primary adult influencer in their life. Yet, this essential role faces difficult setbacks as schools and districts across the country are tasked with stabilizing the teacher shortage while ensuring new teachers are prepared to meet the needs of their students.

The Current State of K-12 Education

Andy Drotos Ph.D., executive dean for the College of Education at University of Phoenix, attributes the loss of new teachers to the lack of continuing teacher development, induction and other educator support programs. "We need to focus on helping teachers grow professionally and be reflective in their practice."

In a recent University of Phoenix College of Education survey, more than three in five K-12 teachers cite mentorship programs that support teachers in their first few years of teaching as key in retaining talent. Forty-six percent of those survey respondents also indicate teacher induction programs designed to mentor and provide professional development as a way to grow the teacher talent pipeline.

Drotos says while the teacher shortage can be attributed to many things—including baby boomer teachers retiring and insufficient resources—helping mitigate the teacher shortage begins with providing them with resources to seek coursework for recertification and to stay current in their field with the latest knowledge of how students learn. The same K-12 survey found that just one-third of teachers say they have significant training in standards and assessment preparation and curriculum development.

Supporting Teachers and Districts in the Changing Education Landscape

Drotos added that districts need to become savvier with their resources to support their educators during this critical time in their career. "The first few years of a teacher's career are vital to his or her success. We need to create an environment where teachers are provided the training



Good teachers are vital in children's lives—and good teachers can get better through professional development classes.

and mentoring to boost their confidence and effectiveness in the classroom."

According to the same survey, some skills for which K-12 teachers say they are interested in pursuing more development include:

- Technology in the classroom to embrace the latest development in technology and software applications
- Addressing student behavior issues with the skills necessary to effectively manage classrooms
- Curriculum and instruction to help in curriculum analysis, design, development and implementation
- Teacher leadership that utilizes collaboration, mentoring and inclusion as a way to initiate and sustain change in their school community.

University of Phoenix College of Education has been educating teachers and school administrators for more than 30 years. The College of Education provides bachelor's and master's degree programs for individuals who want to become teachers or current educators and administrators seeking advanced degrees to strengthen their professional knowledge. With education programs available throughout most of the U.S., the College of Education has a distinct grasp of the national education picture and priorities for teacher preparation. Faculty members on average bring more than 17 years of professional experience to the classroom. For more information, visit www.phoenix.edu/education.