



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

March 7, 2022

The Honorable Mike H. Morath
Commissioner
Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701-1494

Dear Commissioner Morath:

The education of Texas students is critical for the future of all Texans. Highly qualified teachers play a critical role in that education. It was for this reason that I worked so closely with the Legislature to include the creation of and funding for the Teacher Incentive Allotment in the comprehensive school finance reforms in 2017. Additionally, the ongoing and increasing shortage of full-time and substitute teachers in schools across the state demands a thoughtful, creative conversation to develop strategies to attract, train, and retain the teachers our students need.

I am directing the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to immediately create a task force to help school districts address the ongoing staffing shortages they face. This task force should investigate the challenges teacher vacancies are causing for school districts, explore best practices for addressing this shortage, and research the possibility for flexibility of certification, placement, and hiring. This group of stakeholders and experts should also develop recommendations for regulatory and other policy changes at TEA and provide an update on initiatives at TEA that could help impact these vacancies.

Teachers play a critical role in the development and long-term success of our students. This task force should work diligently to ensure that best practices and resources for recruitment and retention are provided to districts to ensure the learning environment of Texas students is not interrupted by the absence of a qualified teacher.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Abbott".

Greg Abbott
Governor

GA:shd