

# TEA's Workforce Plan

## *I. Current Workforce Profile (Supply Analysis)*

### *Critical Workforce Skills*

TEA provides leadership, resources, and guidance for Texas LEAs. The following areas of professional knowledge and expertise are critical to perform TEA's core business functions:

- Accreditation
- Assessment, Accountability, and Data Quality
- Data Analysis
- Educator and Student Policy Initiatives
- Financial Management
- Grants Administration
- Policy Planning/Research
- Standards and Programs
- State Initiatives

Further, additional critical workforce skills include change management; strategy development, implementation, and evaluation; teamwork; and communication.

TEA's goal is to attract and retain a workforce that enables TEA to accomplish its mission. TEA attracts employees from LEAs and many other educational organizations. This provides these employees an opportunity to obtain experience in a statewide role and then potentially return to the schools in an administrative capacity. Additionally, TEA attracts employees who have retired from the Teacher Retirement System and come to TEA for a second career opportunity under the Employees' Retirement System.

In 2007, TEA implemented an online job posting and recruiting system. This has created national exposure for TEA's job opportunities. Additional job advertising in educational and professional association publications is used to target applicants with the professional knowledge and expertise TEA needs.

### *Workforce Demographics*

#### *Gender*

Of the 1,041 TEA employees, 67% are female and 33% are male. A large proportion of the workforce consists of former educators.

#### *Ethnicity*

Just under two-thirds (61%) of TEA's workforce is white, while 22% is Hispanic and 11% is African American. The remaining 6% of the TEA workforce represents other racial and ethnic origins.

#### *Age*

About three-quarters (76%) of TEA's workforce is over the age of 40, with 47% of the workforce over the age of 50 (see Figure 9). Many of TEA's education-related professional positions require several years of public school education experience, which is a contributing factor to the high average age of the workforce.

## *Employee Turnover*

For fiscal year 2009, TEA's turnover rate was 8%, as compared to the state's average of 14.4%. Figure 10 depicts TEA's turnover data for fiscal years 2005–2009 as compared to state employee turnover data for the same period. TEA's turnover for the past several years has consistently been below the state's turnover rate.

According to a state auditor's report, the state's average turnover rate of 14.4% for fiscal year 2009 is the lowest in five years. This report indicates several reasons that may have contributed to the state's decreasing turnover rate, such as salary increase, programs to improve retention, and the increase in statewide unemployment from 4.6% in fiscal year 2008 to 6.5% in fiscal year 2009.

### *Employee Turnover Rate: TEA vs. State*

TEA provides various incentive/retention programs to help promote longer tenure, including the pay-for-performance merit system; one-time merits; a tuition reimbursement program; employee service awards; teleworking/telecommuting; compressed work hours; alternate work schedules, and an employee assistance program. TEA's Quality Workplace Committee, made up of administrative to mid-level professional staff, responds to employee concerns regarding workplace issues or problems and recommends solutions, thus providing another mechanism for reducing employee turnover.

Finally, a new addition since the last agency strategic plan, the Wellness Program was created in September 2009 as authorized in HB 1297. A TEA policy was implemented allowing 30 minutes of physical activity three days a week to be incorporated into an employee's work schedule. This is another benefit designed not only to reduce turnover but also to improve employee productivity and morale.

## *Tenure*

About 33% of TEA's workforce has been with the agency for less than 5 years, while 22% have been employed for 5 to 9 years, and 29% have been employed from 10 to 20 years. Of the remainder, 13% of TEA's employees have worked for the agency between 20 and 30 years, and 4% have worked for the agency for over 30 years.

## *Retirement*

Approximately 35% of TEA's authorized workforce is currently or will become eligible to retire within the next five years. Although this number is comparable to the fiscal year 2008 Workforce Plan, over the last three fiscal years, the actual rate of retirement has been less than 2% each year. The low percentage of actual retirements could be attributed to several factors, such as the state of the economy and a trend showing that people are working longer. While the agency has been fortunate that fewer than the number of eligible employees have retired, should the eligible employees actually exercise their retirement option, the projected number of retirees would have a significant negative impact on TEA's ability to perform its core functions.

With the inevitable loss of knowledge and expertise, TEA must continue to develop strategies both to encourage the retention of employees eligible to retire and compensate for the anticipated loss of knowledge and expertise. Some of these strategies to retain retirement-eligible employees include merits, promotions, flexible hours, work-life balance incentives and programs, teleworking/telecommuting, changes in job duties, and special project assignments.

TEA will also use other strategies to bridge the gap and attempt to minimize the impact of retiring employees and the associated loss of critical professional knowledge, expertise, and experience, including encourage retirees to mentor or coach coworkers; attempt to capture and codify knowledge from potential retirees; create teams to share content knowledge; rotate jobs so current staff in divisions are cross-trained by potential retirees; and cross-train replacement staff in current eligible retirees' job functions. These strategies involve employing various techniques and methods such as utilizing knowledge management, training within divisions, sharing workflow processes, cross-training, and exploring succession plans.

## ***II. Future Workforce Profile (Demand Analysis)***

Given the high percentage of employees eligible to retire within the next five years and the financial constraints facing the state, TEA has begun to look at different ways of filling vacancies. TEA has developed a Vacancy Management Program. The Vacancy Management Program enables TEA to better manage FTEs by posting both "traditional" FTE positions for those ongoing, critical agency functions while also posting "term" FTE positions (with specific employment start and end dates correlated with the term-limited source of funds for the position). Vacancy Management also includes "freezing" or not posting unused or unnecessary positions until they are actually needed.

Recruiting highly skilled individuals will be very important, especially when attempting to replace knowledgeable retirees. Some of the skill sets needed will be in leadership, management, systems analysis, planning, and research fields. TEA will continue to advertise in educational and professional association publications to target applicants with the professional knowledge and expertise needed for vacant positions. TEA will focus more attention on attending educational conferences and local job fairs to recruit statisticians, researchers, data management personnel, managers, and professionals with specific knowledge and skills in various program areas.

## ***Expected Workforce Changes***

TEA should be strategic in preparing for workforce changes, which include the following possibilities:

- Decrease in number of employees due to 5% budget reduction
- An aging workforce, with almost 35% eligible to retire in the next five years
- Retirement of employees with significant historical knowledge and expertise
- Increased emphasis on the use of technology to accomplish core functions
- Increased training to bridge the gap and continuity of professional knowledge, expertise, and skill sets.

### ***Anticipated Increase/Decrease in Number of Employees Needed to Perform Core Functions***

In fiscal years 2004 and 2005, the FTE cap was 754.5. In fiscal year 2006, the cap was 797, and in fiscal year 2007 the cap was 781. The Texas Legislature increased TEA's FTE cap for fiscal year 2008 to 989.30 to assist with HB 1 mandated positions. For fiscal year 2009, the FTE cap was 997.3, and for fiscal year 2010 the FTE cap was raised to 1038.8—an increase of 41.5 FTEs.

With current budget constraints facing state agencies, a 5% or greater reduction in positions could occur. This would mean possibly reducing TEA's FTE cap to 986.86. However, if a 10% potential reduction in positions is required, TEA's FTE cap would be 934.2, which could significantly negatively impact TEA's ability to perform its core functions. The Vacancy Management Program is designed to help with any potential or mandated reductions. At the same time, TEA is cognizant that with a reduction in staff may also come a reduction or redirection in agency focus requiring different human resources. In responding to such changes, TEA may consider outsourcing or seeking additional federal or private funds or grants to fund positions to make up the potential human resource shortfall.

### ***Future Workforce Skills Needed***

To effectively accomplish its mission and goals, TEA will continue to require competent staff in the following program areas:

- Accreditation
- Assessment, Accountability, and Data Quality
- Data Analysis
- Educator and Student Policy Initiatives
- Financial Management
- Grants Administration
- Policy Planning/Research
- Standards and Programs
- State Initiatives

Further, additional critical workforce skills will include change management; strategy development, implementation and evaluation; teamwork; and communication.

### ***Gap Analysis***

Budgetary constraints and the number of potential retirements may cause TEA to experience a significant shortage of employees. A best-case scenario is only a 5% reduction in the workforce due to the state's budget challenges, resulting in a decrease of approximately 51 positions. A worst-case scenario is the 16% of eligible retirees leaving (approximately 162 positions) combined with the budget reduction, resulting in over 210 positions leaving TEA in the next year. TEA could experience a range from 51 positions to well over 450 positions leaving in the next five years. The potential of losing nearly 50% of the agency's workforce creates significant demand in the following areas:

- Educational leadership

- Program area expertise, e.g., accountability, accreditation, math, science and other curriculum content areas, etc.
- Education research and data quality and analyses
- Grants administration
- Information technology

TEA is facing a great challenge in the next five years to meet its workforce requirements.

### *Strategy Development*

To bridge the gap between the current workforce and future needs, TEA will use methods that provide the highest return on investment to attract, develop, and retain employees needed to accomplish TEA's mission. These methods include the following:

- Recruiting practices that provide TEA a qualified, diverse pool of applicants
- Employee training and development opportunities to build leadership, program-area expertise, and other skills
- Succession planning combined with training and development opportunities
- Retention practices such as challenging work, recognizing and rewarding employees, and providing work-life balance

TEA's Human Resources Division will work with the agency's executive management team to balance the diverse, challenging, and sometimes conflicting needs of the agency, the constraints of the external environment, as well as the needs of the agency's internal and external customers and stakeholders in maintaining and improving its greatest asset—its human resources.