

THE TEACHER WORKFORCE TALKING EDUCATION

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MARKETING

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PR

WORRYING NUMBERS OF GOOD, EXPERIENCED
TEACHERS ARE LEAVING ARIZONA,
AND THE PROBLEMS GO WELL BEYOND INADEQUATE
PAY. TEACHERS ALSO FEEL THAT THEY'RE NOT
VALUED OR RESPECTED BY THE COMMUNITY, THAT
THEY'RE NOT BEING TRUSTED TO DO THEIR JOBS
WITHOUT MICROMANAGEMENT, AND THAT THE TIME
COMMITMENT HAS BECOME OVERBEARING.

Fall 2015



REALITY AND PERCEPTION

The teaching profession in Arizona has plenty of real, tangible problems—the sort that teachers and school administrators have to deal with every day. They've been extensively covered in the state's media, and we will look at them in detail in the subsequent sections of this summary.

Beyond the reality problems, however, teaching in Arizona also has a perception problem. Marketers might well think of this as a brand problem. Talking of brands in the context of a great vocation such as teaching might sound a little commercial or even grubby to non-marketers, but it's actually a way of thinking that's familiar to everybody, including teachers.

This is because in the course of normal life, people have to make hundreds of thousands of choices, ranging in scale from the trivial (such as which breakfast



cereal to buy)
and the more
substantial (which
book to read next)
to the more exciting
(where to go on
vacation) and the
truly consequential
(which course to
study, which job to
take, where to live).

The content of the issues involved in each choice might be different, but the essence is the same: What's the best investment of time, energy or money?

For most of these choices, few people go to the trouble of making detailed, rational comparisons. Instead, they are guided by the combination of impressions, perceptions, images, factoids and feelings that are associated with each of their choices. In marketing terms, these combinations are the basis of brands.

Now imagine teachers looking to move to teaching jobs anywhere in the United States. They might have recently completed their training, or they might already have some experience under their belt. At some point early in their deliberations about where to move, they'll think in terms of regions (Northeast, South, West Coast, etc.). They'll make some choices based on personal preferences such as climate, natural features and distance. Then, zooming in on regions, they'll think in terms of states, checking out what they already know about teaching in various states, and what's available online.



As they flip through the states, what perception are they likely to have of teaching in Arizona, and what are they likely to find out if they go online? It's unlikely to be positive.

A quick scan of media headlines (and the stories behind them) doesn't do much for brand Teaching in Arizona, with headlines such as "Why Teachers Are



TEACHER SHORTAGE? OR TEACHER PIPELINE PROBLEM?

Arizona Daily Star

Shortage puts uncertified teachers in Arizona classrooms

'PERFECT STORM' OF POLITICAL, BUDGET FACTORS BEHIND TEACHER SHORTAGE



ARIZONA
Daily Sun

Tuba City teachers add class periods to combat teacher shortage

TEACHER SHORTAGE BEING FELT ACROSS ARIZONA

DAILYMINER

AMY MARTINECK: N.D. board thwarts teachers from other states

Grand Forks
Herald

School administrators scrambling again to hire teachers...



Arizona school admins scrambling, again, to hire teachers



90.9wbur

Wanted: New American Teachers

SCHOOLGUIDE

KANSAS EDUCATION JOB OPENINGS REPORTEDLY DOUBLE THIS YEAR ...



ARIZONA TEACHER SHORTAGE PERSISTS AS SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS

Chalkbeat
TENNESSEE

Why is there no teacher shortage in New York City?

“State policymakers want to hire ‘effective teachers,’ but they don’t want to pay a middle-class wage.”

—Diane Ravitch’s blog, July 25, 2015

“Schools in Maricopa reflect the state’s difficulty in recruiting and keeping quality teachers. 2013 data still used in every study puts the big red mark on Arizona ranking 47th in the country for grades and per-student spending. Last year, Arizona ranked 44th in starting salaries for teachers. ... [P]otential educators get the impression Arizona does not care about education or children.”

—In Maricopa, Aug. 7, 2015

“Teachers say low pay, long workdays, a lack of professional respect and opportunities elsewhere are luring them away from a field they love. ... [S]aid Cecilia Johnson, a state Education Department executive: ‘We do believe we are in a crisis.’”

—Arizona Daily Star, Aug. 1, 2015

“Arizona officials say there are at least 1,000 vacant teacher positions to fill, with just weeks left until the school year starts around the state. It’s not the first time school districts have found themselves scrambling to hire teachers in Arizona.”

—Kingman Daily Miner, July 29, 2015

Fleeing Arizona in Drones” in *The Washington Post* and “Recession, Politics and Policy Stretch Arizona School Budgets” in *The New York Times*. Wallet Hub’s deep-dive “2015’s Best and Worst States for Teachers” is referenced all over the Internet, and not in a good way for the state, such as “Arizona, the 49th Best State for Teachers” on azcentral. A feature on KPHO is headlined “AZ Teacher Exodus Leaves More Than 1K Valley Classrooms Vacant.”

Potential candidates might decide that, rather than taking the media’s word, they should check out what fellow professionals have to say on a site such as Pro Teacher Community. They would find comments such as these: “Yes, it’s happening. Funding has been an issue but there are many other reasons. Teachers are being micromanaged to death! Overcrowding, students out of control, parents out of control and teachers being blamed for EVERYTHING!!” and “I’m in Arizona and it is true. The district I work in has MANY positions open with school starting in a month.”



Faced with this sort of brand reputation, only teachers from outside the state who are really keen on Arizona would put the state on their shortlist. As for teachers already working in the state, they are all too aware of the realities that underlie the brand reputation. And seeing the higher ratings of most other states, they might well decide to follow the lead of others: out, and up.

But what are the realities underlying the poor reputation of teaching in Arizona?

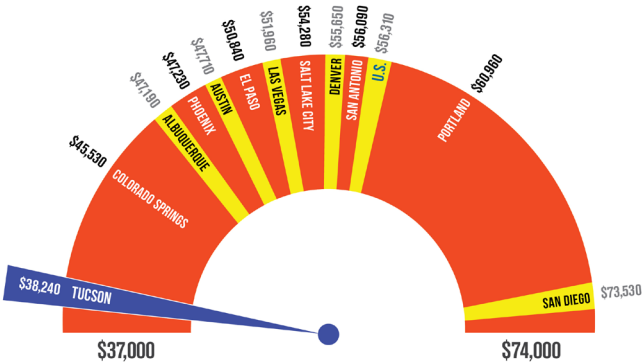
VALUE

For many people who go into the profession, it's a vocation, like nursing—something they feel called to do. It's generally expected that people who opt for vocational work get job satisfaction as an important part of the “compensation package.” They don't expect to get rich teaching, or even to earn a whole lot of money. Even so, there's a big difference between not getting rich and getting poorly paid. In Arizona, by national standards, teachers are poorly paid. The national median annual wage for secondary school teachers in 2014, according to MAP AZ Dashboard, was \$56,310. In Phoenix it was \$9,000 a year less (\$47,230), and in Tucson it was \$18,000 a year less (\$38,240).

In other words, secondary school teachers in Phoenix were getting paid 16 percent below the national median, and those in Tucson were getting paid 32 percent less.

It's not just teacher earnings. School budgets in Arizona have been squeezed. Between 2008 and 2015, inflation-adjusted state spending per student was

Median Annual Wage for Secondary School Teachers



Source: MAP AZ Dashboard



Professions Respected More or Less Than Teachers

(Rated by Arizona Teachers)

Total Arizona Sample Profession/Job	Rating		Southern Arizona Sample Profession/Job	Rating
Medical doctor	4.8		Medical doctor	4.8
Judge	4.5		Judge	4.6
Professional engineer	4.3		Professional engineer	4.4
College professor	4.2		Architect	4.2
Military professional	4.2		College professor	4.2
Architect	4.1		Military professional	4.2
Medical nurse	4.1		Medical nurse	4.1
Police officer or firefighter	4.1	Respected More Than Teachers	Police officer or firefighter	4.1
Actor	4.0		Actor	4.0
Law enforcement officer	3.9		Law enforcement officer	3.9
Accountant	3.7		Accountant	3.7
Industrial designer	3.6		Banker	3.6
Business manager	3.6		Industrial designer	3.6
Banker	3.5		Business manager	3.6
Small-business owner	3.5		Small-business owner	3.5
Building contractor	3.3		Building contractor	3.3
Federal government employee	3.2		Federal government employee	3.3
Chef	3.0		Professional translator	3.2
Local government employee	3.0		Local government employee	3.1
Real estate salesperson	3.0		Chef	3.0
Professional translator	3.0		Community organizer	3.0
Office administrator	2.9		Office administrator	3.0
Community organizer	2.8	On Par with Teachers	Real estate salesperson	3.0
Corrections officer	2.8		Corrections officer	2.9
Personal trainer	2.6		Personal trainer	2.7
Travel/tourism agent	2.4		Travel/tourism agent	2.5
Childcare worker	2.1		Childcare worker	2.2
Stay-at-home parent	2.0		Stay-at-home parent	2.0
Vehicle driver	1.7	Respected Less Than Teachers	Vehicle driver	1.8
Retail sales clerk	1.7		Retail sales clerk	1.8

Source: Tucson Values Teachers survey

cut by 47 percent in Arizona. That made it the most-cut state in the union, rivaled mainly by Louisiana (down 42 percent) and South Carolina (down 37.9 percent). Partly thanks to those hefty cuts in the public education budget, Arizona now has the lowest per-student spending of any state in the union.

For any teacher with the interest and intelligence to check out the numbers, it's clear that Arizona values public education and public school teachers less than other states do..

The bottom line: Teachers in Arizona feel the public doesn't value them.

RESPECT

Part of teaching is having specialist knowledge and being able to help students acquire that knowledge. Teachers have to be smart, and they have to be able to deal with a lot of children every day. Those are already grounds for the respect that teachers are supposed to enjoy, at least in theory. What's more, in Arizona, they have to be smart enough to obtain certification with Arizona Educator Proficiency

Assessments or National Evaluation Series.

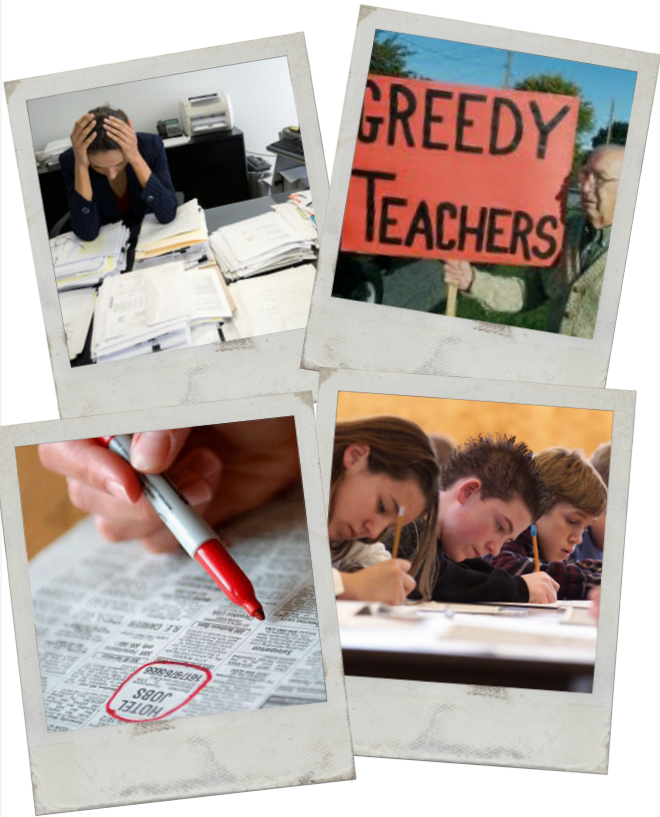
In Arizona, however, teachers don't feel respected. They face negative comments from lawmakers and politicians, declining respect from students and declining respect from the community.

In the Tucson Values Teachers (TVT) survey of 6,163 teachers in Arizona earlier this year, teachers were asked to rate 30 professions and occupations in terms of whether they were respected more or less than teachers. Teachers reckoned they were respected less than virtually all the job types listed; only vehicle driver and retail sales clerk scored significantly lower.

The bottom line: Teachers in Arizona feel the public doesn't respect them.

TRUST

By its nature, teaching involves putting a great deal of trust in teachers. They're full-grown adults spending many hours a week alone with groups of children.



Can Arizona's Teachers Get Satisfaction?

48%

SATISFIED
with teaching

Among those, 49% cited
"Respect I get from others"
as important

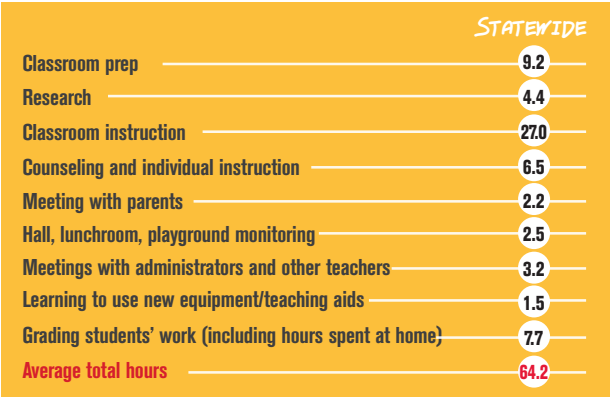
11%

NOT SATISFIED
with teaching

Among those, 56% cited
"Respect I get from others"
as important

Source: Tucson Values Teachers survey

Estimation of Hours Spent on Teacher Tasks



Source: Tucson Values Teachers survey

At the most basic, they're trusted to ensure the physical safety and mental well-being of their students. And, of course, they're trusted to educate their students, to provide them with knowledge and skills.

In many parts of the country, however, and especially in Arizona, teachers feel that they're not trusted to do the job. Rules change about what they can and can't do, what they must and mustn't do. New tests and measurements have been introduced to monitor their performance more closely. And they're subjected to increased levels of micromanagement by higher-ups in the school who themselves are feeling the pressure.

The bottom line: Teachers in Arizona feel they're not trusted to get on with the job as responsible professionals.

TIME

One of the supposed upsides of teaching is shorter working days and long school holidays. In a nation that prides itself on working long hours and taking just a week or two of annual leave, these are unusual upsides. They're



also misconceptions. Teaching in class is just part of the working day, which doesn't finish when classes do.

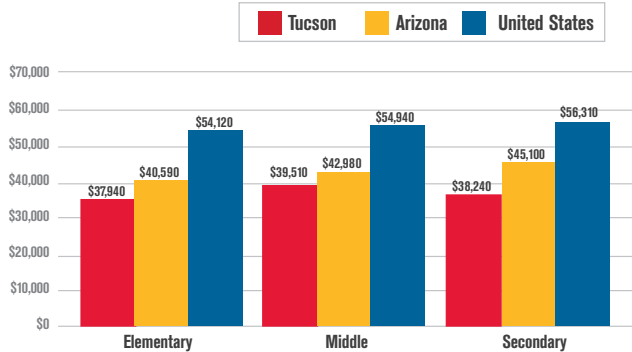
The job involves a whole lot of duties apart from classroom teaching, starting with counseling and instructing individual students. There's preparing the lessons and grading students' work. There's supervising students in break time and extracurricular activities. There are meetings with parents and school administrators. All in all, teachers in Arizona have a working week of more than 60 hours, of which just 40 percent or so is spent teaching in class. Add to that the commute, because on a teacher's salary, they're not always able to afford housing near their school.

As for those long vacations, aside from taking time to prepare for the next school year, many teachers seek out other paid work to supplement their income.

The bottom line: Teachers in Arizona don't have a whole lot of free time at their disposal to compensate for the sacrifices they have to make to do the job.

Arizona Wages Compared with the Nation

Median Wage for Teachers (except special education)



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Occupational Employment Statistics (OES)



MONEY

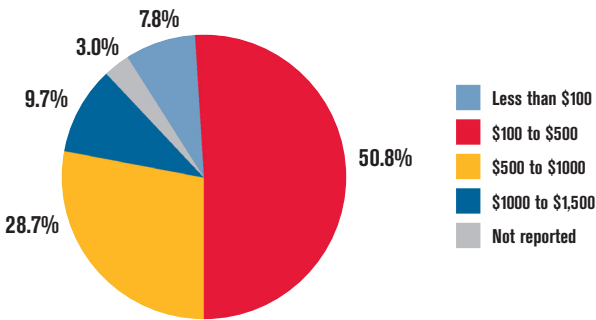
Nobody expects teachers to earn megabucks, but what should they earn? They just want paychecks equal to those of other educated and experienced professionals. In a community survey of 422 people living in the Tucson area, TVT asked which of around 30 jobs should be paid more than teachers and which less. Netting out their responses put teachers a little below the middle of the rankings, just below bankers.

In the TVT survey of teachers across the state, respondents were asked to estimate how much they earned in comparison with their neighbors who also work full time. Most (77 percent) thought they were paid less. An even higher proportion (92 percent) thought the low pay was an important reason for why teachers are leaving the profession.

Clearly, money is an issue for teachers in Arizona. Yet because school budgets are squeezed, almost all of the teachers surveyed (92 percent) incurred unreimbursed expenses to provide for their students.

The bottom line: Teachers' pay and the costs they incur just don't square.

Percentage of Annual Unreimbursed Expenses



Average Unreimbursed Expenditure (Annual)

Total Average Amount

ARIZONA

\$480

SOUTHERN
ARIZONA

\$397

Source: Tucson Values Teachers survey



IN CONCLUSION

From a hard-nosed, rational perspective, teaching in Arizona as it stands is not a particularly appealing proposition. In marketing terms, it's a niche brand with declining appeal leading to unfilled vacancies. Beyond the natural cycle of teachers retiring, worrying numbers of good, experienced teachers are leaving the state and/or the profession¹. Anecdotal and data-driven evidence suggest that recent graduates with great potential as teachers often are not joining the profession in the first place or are treating Arizona as a starter job to cut their teeth on.

In the current conditions, why would someone work as a teacher in Arizona? The answer is simple: because of the students.

Teachers know the positive impact they have on students, and therefore the future of all of us. If it weren't for the dedicated teachers who stay despite Arizona's many challenges, the state would have far fewer teachers.

¹ "Educator Retention and Recruitment Report," Arizona Department of Education, January 2015

METHODOLOGY

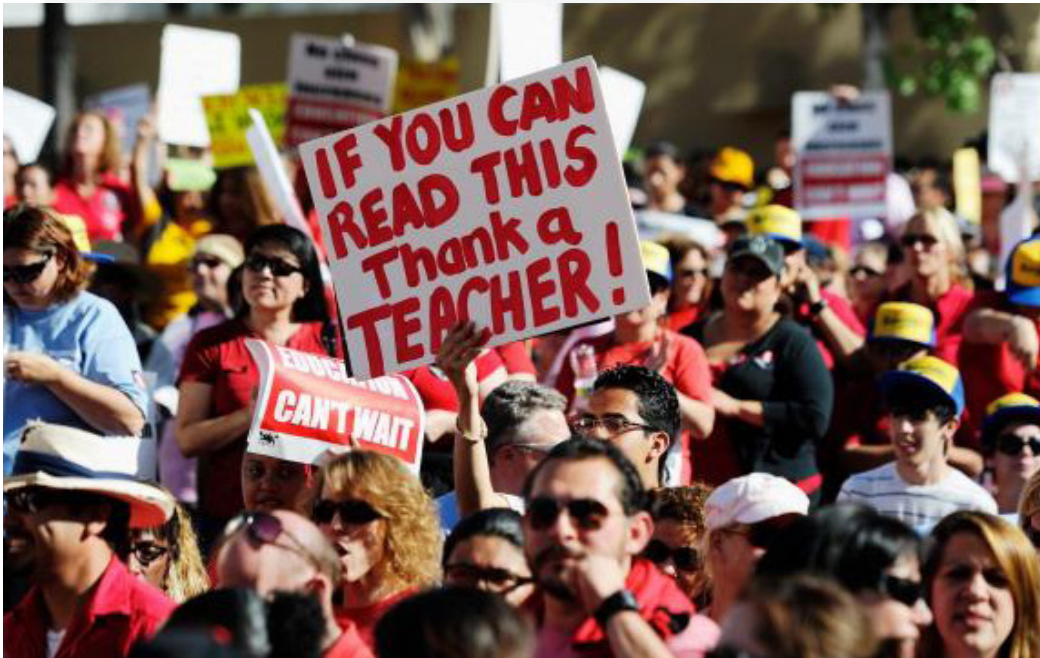
This report analyzes information from an omnibus study of Arizona teachers conducted in April 2015 by Strongpoint Marketing. Some 6,163 teachers answered an online survey developed by Tucson Values Teachers. This survey was sent to more than 55,000 teachers across the state, meaning the overall response rate was more than 11 percent. The questionnaire asked a broad range of questions focusing on how teachers view their profession, the amount of time they spend at their work, how they relate to

neighbors and the parents of their students, and other important issues.

A corresponding online survey of southern Arizona residents was fielded during the same period. The purpose of this study was to provide a comparison between teachers' opinions about how their community views them and how residents actually view them. A total of 422 adult residents responded to the questionnaire during May 2015. Residents were asked about their perceptions of

teachers and education in southern Arizona and (if they have children attending area schools) their evaluation of southern Arizona schools.

Many of the questions that appeared in both questionnaires asked respondents to rate or score their responses on a 0-to-5 scale. This scale is used because it eliminates a midpoint response and allows evaluation of ratings along a numeric continuum, thereby providing more information than "soft" descriptive ratings might.



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