



# TEACHER SHORTAGES IN HAWAII

## LEARNING GOALS

- To practice drawing connections between local challenges and global contexts and best practices.
- To understand the factors shaping teachers' respective experiences and satisfactions with their careers.
- To think critically about how the state of Hawaii can effectively address its problem of teacher shortages.

## ASSIGNMENT

Estimated Time: ~12 min

- Watch: ["Teaching in the US vs. the rest of the world"](#) (~ 5 min.)
- Read: ["Why Hawaii Isn't Competitive In Recruiting Teachers"](#) (~7 min.)

## TERMINOLOGY

- **Teacher shortages** - refers to the steady decline of teachers in the U.S., relative to the increasing student population in public schools.
- **Teaching hours** - the length of time instructors spend teaching per day. Teaching hours do not include the time spent grading papers, planning lessons, and performing other job-related responsibilities.
- **Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** - Consists of wealthy countries such as the U.S., the United Kingdom, Japan, and Israel. Countries in the OECD serve as a good basis for comparison for one another's policies and education systems.
- **Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)** - an international exam which tests fifteen-year old students' abilities in reading, science, and math. PISA scores can be used as an indicator of the success of countries' educational systems.

## KAHOOT QUIZ

- Go to [Kahoot.it](https://kahoot.it) or use the Kahoot mobile app and enter the pin 01612795
- Or, use [this link](#)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are some of the key reasons why Hawaii has a hard time recruiting and retaining teachers?
- What are some key differences between teachers' experiences in the US versus other countries, such as Finland? Why might these differences explain the high teacher turnover rate in the US?
- Why do you think teaching hours play such an important role in teachers' satisfaction with their jobs?
- Why might countries mandating fewer teaching hours than the U.S. still have similar national scores on standardized tests?



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## IDEAS FOR ACTION

### Easier

- Educate yourself: have a discussion with your teachers, starting with the following questions.
  - On the whole, do your teachers feel valued/feel that their work is fulfilling? Why or why not?
  - What is the most challenging part of their job, and what small changes could be made to make their jobs easier?
  - What school-related responsibilities (advising clubs, lesson planning, etc.) do teachers have beyond teaching? Of these responsibilities, which are the most time-consuming?
- Work with your classmates to find small, creative ways to make your teachers feel appreciated on a daily basis.

### Medium

- Spread awareness: give a class presentation or make a video on educators' experiences teaching in Hawaii. If possible, find a teacher who has taught in another state prior to teaching in Hawaii, and ask them to compare their experiences.
- Research more about teachers' struggles with Hawaii's education system, and write to your school board or city council on what you think should be done to better support teachers.

### Hard

- Policy advocacy: research bills in the city council and state legislature regarding adjustments for teachers' salaries or funding for public schools. Write testimony for the bills which you believe are most important for improving teacher retention rates in Hawaii.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Watch: "[Finland's Education System](#)" (6:17)  
An interview with teacher and author Tim Walker about what makes Finland's education the best in the world.
- [How Singapore Developed a High-Quality Teacher Workforce](#)  
A brief article on the strategies Singapore has employed to develop the teacher workforce they need.

## HAWAII CORE STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES (HCSSS) LINKS

- Content Standard [SS.WH.8.12.1](#)
- Content Standard [SS.US.12.8.1](#)
- Action Projects link to [SS.PID.5.7.1](#)

This lesson was created by Megan Tagami.