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Submitted via Regulations.gov

Ross Santy
Chief Data Officer, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development
U.S Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave SW
Washington, DC 20202

Re: Docket Number ED-2026-SCC-0463; Targeted Teacher Shortage Areas Data Collection

Dear Mr. Santy:

On behalf of the approximately 3 million members of the National Education Association (NEA), we submit the following response to the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) information collection on the Targeted Teacher Shortage Areas data collection, published in the Federal Register on March 30, 2026. **We strongly support the reinstatement of the Targeted Teacher Shortage Areas (TSA) data collection and encourage the Department to strengthen both the administration and public reporting of these data.**

Necessity of the Collection

The TSA collection is necessary for the proper function of the Department. Most directly, TSA data determine eligibility for the TEACH Grant program, which provides critical financial support to individuals preparing to teach in shortage fields. As noted in the Federal Register notice, the data also support administration of additional federal student aid and loan forgiveness provisions tied to teacher shortages.

Beyond these statutory and programmatic purposes, the TSA collection serves an important national data function. IT is one of the only regular federal data collections specifically focused on teacher shortages across states, subjects, and grade levels. Although other federal efforts, such as the School Pulse Panel, have periodically included educator staffing questions, those efforts do not provide a consistent or comprehensive substitute for the TSA collection. Continued collection of these data is therefore essential for understanding educator workforce needs nationwide.

Because the TEACH Grant program is a non-needs-based grant program, the TSA data collection also serves a critical role in recruitment. The program helps prospective educators finance preparation programs while including a service obligation that directs educators into high-need

schools and shortage fields. Reinstating and maintaining this collection supports both educator preparation and broader efforts to address persistent staffing shortages.

Timely Processing and Use of Information

NEA encourages the Department to ensure that sufficient staffing and vendor support are available to process and publish TSA data in a timely manner. The usefulness of these data depends heavily on current information being available to states, institutions of higher education, and prospective educators before academic planning, recruitment, and hiring decisions are made. Maintaining the operational capacity necessary to administer the collection efficiently should remain a priority.

Enhancing the Quality, Utility, and Clarity of the Information Collected

NEA strongly encourages the Department to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected by publishing more detailed teacher shortage data. Currently, the public-facing TSA lists primarily identify shortage areas by subject and grade span within each state. However, publicly available state submissions suggest that substantially richer information is collected, including information about the extent or severity of shortages.

Given the lack of other comprehensive national teacher shortage datasets, publication of more detailed information would provide significant value to policymakers, researchers, educator preparation programs, state agencies, school districts, and prospective educators. More granular data could support educator workforce planning, vacancy forecasting, and targeted recruitment strategies. It could also help guide aspiring educators towards high-demand and hard-to-staff subject areas where they are most needed.

Conclusion

NEA appreciates the Department's consideration of these comments and strongly supports reinstatement of the Targeted Teacher Shortage Areas data collection. Please do not hesitate to contact me at SPelika@nea.org should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Stacey Pelika, Ph.D.
Director of Research
Education Policy and Implementation Center
National Education Association