



**Opening Statement of Rep. Aaron Bean (R-FL), Chairman
Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education
Hearing: “Innovative Teacher Preparation: Properly Equipping America’s
Educators”**

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(As prepared for delivery)

Have you ever been in your car when you get an alert notifying you something is wrong? Let’s face it. There is no such thing as a good time for a warning light to signal a problem. Having your morning commute interrupted by a mechanical failure is an inconvenience at best and a downright emergency at worst. But the warning lights are there to help signal that action should be taken.

I like to consider myself to be a very optimistic person, but I will say this: When it comes to our K-12 education system, we are facing a giant “WARNING!”

America’s teacher preparation pipeline is struggling.

And I’ll be blunt: the numbers are alarming. Eighty-six percent of public schools reported difficulties in hiring teachers for the 2023-2024 school year. Between 2020 and 2022, 16 percent of teachers left their schools. Teachers are feeling disheartened, and only 20 percent say they are very satisfied with their jobs. Just 16 percent would recommend the profession to others. With that said, it should be very apparent that these aren’t just statistics—they’re a flashing red light on the dashboard of our education system.

Part of the solution is more affordable, accessible pathways into the classroom. Traditional teacher preparation programs can take four to five years to complete and come with a sticker price of up to \$100,000. These costs are simply too high for many prospective teachers. The upfront investment is enough to send teachers running for the exits before they even start.

That's why alternative certification programs are gaining traction as a more efficient, cost-effective way to get talented individuals into the classroom. Between 2018 and 2021, enrollment in alternative programs increased by 20 percent. These programs offer a faster path to certification for individuals who already have expertise in other fields.

But it's not just about getting teachers into the classroom—it's about keeping them there. The reality is that too many teachers leave the profession because they don't feel supported and valued. We need to rethink the way we structure the teaching profession. Innovative programs like Arizona State University's (ASU) Next Education Workforce are doing just that. By reimagining the traditional model of one teacher, one classroom, new approaches can provide teachers and students room to flourish.

For example, third graders in ASU's team-based teaching schools experience an extra 1.4 months of reading growth each year, and Algebra I students pass at rates four to seven percentage points higher than their peers in traditional classrooms. Teacher turnover and satisfaction also greatly improve. These results show that we can't treat teachers like revolving doors and still expect our schools to thrive.

Other colleges such as Appalachian State have developed similar models. We must continue to press harder and expand these ideas further. It's time to think boldly and spotlight changes that will not only bring more people into the teaching profession but will also ensure that they want to stay there.