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Compass Rose Public Schools
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Hello! My name is David Schlenker and I am the Director of Talent at Compass Rose Public Schools. I have been in education for over a decade, working in schools across the United States and 3 different countries. What I notice in our community / is that after years of people coming to Texas for opportunities - Texas is now at risk of losing its talent to other states.

When the pandemic hit, we lost 43% of our teacher workforce and 36% of total LatinX and Black workforce. Since then, educators continue to leave for a variety of reasons which my colleague will speak to but I would like to spend my time identifying / what has worked to keep our talent in Texas / and what we recommend to keep our teachers from continuing to move to other states.

Despite challenges, we have found creative and innovative ways to build partnerships to rebuild the teacher pipeline. Compass Rose collaborates across K-12, higher education, and nonprofit partners to share opportunities, align teacher preparation to job persistence, and collectively redefine what it means to be a teacher in Texas and who we reach out to for these roles.

But if there's anything we've learned from our partnerships, it's that there are two actions the state can take to retain and hire great educators:

1. Continue funding for district sponsorship of Educator Preparation Programs. At Compass Rose, we have a teacher residency program where educators gain classroom experience co-teaching while earning their teacher certification and Masters Degree. Increased AND continued TCLAS 5 funding allows us to continue Growing our Talent through growing our talent from within.
2. The second factor that could keep our talent local is increasing teacher salaries. Compass Rose has been recognized as a certified Great Place to Work for years, but the greatest drop in our employee satisfaction revolves around the question, "I feel like I am paid fairly," plummeting from 76% to 41% of employees agreeing to this question. The salary scales slightly changed, but the world around us, including cost of living, opportunities for educators to work outside the traditional classroom, salaries across comparable industries, etc. has changed at a higher rate. Our allocated funding for teacher salaries must change so that schools in Texas can remain competitive in comparison to other states' education systems.

If there is anything you take away from this testimony, it is that we do not want Texas to lose our talent to other states as I believe in the potential that lies within, but without change, we will continue to lose our workforce in the coming years. Thank you.