

## Attracting and Retaining Talented Teachers: The Role of Salaries and Pensions

**Faculty Member:** [Barbara Biasi](#)

### Proposal Description:

Teachers are the most important input in the “production function” of student learning. Having an effective teacher has large and long-lasting effect on students, which persist through adulthood. Attracting and retaining talented teachers to the profession is, therefore, key for the success of an education system, yet we know very little on how different policy levers (pay schemes, pensions, tenure ) affect the composition of the teaching workforce. In this project we will work to shed light on this by studying a large reform of the labor market for teachers in Wisconsin. The reform shifted salaries in some school districts (but not others) toward merit pay, changed the way teacher pensions are financed, and modified the rules regulating teacher unions. Specifically, we will study how this reform changed the composition of college graduates who choose to become teachers, their turnover rate, as well as the exit behavior of older teachers who are eligible for retirement. To do so we will use administrative data on the universe of Wisconsin teachers and students, and combine it with information on how the reform was implemented within each individual school district.

### Requisite Skills and Qualifications:

The project involves many different components and requires a diverse set of skills. We will need help collecting data on district-specific policies from newspapers, administrative documents, and other less conventional sources; this information will be used to compile a novel data set. In addition, we seek assistance in analyzing both newly-collected and existing administrative data on teachers and students. The ideal candidate should be comfortable to handle these tasks familiar with Stata (proficiency is a plus) and be able to summarize key variables, build graphs to visualize interesting patterns, and perform basic statistical analyses. Applicants should send a CV and a full transcript.

**Award:** Calvin Jahnke

**Tobin Application Link:** [Tobin Application](#)

**Project Type:** Tobin RA

**Project Year:** 2018

**Term:** Spring 2019

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