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Innovative staffing model tackles the teacher shortage

Odessa, TX – Third Future Schools is tackling the teacher shortage with an innovative staffing model. As a result, all six TFS schools are fully staffed, and any new vacancy is immediately filled with a qualified “Teacher Apprentice.”

While competitive salaries play a role in strong recruitment (the average TFS teacher salary is \$74,000), the biggest draw going forward may be the steps TFS is taking to improve work-life balance.

“We believe the workforce is changing and that teachers will increasingly demand better work-life balance. If we want to be competitive as a profession, then we cannot expect teachers to work ten to twelve-hour days,” said Mike Miles, CEO of Third Future Schools.

Accordingly, TFS has redefined the teacher role, they have eliminated many traditional teacher tasks and created positions to support teachers. At a TFS school, lesson plans and visual presentations are created by curriculum experts and provided to the teacher. Support personnel – called Learning Coaches – take copies of assignments and activities to the copy center and return them to the classroom. Learning Coaches also grade papers.

Teachers only grade “demonstrations of learning” during class; they do not grade papers outside of class. Learning Coaches monitor students at lunch and during most of the day. Teachers have only one hour of duty each week, and Miles expects TFS to eliminate even that amount of duty next year.

So far, the staffing model seems to be working out as planned: when a teacher leaves at 4:15 p.m., they are done for the day – no lessons to plan, no papers to grade, no documents to copy, and no parent phone calls to make.

Other innovative staffing initiatives solidify TFS leadership in this area and are being considered by other schools and districts:

- **Teacher Apprentice position:** all TFS schools have recruited teacher apprentices who are inexperienced, but highly motivated. Teacher apprentices start at \$60,000 annually and support teachers in the classroom, while they are learning the instructional model and improving their ability to deliver high-quality instruction. Should a vacancy arise, the



teacher apprentice steps right in, and students do not experience any loss of instructional time or quality.

- **The TFS Teacher Corps:** The Teacher Corps program is aimed at recruiting either beginning or experienced teachers who are willing to relocate to Odessa or Midland to teach at Ector College Prep Middle School or Sam Houston Elementary School. Teachers in the Corps receive a starting salary of \$75,000 and a \$10,000 signing bonus. Teachers who are selected for the Teacher Corps must commit to teach for one full year. At the end of the school year, if a teacher receives a proficient evaluation, they can transfer to any school in the Third Future network, where there is a vacancy. Third Future has three schools in Texas and three in Colorado.

To learn more about the TFS staffing model, visit <https://www.thirdfuture.org/teacher-corps>.

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About Third Future Schools

Third Future Schools (TFS) is an award-winning network of free public charter schools. TFS serves over 4,000 students between six schools, across Colorado and Texas. Founded in 2016, TFS is dedicated to preparing students for the 2035 workplace by providing high quality instruction in a caring culture that has high expectations. The main instructional delivery model is personalized learning provided by highly effective teachers. TFS closes the achievement gap and allows every student to reach their full potential.

Learn more about Third Future Schools by visiting <https://www.thirdfuture.org/>