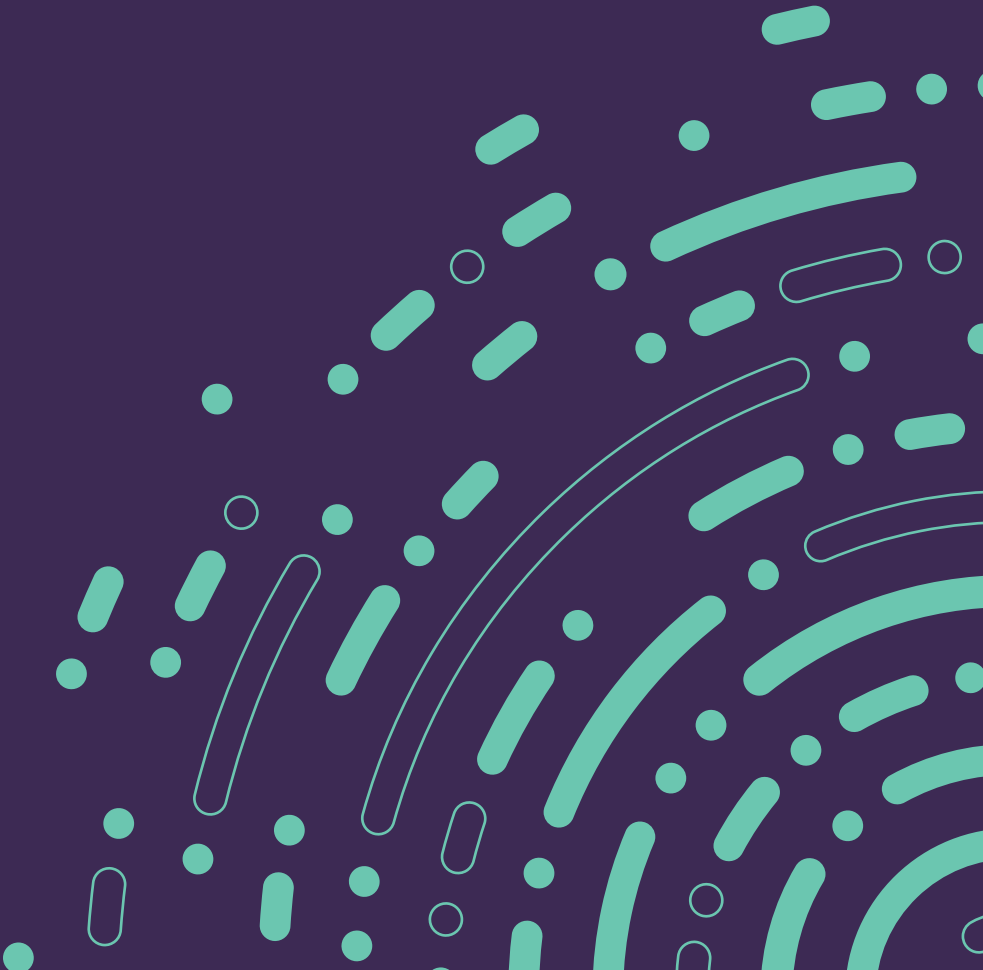




# The Longitudinal Recruiting and Hiring Landscape for Non-Instructional Education Employees

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## ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The Frontline Research and Learning Institute is dedicated to providing data-driven research, resources and observations to support and advance the educational community. As K-12 navigates the labor shortage, comprehensive and the most up-to-date data will equip school leaders with knowledge and actionable insights to make informed decisions in attracting quality staff and ensuring that open positions are being filled in a timely manner.



*This research brief, focused on non-instructional staff, is the first in a two-part series highlighting the story data tells in reference to staff shortages. The subsequent research brief will focus on instructional roles.*

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Key Findings

*The K-12 non-instructional staff shortage is more heavily weighted towards a supply issue (not enough candidates) rather than a demand issue (a large number of current employees leaving the position).*

*While the gap between supply and demand is increasing, the pace in which some positions are being filled is also increasing suggesting that districts are prioritizing hiring more than in previous years.*

It is well understood that many industries have recently experienced changes in their job market patterns and practices. While there has been much written about the impact of a teacher shortage, the Frontline Research and Learning Institute explored the recruiting and hiring landscape related to the lesser-studied roles required to ensure successful K-12 organizations. This report analyzes hiring data for non-instructional education positions from January 2019 through June 2022. Although trends consistent with national narratives regarding recruiting struggles for teachers and other industries were identified, some metrics are trending in a positive direction.

Following a basic supply and demand economic model, the analysis investigates the quantity of candidates applying for jobs (supply) as well as the availability of open positions (demand). Trends indicate both sides of the equation are contributing to a labor shortage, however the decline in candidates is more pronounced than the increase in available jobs. The conclusion being that the resulting shortage is primarily a result of fewer individuals looking to fill positions. Unexpectedly, data also shows that, while the number of applications per non-instructional opening are currently at the lowest point of the study period, the three-year trend illustrates that filled positions are being hired increasingly faster.

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## DATA SAMPLE

Data from 1,160 public school districts across 48 states within the United States was used for this report. Each district has been an active user of [Frontline Recruiting & Hiring](#) for the entire duration of the study's time frame.

- Districts include a mix of [locales](#), as defined by the National Center for Education Statistics, and is [representative](#) of the population of public school districts in the United States as determined by the Johns Hopkins Center for Research and Reform in Education.
- The data was generated from over three million applications for over 271,000 job postings created between January 1, 2019, and June 30, 2022.
- The job postings are categorized as one of the following: facilities, food services, office support and other administrative roles, outside of school activity programs, security/safety, substitutes, teacher's assistant/aide, technology services, transportation services, and tutoring.

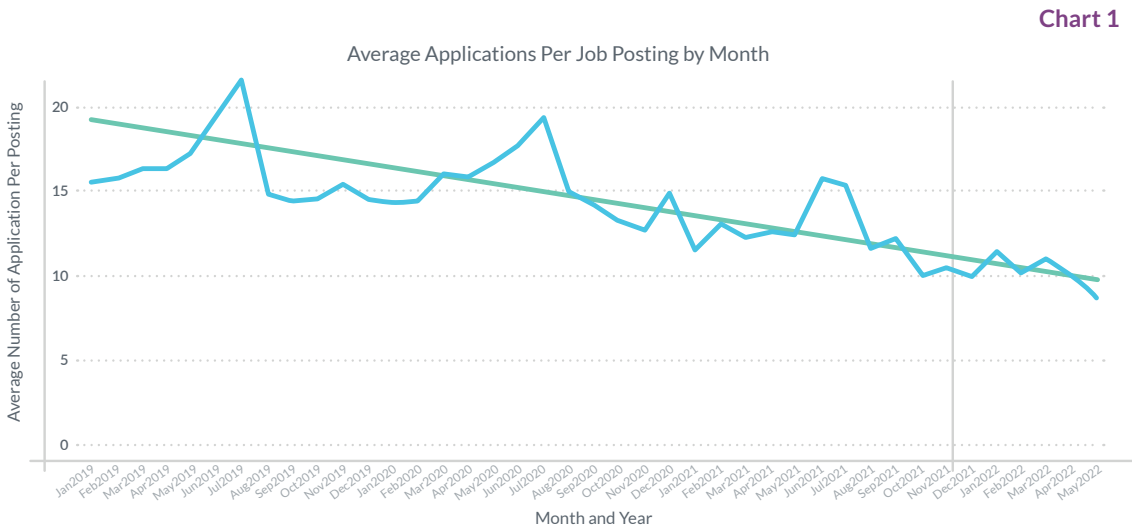
# WORKER SUPPLY METRIC:

## Job Applications

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the [workforce participation rate](#), or the number of people working or actively looking for work as a percentage of the population, has yet to recover to pre-Covid levels. This, along with other economic, health, and personal factors may be causing a decrease in the number of applications being submitted for non-instructional jobs.



**Chart 1**, below, shows the average number of applications per district per job posting over a 3-year period.



Pre-Covid, a job posting for a non-instructional staff position was receiving 18.1 applications, on average. Post-Covid, that number has decreased to consistently be less than 12 in late 2021 and 2022. Additionally, in 2019, 2020, and 2021, there was a spike in the average number of applications per posting in the late spring and early summer months. This trend does not yet appear to be occurring for 2022. In May of 2019 and 2020, the average job posting received about 18 applications. In comparison, jobs posted in May 2022 only saw an average of 10 applications - a 44% decrease from pre-Covid levels.

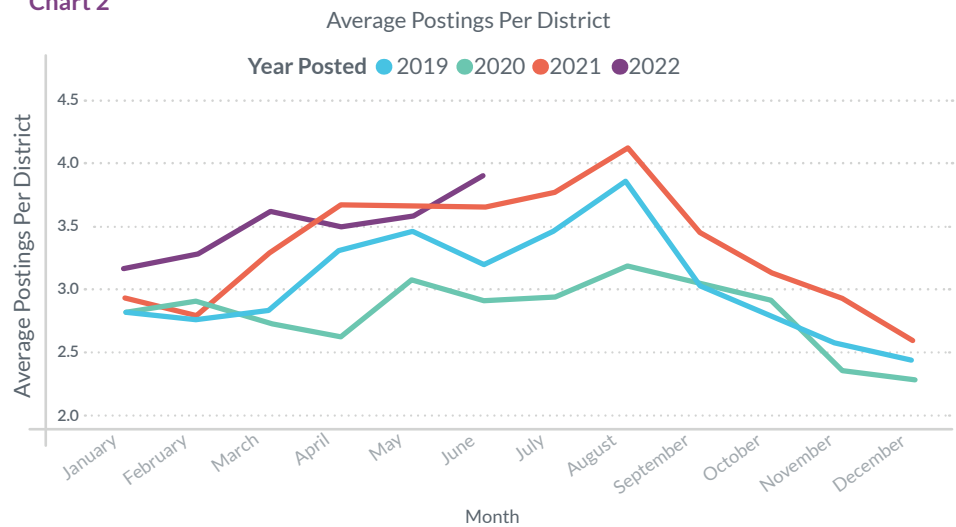
**Key Take Away** – The number of applications per non-instructional job posting has continued to decrease over the past three years. This supply side decrease is the major contributing factor to the non-instructional staff shortage

*Key Take Away – While there has been an increase in non-instructional position job postings, it has been modest. This demand-side increase is resulting in a lesser impact to the non-instructional staff shortage.*

## EMPLOYER DEMAND METRIC: Job Postings

Signs of a labor shortage for non-instructional staff may be evident in **Chart 2** below, which shows the average number of new job postings per district per month. The number of job postings for non-instructional staff per district was higher in 2021 than in 2019 or 2020 in eleven out of twelve months. Further, the average number of job postings per district increased by 0.5 per month, or 18%, from January through March of 2022 than during those same months in previous years.

Chart 2



If the labor shortage were caused by a mass exodus of non-instructional staff members via retirement or resignation, we would expect to see an increase in job postings to back fill those positions. There is some evidence of this, as the average district was posting more jobs for these positions in 2021 and 2022 than they did in previous years, resulting in moderate increases.

## FOCUSING IN ON TRANSPORTATION

### Services:

During the summer and fall of 2021, many districts nationally were experiencing labor shortages specifically related to bus drivers. The U.S. Department of Education was forced to step in and take action to address the situation. Hiring for these types of positions typically peaks in the summer months. **Table 1** shows the average number of job postings for transportation services jobs per district in our sample over the past three summers. The pandemic appears to have caused a drop in the frequency of transportation job postings as seen when comparing 2020 to 2019. This drop is countered in 2021 where a large jump in the amount of postings per district occurred.



Table 1

Average Postings Per District for Transportation Service Jobs		
Year	% Change from 2019	% Change from 2020
2020	-11.4%	-
2021	8.6%	22.6%

\*Only includes jobs posted in May - September of each year

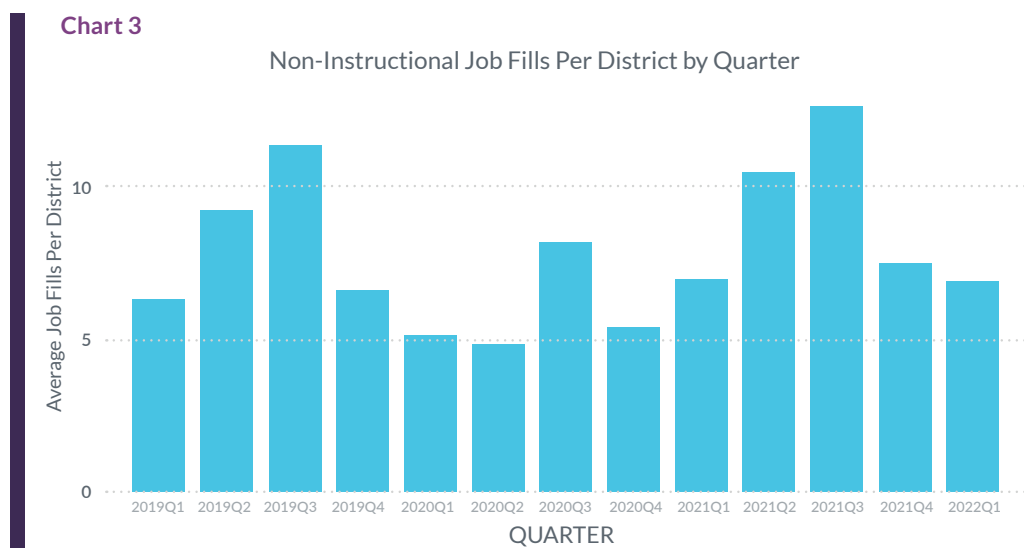
*Key Take Away – Despite a widening gap between the supply and demand side of a non-instructional staff shortage, K-12 organizations continue to fill jobs and the time to fill open positions has steadily decreased since before the pandemic.*

## THE OUTCOME.

### Jobs Filled

As established above, there is some evidence of an increase in the number of job postings for non-instructional staff over the past year or two. Additionally, there has been a decrease in the average number of applications being submitted to those job postings. These facts raise the question, are the increased number of open jobs being filled, despite fewer candidates?

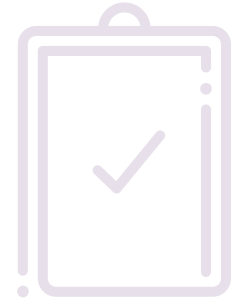
**Chart 3**, below, shows the average number of non-instructional jobs fills per district by quarter.



Even with more job postings than usual and an uncharacteristically low supply of applications, district leaders were still able to fill a large number of jobs each quarter. The third quarter of 2021 brought the highest number of job fills per district out of every quarter since 2019.

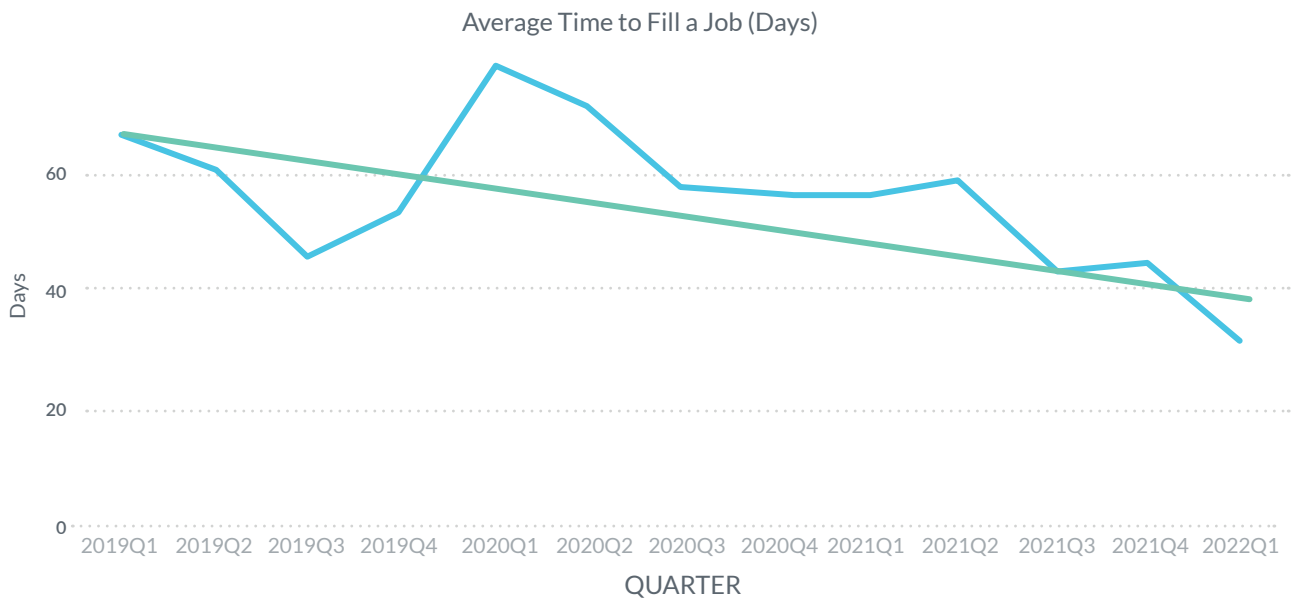


Given the increase in job postings, coupled with the decrease in applications and number of jobs going unfilled, one might surmise that jobs are taking longer to fill than usual.



**Chart 4** shows the average amount of days it took for a job to be filled after it was created.

**Chart 4**



In the three most recent quarters, jobs were taking less time to fill than any previous quarter in this study's time frame. This unexpected result may be attributed to the increased focus district leaders have on ensuring open positions are filled as soon as possible given the reduced supply.

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## CLOSING

### Key Takeaways and Recommendations:

While overall our data supports the idea of a non-instructional staff shortage, there are actions that districts can take related to our specific findings that may help to minimize the number of open positions and ensure that the most qualified candidates are being hired.

1. The decreasing number of applications for open positions results in a reduced pool of qualified candidates from which to hire.
  - a. Leverage recruiting and hiring technology to easily and efficiently generate and post job openings to expedite the process
  - b. Identify solutions that proactively reach out to prospective job seekers, rather than have them find your district to broaden your reach and diversify your candidate pool
  - c. Implement programs that encourage current employees to identify potential candidates
  - d. Differentiate yourself from other districts by highlighting your culture, unique benefits or professional learning opportunities

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2. There is an increasing number of non-instructional open positions to be filled resulting from attrition or retirement
    - a. Offer staff relevant professional learning opportunities with a clear career pathway
    - b. Include staff in formal evaluation processes to provide feedback and support individual growth
    - c. Develop a culture where the voices of the non-instructional staff are heard and celebrated for their contribution to the overall success of the district's vision and mission
  3. Districts have still been able to fill a large amount of these postings and have been filling them faster than ever before.
    - a. Focus on improving the efficiency of the hiring process, in order to reduce friction for candidates
    - b. Communicate with candidates to avoid frustration and align on expectations
    - c. Refine onboarding processes to engage new hires as soon as possible

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# Learn More

For more insights into K-12 education, visit

**[FrontlineInstitute.com](https://FrontlineInstitute.com)**

## About the Institute

The Frontline Research & Learning Institute generates data-driven research, resources and observations to support and advance the education community. The Institute's research is powered by Frontline Education data and analytics capabilities in partnership with over 12,000 K-12 organizations and several million users nationwide. The Institute's research reports and analysis are designed to provide practical insights for teachers and leaders as well as benchmarks to inform strategic decision-making within their organizations.