



Case for Support





**"The act of teaching
is divine. Yet, teachers
are human. Prayer
bridges the gap."**

-Marilyn Rhames, Teachers Who Pray Founder
(from her TEDx talk "Why Faith Will Fix Education")



“As a school leader in my building, I am dealing with the challenges the school year brings, especially the aftermath of the shutdown with our students and staff. Teachers Who Pray provides biblical insight as a leader to respond and guide with wisdom and God’s love to my school community. We have seen and still see so many answered prayers through this prayer circle called Teachers Who Pray.”

Eunice Hernandez,
Dean of Students at a junior
high school in Illinois


The Problem



Teachers face real-life personal issues just like everyone else. Sickness. Raising kids. Caring for aging parents. Money pressures. Divorce. Job insecurity. Life's disappointments. And these burdens don't disappear when they go to work.

At school, teachers can also face difficult professional challenges. Overwhelming workloads. Student discipline issues. Lack of resources. Conflicts with colleagues. Add to that, legislative mandates, budget battles, building lockdowns, curriculum woes, disconnections with the community. The volume of internal and external noise has grown loud and hostile. Teacher burnout is real.

With all of these issues, what else could go wrong? The Covid-19 pandemic arrived and made teaching far more difficult. Managing socially distant classrooms, masking, unmasking, sanitizing, and remote learning during quarantine is now the new normal.



Our nation's teachers are struggling, which should create concern. A paper published by the University of Arkansas found that nearly one-quarter of teachers considered leaving their jobs because of the pandemic and an additional 19 percent of teachers considered leaving for other reasons, according to a January 2021 survey. The authors of the paper speculate that, if mass teacher attrition occurs, many who remain will be dissatisfied teachers who may be less effective.

An impending crisis is looming.

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Elizabeth Loerop, teacher
Chicago Public Schools

The Solution



Faith can play a significant role in addressing the problem - at least 39 percent of K-12 public teachers in the U.S. are Christians, according to the 2019 poll by Phi Delta Kappa (PDK). Throughout history, faith and prayer has served as a mechanism for social and emotional wellness among believers, as well as an agent for community-building and increasing self-efficacy.

Unfortunately, many Christian educators do not know, or they misunderstand, the legal guidelines regarding the separation of church and state. As a result, they try to maintain complete separation between their hope in Jesus Christ and their professional work. This can lead to feelings of isolation, frustration, and despair. The truth is expressions of faith and prayer among educators in schools are permitted under clearly defined circumstances. Public employees and educators “may take part in religious activities such as prayer even during their workday at a time when it is permissible to engage in other private conduct such as making a personal



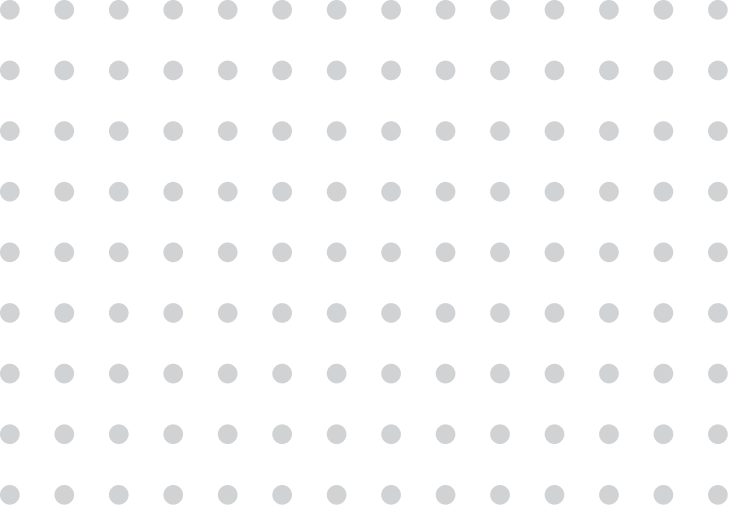
telephone call,” according to the U.S. Department of Education’s Guidance on Constitutionally Protected Prayer and Religious Expression in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools that was published in January 2020.

Simply stated, as long as students are not present or involved, teachers/staff are permitted to pray, independently or together, at school during their breaks.

Teachers Who Pray (TWP) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, Christian organization that provides educators with a community of prayer, spiritual support, professional development, and knowledge of existing religious liberties in schools to uplift them in life and strengthen their effectiveness with students. We help teachers bring their very best selves into the classroom.

“ To be honest, I was quite hesitant at first. How would the other teachers in my building react? Our TWP chapter launched, and these fears were overcome; everything I thought would happen did not. The teachers who came to the meetings felt encouraged and appreciated the time spent in prayer. They felt heard and loved. In fact, the very first day back this year one of the teachers said to me, ‘When is our first prayer meeting?! ”

Elizabeth Loerop, teacher
Chicago Public Schools

A decorative graphic consisting of a grid of small, light gray dots arranged in 10 rows and 20 columns, located in the top left corner of the page.

The people who fulfill a divine calling can gather; and when doing so, they can count on a Divine presence: “For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.” (Matthew 18:20). For over two thousand years, this promise has served as the single most powerful catalyst for change. That same power remains available today. If Christian teachers unite, support one another, and appeal to heaven, what might happen in their lives? Could boldness replace burnout? How might our classrooms and public schools change? Might the attrition rate diminish? What could happen to families and communities?

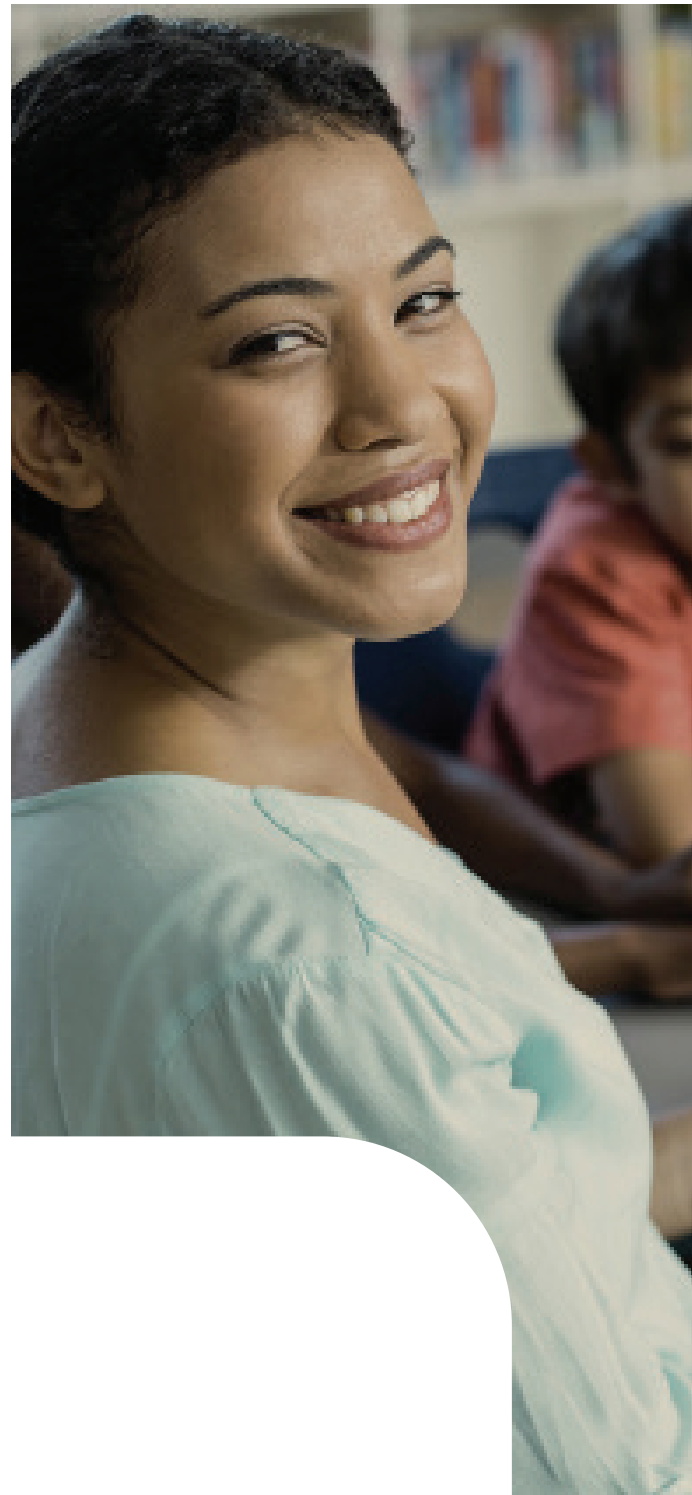
TWP helps educators launch chapters at their local schools and join a network of praying teachers across the country

who pray with colleagues before or after school — or during school on a duty-free break outside of the reach of students. In addition to a growing collection of resources on their website and professional development opportunities, TWP offers a national prayer call on Monday nights so that every teacher can start the week in a community of love, prayer, and support. The result: teachers have a welcoming, safe place that shows love and concern for all who attend. This space nurtures their humanity while also feeding their eternal spirit.

Launched in 2011 from the passionate efforts of founder Marilyn Rhames, TWP stands as the only national organization exclusively focused on school-based communities of prayer and faith-inspired professional development for teachers and school staff. The organization grew to a peak of 140 chapters, attracted by the program’s three core tenets: Teach. Pray. Lead.

However, the network now exceeds TWP's capacity to nurture it and grow any further, or to support and provide for members. TWP finds itself at a critical point today: build the necessary infrastructure to thrive and expand — or watch it fade away.

Doing nothing is not an option. Our country, our schools, and our children need praying teachers. Why? Because teachers uniquely know what to pray for, and they occupy a sacred space to see those prayers answered.





What's Needed



Following a season of discernment and sound strategic planning, the TWP Board of Directors emerged with fresh determination to equip educators to ground their work in prayer, faith, and spiritual practices so that teachers bring their best selves into the classroom. As a result, many more students will receive even greater levels of academic and social-emotional support from teachers who are themselves feeling fully alive, joyful, and whole.

TWP seeks to support more teachers in ways that will harness the passion of their Christian beliefs, driving them to develop as professionals. We must first expand our organization to serve our network. We know what's needed, and we feel confident of the difference to be made.

Imagine the impact when teachers begin forming heartfelt bonds as they innovate and elevate education in every school through their faith in Jesus Christ.



Here's How



Preparation

Guided by consultants, TWP now has detailed strategic and operational plans to navigate the next three years and beyond, serving teachers better than ever.

Provision

As a donation-based 501(c)(3) organization, we will approach donors with well-crafted opportunities and then trust that God will stir hearts toward generosity.

Prayer

Every plan, every goal, and every step at TWP contains prayer. That includes every word contained in this document.

With plans in place, with trust in God to provide, we now prayerfully seek funds to:



1. Build infrastructure

- **Capacity:** TWP needs to hire staff members. Because of budget constraints, most of the work for the past year has been conducted by contractors and the volunteerism of the Board of Directors. Hiring staff will enable the board to implement governance best practices for organizational effectiveness. The first role to hire is a full-time Executive Director who will oversee contract services and volunteers, with other staff hired as finances allow.
- **Systems:** Currently, just a few key donors fuel our work. TWP needs efficient and effective capacities to expand fundraising to reach new donors in addition to those already providing support. This starts with developing a database and hiring a part-time fundraiser. Our accounting and reporting systems also need to be updated, enhancing our ability to be wise stewards of resources.

2. Build and expand the TWP network of teachers

- Expand prayer guidance and faith-based resources that touch teachers' hearts and help them form bonds with Christian colleagues in their buildings and across the country.
- Launch a broader recruitment initiative to expand chapters/members. TWP's early expansion showed that desire exists for Christian educators to create communities. Building awareness will benefit fundraising as well as new chapter recruiting efforts.
- Focus on building church partnerships with pastors and faith leaders nationwide, particularly since teachers are often the most represented profession in local congregations. Other collaborations will develop, when appropriate, with other organizations where mission and values align.

- Develop an engaging member communications plan that builds a robust community within schools and among participating schools across the country.

3. Expand professional development to equip TWP chapter members and introduce new teachers to TWP

- **Strengthen our offerings in these areas:**
 - a. Instructional Support
 - b. Social and Emotional Wellness
 - c. Parent and Family Engagement
 - d. Cultural Competency and Awareness
 - e. Religious Liberties in Public Schools
- Develop webinars, courses, and workshops that teach instructional and school-related best practices that are supported by biblical principles and spiritual significance.

- Provide teachers with access to high-level leaders who can help apply spiritual tenets to the day-to-day realities of the classroom - so that teachers of faith can approach their work in school as a vocation, not merely as an employment opportunity.





Results Expected

A new era for Teachers Who Pray will launch, highlighted by:

1. A stable, scalable, and sustainable organizational structure that annually increases in capacity (staff + volunteers), utilizes new systems for efficiency, adopts governance best practices, and manages finances responsibly by expanding only as income allows.
2. Reliable and expanded funding from a donor base that doubles in the next two years, stewarded to ensure donor retention at or above national averages.
3. A healthy network evidenced by >80 percent chapter retention, with year-over-year growth in average chapter membership.
4. Network growth to 300 chapters by 2023; 500 chapters by 2025.
5. Steady growth in event attendance, an expanding library of relevant resources, and a constant flow of stories depicting life change in students, teachers, schools, and communities.





Your Opportunity

A few generous funders invested in Teachers Who Pray, providing the resources needed to launch and prove that coalescing Christian teachers in public schools make a difference. And it does.

Today, we invite you to partner with us to launch a new season marked by expansion, excellence, and exhibiting what God can do through teachers gathered in His name.

Together we can provide the support teachers need to gather in the name of Jesus, support one another, develop skills, and pray. When that happens, lives will change. A process that starts because people like you give generously — another divine act.

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will also be.”

— Matthew 6:21



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