**Research: Teacher-Retention Rates Higher Than Previously Thought**

By [Stephen Sawchuk](http://www.edweek.org/ew/contributors/stephen.sawchuk.html) on May 1, 2015 10:43 AM

If the new results on teacher retention sound familiar, it's because they echo findings from a [Center for American Progress report](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/teacherbeat/2015/01/study_questions_stock_turnover_stat.html), released in January, which used the same data. But unlike that study, IES is also working on delving into *why*the retention rate has changed so much in the past decade.

There are some threads throughout the data:

* **Teachers with mentors:** Among members of the original cohort, 86 percent with first-year mentors were still teaching, compared with 71 percent without mentors. A survey released in April 2014 by the National Network of State Teachers of the Year and the American Institutes for Research found that [mentors provided the most value to new teachers](http://www.gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/Good_to_Great_Report.pdf) of any form of assistance. Some researchers note, however, that [not all mentorship is created equal](http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/teaching_now/2014/05/new_teachers_owners_manual_for_schools.html), and schools that create collaborative environments see the most return on investment.
* **Teacher salary:** Eighty-nine percent of teachers with a starting salary of $40,000 or more were still teaching through five years, compared to 80 percent of teachers with lesser starting salaries. Teacher salaries across the country, mind you, often [start low](http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/teaching_now/2014/07/teacher-salary-growth-weak-in-the-united-states.html) and [stay low](http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/teaching_now/2014/12/what-districts-let-teachers-reach-maximum-salary-fastest.html) throughout their careers and [end with weak retirement savings](http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/teaching_now/2014/12/many-teachers-may-fall-short-in-retirement-savings.html).
* **Teacher education:** Retention rates didn't change much based on whether new teachers came in with a bachelor's degree or a master's degree, though teachers with the latter held a slight edge after three years.
* **Teacher sex:**Men drop out of the profession faster than women: 78 percent vs. 84 percent.
* **Teacher race:**This one is just a little weird: Through five years, white teachers have an edge in retention over teachers of other races, but there's a sharp drop for non-white teachers in the fourth year, followed by a small rebound. The slight edge white teachers have may be a cause for concern, though, because [the teaching profession is very white](http://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2015/04/28/why-are-all-the-teachers-white.html).
* **Teachers who move:**Four out of five teachers who changed schools after their first year did so voluntarily; the remainder moved involuntarily or because their contracts were not renewed. Why so many change schools voluntarily is a good question, but they probably can't all be moving just because they want a change of scenery after one year. From a recruitment aspect, it's positive that teachers can move but stay teachers. But teacher mobility is still a form of turnover, and [turnover may affect achievement](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/teacherbeat/2012/03/when_teachers_leave_schools_ov.html).
* **Teachers who leave:**Ten percent of teachers left the profession in the first year, and of those, 73 percent did so voluntarily. Another way of framing that: Almost eight percent of new teachers left the profession voluntarily after one year.