

Teacher Preparation and Employment Outcomes of Beginning Teachers in Rhode Island

Rhode Island, like many other states, wants to better understand teacher mobility and attrition because of the adverse effects teacher turnover can have on student achievement and local education budgets. Leaders at the Rhode Island Department of Education want to understand what factors are related to teacher mobility, retention, and attrition, such as whether there are differences associated with the state’s teacher preparation program providers or across teacher certification fields.

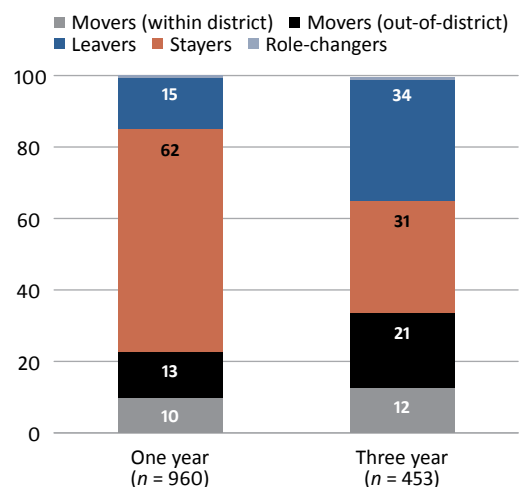
This study used descriptive and statistical analyses to examine mobility, retention, and attrition rates for beginning teachers in Rhode Island. The sample included teachers who were trained in the state between 2012/13 and 2016/17 and who went on to teach for at least one year in the state public school system by the 2017/18 school year.

Key findings

- After three years about a third of the teachers in the sample were still teaching in their initial school. A third were teaching at another school in the state public school system, and a third were no longer teaching in the state public school system.
- Three-year mobility, retention, and attrition rates varied by teacher certification field. Teachers with special education certification had the highest mobility rate, while teachers with early childhood certification had the highest retention rate.
- After one year and after three years, the mobility, retention, and attrition rates of beginning teachers did not differ significantly across individual teacher preparation program providers, except in the case of one private provider offering only an alternative program. Teachers who were trained at that private provider had a higher one-year retention rate and a lower three-year retention rate than teachers who were trained at the state’s two largest providers. The Rhode Island Department of Education and districts may need to work together to improve long-term retention of these teachers or to develop a support system for schools with high turnover of these teachers.
- After three years 40 percent of beginning teachers with elementary, middle grades, or secondary certification were no longer teaching in the Rhode Island public school system. These results appear to be higher than national trends.¹

Beginning teachers who were trained in Rhode Island left teaching in the state public school system at a higher rate after three years than after one year, 2012/13–2017/18

Percent of beginning teachers



Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Source: Authors’ analysis of Rhode Island Department of Education data for 2012/13–2017/18.

1. Gray, L., & Taie, S. (2015). *Public school teacher attrition and mobility in the first five years: Results from the first through fifth waves of the 2007–08 beginning teacher longitudinal study*. National Center for Education Statistics. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED556348>.