



Teacher Shortages in New York State: New Teachers' Certification Pathways, Certification Areas, District of Employment, and Retention in the Same District

New York State provides multiple certification pathways to become a teacher. Using certification and employment data for new teachers with less than one year of teaching experience in the state in 2015/16, 2016/17, and 2017/18, the Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast & Islands partnered with the New York State Education Department (NYSED) to study certification pathways, certification areas, district employment, and retention.

Key findings

- **The majority of new teachers earned certificates through the traditional in-state pathway.** About 73 percent of new teachers earned certificates through the traditional in-state pathway, and 23 percent did so through the individual evaluation pathway. The alternative in-state pathway (15 percent) and out-of-state program pathway (7 percent) were used less frequently. About 5 percent of new teachers were uncertified. Teachers can earn multiple certificates in multiple pathways, so the sum of these percentages exceeds 100.
- **The most frequent certification area for new teachers was the shortage certification area¹ of special education (40 percent), while the shortage certification areas of career and technical education and bilingual special education were among the least frequent (1 percent each).** About 1–8 percent of new teachers earned certificates in each of the remaining shortage certification areas.
- **The proportion of new teachers who earned certificates through the individual evaluation pathway was higher for career and technical education than for other certification areas.** While overall only 23 percent of all new teachers earned certificates through the individual evaluation pathway, 92 percent of teachers who earned certificates in the shortage area of career and technical education used this pathway.
- **New teachers employed in high-need districts had higher rates of retention in the same district than new teachers employed in average- and low-need districts.** Second-year retention rates for high-need districts ranged from 76 to 81 percent relative to 72 percent for average-need and 66 percent for low-need districts.

NYSED can use the study findings to inform decisions to increase the number of qualified teacher candidates, particularly in shortage areas. NYSED could investigate career trajectories of new teachers to understand the extent to which new teachers fill shortage area positions. NYSED and teacher preparation programs might also consider targeted recruitment or incentives to increase prospective teachers' awareness of shortage areas. This study cannot support causal inferences about the relationships among certification pathways, certification areas, employment location, or retention. It also does not address the extent to which new teachers were employed in course assignments related to their certification area. Future research could address this.

¹ NYSED does not report shortages related to certification areas but rather related to course assignment areas in which full-time equivalent teaching positions (FTEs) in the subject area are greater than 5 percent of total FTEs in the subject area (New York State Education Department, personal communication, December 30, 2016). This study examined certification areas related to shortage areas, and these are referred to as "shortage certification areas" throughout the report.