

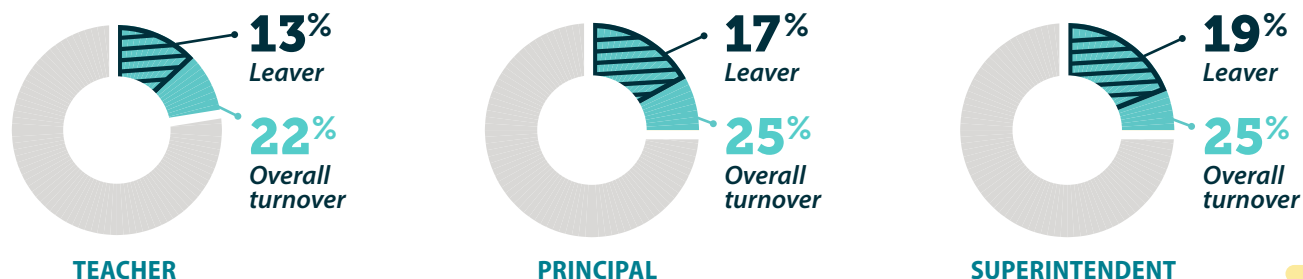
Educator Retention and Turnover in Alaska

Like many other states, Alaska is finding it difficult to retain educators. Turnover—defined as not returning to a position or school in a given year—among Alaska educators is higher in rural areas and among educators not prepared in the state. Alaska’s struggle to retain educators is concerning because educator turnover at the teacher, principal, or superintendent level is associated with negative student outcomes.¹

Most of Alaska’s turnover was educators leaving Alaska or the profession

Statewide turnover rates from 2012/13 to 2017/18 remained steady for teachers but varied for principals and superintendents.² Nearly 60 percent of teacher turnover involved “leavers”—individuals who left Alaska or remained in the state but were no longer educators. For example, in 2017/18, 13 percent of teachers left the profession or their position, while 9 percent of teachers went to a new district or school but remained in the Alaska public school system.

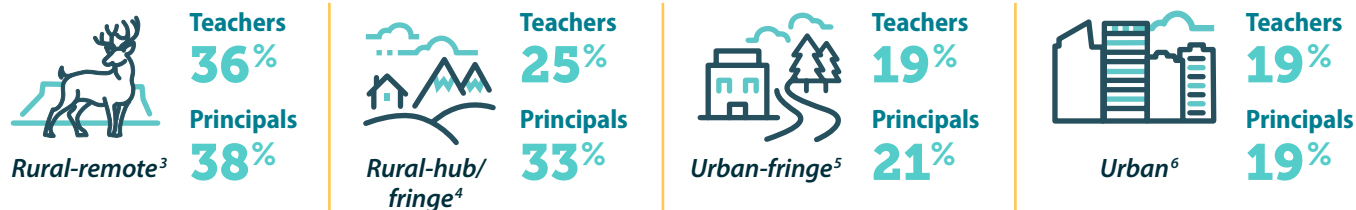
Turnover rates in Alaska for 2017/18



Rural schools and students are hardest hit by turnover

Rural schools have much higher teacher and principal turnover than urban or urban-fringe schools, with 64 percent of rural-remote teachers who turn over leaving the state or the profession.

Average annual turnover rates for 2012/13 to 2017/18



Teachers and principals who were prepared outside Alaska were more likely to turn over the following year

Teachers and principals prepared outside of Alaska had higher turnover rates compared to teachers and principals prepared in Alaska.

Average annual turnover rates for 2012/13 to 2017/18



Potential recruitment and retention strategies based on feedback from district leaders



Recruit continuously for retention



Build trust between administrators and teachers



Recreate familiar living conditions



Support teacher growth



Treat teachers like the leaders they are



Make up for pay that is not competitive



Find pockets of cross-district collaboration in a competitive environment



OVERALL CONSIDERATIONS

Drawing on findings from the full report, education leaders and policymakers may want to consider:

- Increasing the supply of Alaska-educated teachers and principals.
- Improving working conditions for teachers and principals, especially in rural schools.
- Equipping principals to better support teachers.

Notes

¹ Coelli & Green, 2012; Gibbons, Scrutinio, & Telhaj, 2018; Henry, Bastian, & Fortner, 2011; Miller, 2013; Parker-Chenaille, 2012; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018; Waters & Marzano, 2006. Please see the full report for references.

² Superintendent turnover rates were only available from 2013/14 to 2017/18.

³ Rural-remote refers to schools located in small communities in off-road areas that are accessible only by small plane and/or by boat, such as the Pribilof Islands.

⁴ Rural-hub/fringe refers to rural-hub communities, such as Bethel, that may be off road, as well as rural-fringe communities, such as Healy, that are on the road system.

⁵ Urban-fringe refers to on- and off-road communities either near an urban locale or with commercial air access, such as Palmer and Sitka.

⁶ Urban refers to larger cities such as Anchorage, Juneau, or Fairbanks.

Read the report: Vazquez Cano, M., Bel Hadj Amor, H., & Pierson, A. (2019). *Educator retention and turnover under the midnight sun: Examining trends and relationships in teacher, principal, and superintendent movement in Alaska*. Portland, OR: Education Northwest, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. <https://eric.ed.gov/?q=ED598351>

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