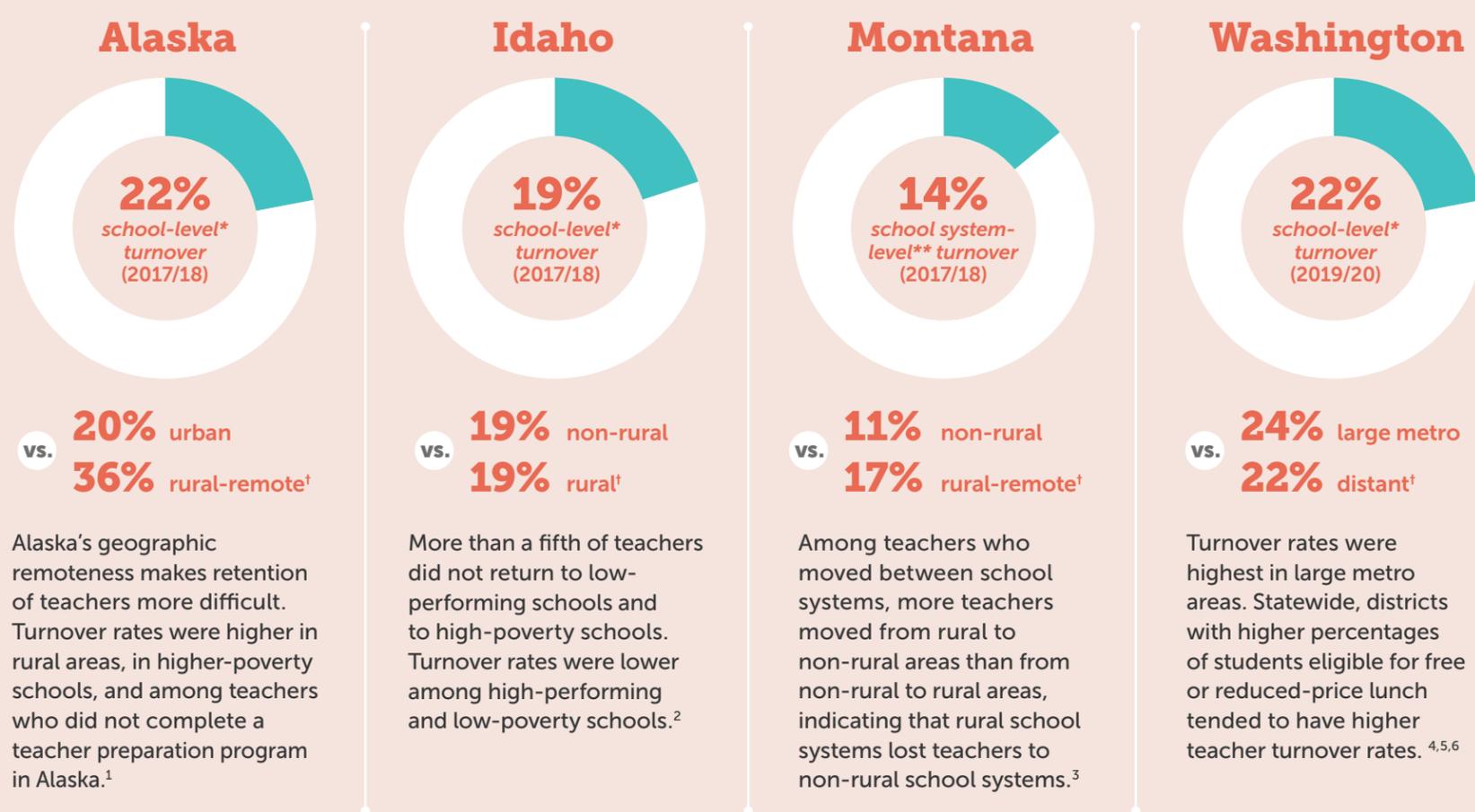


A LANDSCAPE SCAN OF FOUR NORTHWEST STATES

Teacher turnover and suggestions for improving retention

Across the country, many states—including Alaska, Idaho, Montana, and Washington—are working to lower teacher turnover and improve retention. Each state has its own unique context, but potential strategies to mitigate teacher turnover that increase retention may be relevant for multiple states.

A snapshot of teacher turnover across the four states



* In Alaska, Idaho, and Washington, turnover is defined as not returning to a school in a given year.

**Due to the large proportion of small schools in Montana, different schools and districts often share the same building and school system ID. Because some schools have only one or two grades with a small number of students, we observed that teachers moved to a different school and taught different grades—but stayed in the same building (i.e., school system). Thus, in Montana, turnover is defined as teachers who leave their school system.

† Definitions of rurality differ by state and can be found on the next page.

Potential considerations for education leaders and policymakers to address teacher shortages and turnover

Create and/or support multiple teacher preparation pathways, including career and technical education teacher programs

Improve working conditions for teachers (for example, reducing the need for teachers to hold multiple positions in rural schools)

Increase incentives for educators (such as housing subsidies and loan-forgiveness programs)

Develop partnerships with higher education institutions and community-based organizations to access new potential teachers and improve recruitment efforts

Identify and reduce barriers to obtaining a teaching certification, such as testing requirements

Support teacher growth by providing mentorship and professional development opportunities

Empower teachers to lead—and offer teachers leadership opportunities

Promote grow-your-own initiatives that encourage limited-certificated teachers to become fully certified

Encourage cross-district collaboration, such as offering joint professional development and collaborating on recruitment marketing materials—especially in rural environments and where there are few teacher candidates

For more details, see the studies included in the references list.



Definitions of rurality across the four states

ALASKA⁷

In Alaska, “urban” refers to Anchorage, Juneau, or Fairbanks. “Rural-remote” refers to small communities in off-road areas accessible only by small plane and/or by boat.

IDAHO⁸

According to an Idaho state statute, a school district is considered a rural school district if it meets one of two criteria:

1. There are fewer than 20 enrolled students per square mile within the area encompassed by the school district’s boundaries.
2. The county in which a plurality of the school district’s market value for assessment purposes is located contains fewer than 25,000 residents, based on the most recent decennial U.S. census.

MONTANA⁹

Montana uses locale definitions from the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). According to NCES, “rural-remote” refers to “a census-defined rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and more than 10 miles from an urban cluster.”

WASHINGTON¹⁰

In Washington, locales are defined by the Education Research & Data Center (ERDC), which houses Washington’s State Longitudinal Data System. According to ERDC, “distant” ranges from an area “inside an urban cluster that is more than 10 miles and less than or equal to 35 miles from an urbanized area” to “a census-defined rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and is also more than 10 miles from an urban cluster.”

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