

## REL Southwest Ask A REL Response

October 2019

Teacher Workforce

### Question:

*What are the characteristics of certified teachers who re-enter the teaching profession after resigning?*

### Response:

Thank you for the question you submitted to our REL Reference Desk. We have prepared the following memo with research references to help answer your question. For each reference, we provide an abstract, excerpt, or summary written by the study's author or publisher. Following an established Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southwest research protocol, we conducted a search for research reports as well as descriptive study articles on characteristics of certified teachers who re-enter the teaching profession after resigning.

We have not evaluated the quality of references and the resources provided in this response. We offer them only for your reference. Also, we searched the references in the response from the most commonly used resources of research, but they are not comprehensive, and other relevant references and resources may exist. References provided are listed in alphabetical order, not necessarily in order of relevance. We do not include sources that are not freely available to the requestor.

### Research References

DeAngelis, K. J. (2013). A look at returning teachers. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 21(13), 1–34. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1015333>

*From the ERIC abstract:* “Research shows that one-quarter to one-third of teachers who leave the profession return, the majority after only a short absence. Though returning teachers can constitute a substantial share of newly hired teachers in schools each year, little is known about them, the factors associated with their decisions to return, or the schools to which they return. In this study, I use a 20-year longitudinal dataset to examine the characteristics of returning teachers as well as the personal, school, and district factors associated with their return both to the profession and to particular schools. In addition, I consider the extent to which returning teachers contribute to the systematic sorting of teachers across schools. Contrary to conventional wisdom, the loss of teachers

to attrition from the profession is more likely to be permanent for smaller schools and districts outside of urban and suburban areas. In addition, both personal and job-related factors impact whether and where former teachers return, albeit differently by gender. Interestingly, personal and pecuniary factors in teaching appear to play a greater role than non-pecuniary factors on male leavers' decisions regarding whether and where to return, whereas personal, pecuniary, and non-pecuniary factors all influence female leavers' decisions. Finally, the study demonstrates that returning teachers on average reenter schools that are very similar in terms of student and teacher characteristics to those that they left.”

Grissom, J. A., & Reininger, M. (2012). Who comes back? A longitudinal analysis of the reentry behavior of exiting teachers. *Education Finance and Policy*, 7(4), 425–454. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ999971>. Retrieved from [https://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/EDFP\\_a\\_00075.pdf](https://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/EDFP_a_00075.pdf)

*From the ERIC abstract:* “While a large literature examines the factors that lead teachers to leave teaching, few studies have examined what factors affect teachers’ decisions to reenter the profession. Drawing on research on the role of family characteristics in predicting teacher work behavior, we examine predictors of reentry. We employ survival analysis of time to reentry for exiting teachers using longitudinal data from the 1979 National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth. We find that younger, better paid, and more experienced teachers are more likely to reenter. We also find that women are more likely to return to teaching than men. Child rearing plays an important role in this difference. Women are less likely to reenter with young children at home. We conclude that reentrants may be an important source of teacher labor supply and that policies focused on the needs of teachers with young children may be effective ways for districts to attract returning teachers.”

Kersaint, G., Lewis, J., Potter, R., & Meisels, G. (2007). Why teachers leave: Factors that influence retention and resignation. *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies*, 23(6), 775–794. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ769453>. Retrieved from [https://www.academia.edu/14414453/Why\\_teachers\\_leave\\_Factors\\_that\\_influence\\_retention\\_and\\_resignation](https://www.academia.edu/14414453/Why_teachers_leave_Factors_that_influence_retention_and_resignation)

*From the ERIC abstract:* “Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behavior is used to examine continuing teachers’ plans to remain or resign and the likelihood of resigned teachers to return to teaching in the next 3 years. Specifically, this study examined factors that encourage or hinder resigned teachers from returning to teaching, the importance of such factors, and the importance of those factors for teachers who remained in teaching. We find that family issues are of greatest concern to all teachers, and that leavers place much more emphasis on the time they are able to spend with their families than do stayers. The importance assigned to all factors is influenced by demographic characteristics.”

Warner-Griffin, C., Noel, A., & Tadler, C. (2016). *Sources of newly hired teachers in the United States: Results from the Schools and Staffing Survey, 1987-88 to 2011-12* (NCES 2016-876). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED569202>

*From the ERIC abstract:* “There are at least four ways teachers may enter a new school: directly after receiving a new degree, exiting a different career, transferring from another school or type of position in a school, or after a break from teaching. The data used in this report span 25 years, from 1987 to 2012, providing an overview of these four key sources of newly hired teachers in the United States using the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). Four administrations of SASS (1987-88, 1999-2000, 2007-08, and 2011-12) provide data tracing the demographic characteristics, experience, qualifications, and prior year activities of newly hired K-12 teachers in the United States. Newly hired teachers are those who are new to teaching or those who are in a new position at a school in a different district or system in the academic year of the survey administration and taught at least half time or more at the school. The four sources of newly hired teachers described in this report follow: (1) Newly prepared teacher: first-year teacher (no previous experience) whose main activity in the prior year was attending college or who earned his or her highest degree in the prior year; (2) Delayed entrant: first-year teacher who in the prior year had engaged in other activities outside of attending college and teaching and had received the highest degree more than 1 year prior to the survey administration; (3) Transfer: teacher with previous teaching experience whose main activity in the prior year was working in another school outside of the current school system or another sector (public or private school); or (4) Re-entrant: teacher with previous experience whose main activity in the prior year was not teaching in grades K-12 but had taught in the past. Estimates are produced from cross-tabulations of the data, and Student's t tests are performed to test for differences between estimates. Only findings that met the  $\alpha = 0.05$  significance level are discussed in the text.”

## Methods

### Keywords and Search Strings

The following keywords and search strings were used to search the reference databases and other sources:

- Recruiting former teachers
- Getting teachers to return to teaching
- [ (“returning teachers”) OR (“reentrants”) ]
- [ (“returning teachers”) OR (“reentrants”) OR (“reentry workers”) ]
- [ (“teachers”) AND (“return to teaching”) ]
- Teachers who interrupt their careers

## Databases and Resources

We searched [ERIC](#) for relevant, peer-reviewed research references. ERIC is a free online library of more than 1.7 million citations of education research sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES). Additionally, we searched the [What Works Clearinghouse](#).

## Reference Search and Selection Criteria

When we were searching and reviewing resources, we considered the following criteria:

- *Date of the publication:* References and resources published from 2004 to present, were included in the search and review.
- *Search priorities of reference sources:* Search priority is given to study reports, briefs, and other documents that are published and/or reviewed by IES and other federal or federally funded organizations, academic databases, including ERIC, EBSCO databases, JSTOR database, PsychInfo, PsychArticle, and Google Scholar.
- *Methodology:* The following methodological priorities/considerations were given in the review and selection of the references: (a) study types—randomized control trials, quasi-experiments, correlational studies, descriptive data analyses, literature reviews, mixed methods analyses, and so forth; (b) target population, samples (representativeness of the target population, sample size, volunteered or randomly selected, and so forth), study duration, and so forth; and (c) limitations, generalizability of the findings and conclusions, and so forth.

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This memorandum is one in a series of quick-turnaround responses to specific questions posed by stakeholders in the Southwest Region (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas), which is served by the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southwest at AIR. This memorandum was prepared by REL Southwest under a contract with the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences (IES), Contract ED-IES-91990018C0002, administered by AIR. Its content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.