

2021 UPDATE

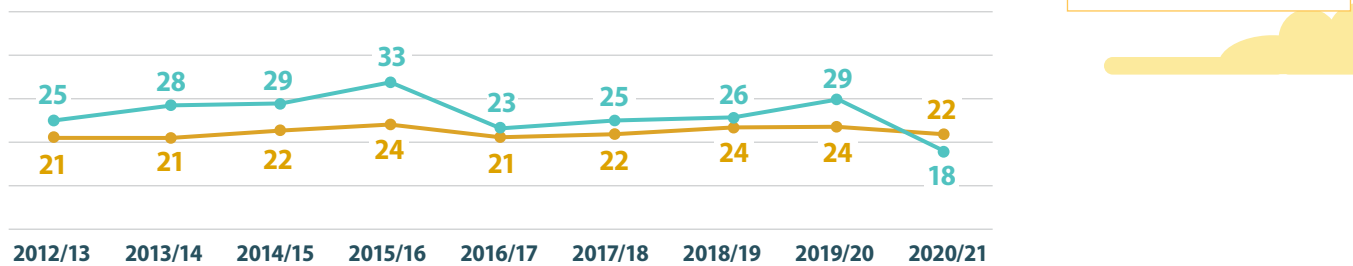
Educator Retention and Turnover in Alaska

Educator turnover is associated with a broad range of negative outcomes for students.¹ Alaska continues to experience high rates of educator turnover, as measured by the number of teachers and administrators who do not return to a position or school in a given year. This issue is particularly acute in rural areas of the state. This infographic provides updated data that supplements a **2019 REL Northwest report** on educator turnover in Alaska.

Teacher turnover remains steady but high, while principal turnover decreased in 2020/21

Over a nine-year period, from 2012/13 to 2020/21, teacher turnover was relatively steady, with a small, recent decrease (from 24 percent in 2019/20 to 22 percent in 2020/21). Principal turnover during the same time period was more volatile, with a peak of 33 percent turnover in 2015/16 and a low of 18 percent turnover in 2020/21. Turnover rates in 2020/21—a year in which some expected to see higher turnover due to the COVID-19 pandemic—decreased for both teachers and principals.² In 2020/21, as in prior years, the majority of teachers who turned over (58 percent) and principals who turned over (78 percent) left Alaska or remained in the state but were no longer educators.

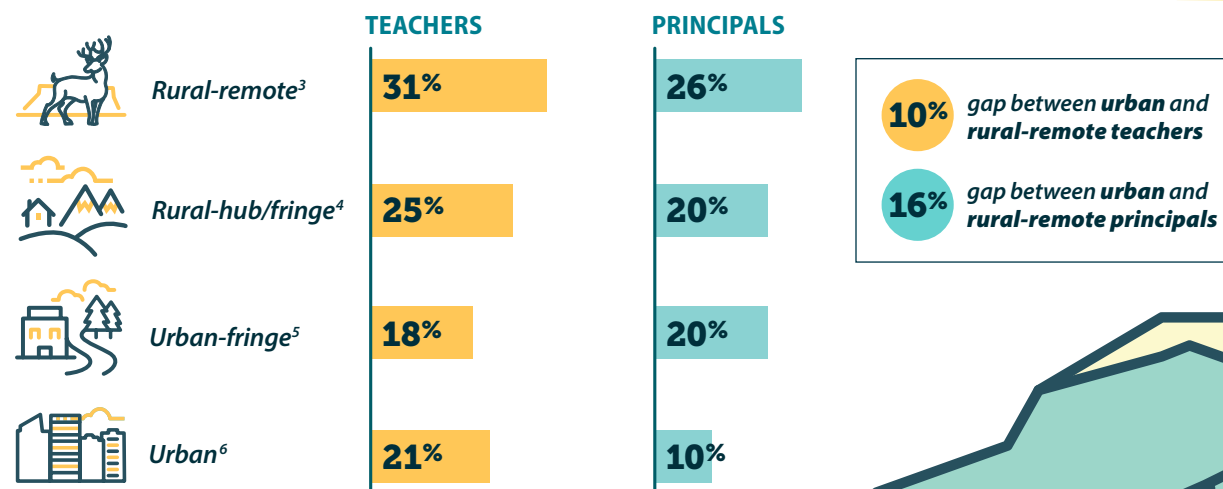
Annual turnover rates (percent)



Rural schools continue to be hardest hit by turnover

Rural schools have much higher teacher and principal turnover than urban or urban-fringe schools.

2020/21 annual turnover rates



Note: Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number

Teachers and principals prepared outside Alaska continue to be more likely to turn over

In 2020/21, teachers and principals who were prepared outside of Alaska continued to have higher turnover rates than those prepared in Alaska. This has important implications for state policy related to educator licensure and preparation.

2020/21 annual turnover rates

TEACHERS

19% prepared in Alaska vs. 23% prepared outside Alaska

PRINCIPALS

15% prepared in Alaska vs. 22% prepared outside Alaska



Strategies for improving educator recruitment and retention in Alaska

Alaska's geographic remoteness and other factors present significant challenges for educator recruitment and retention. This reality is most likely reflected in the higher turnover rates for educators who are trained out of state and may be less familiar with local culture and conditions. Alaska education stakeholders may want to consider the following strategies for improving educator recruitment and retention.⁷

- Create and support multiple teacher preparation pathways that can increase the supply of Alaska-educated teachers, including through University of Alaska programs, certification pathways available to rural residents, and grow-your-own teacher programs
- Recruit candidates who may be more likely to stay, considering community fit, and help orient new educators to the community through culture camps and facilitated connections with families
- 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, loan-forgiveness programs, longevity bonuses, and access to amenities like high-speed internet)
- Support teacher growth by providing mentorship, leadership, and professional development opportunities, including cross-district connections to help reduce professional isolation in rural communities
- Encourage cross-district collaboration, such as offering joint professional development and collaborating on recruitment marketing materials, especially in rural environments and places with few teacher candidates

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 Turnover is measured using data on teacher and principal placement from October of the given school year compared to placement data from the prior year.

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.

⁷ Strategies and examples drawn from Vazquez Cano, Bel Hadj Amor, & Pierson, 2019.

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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