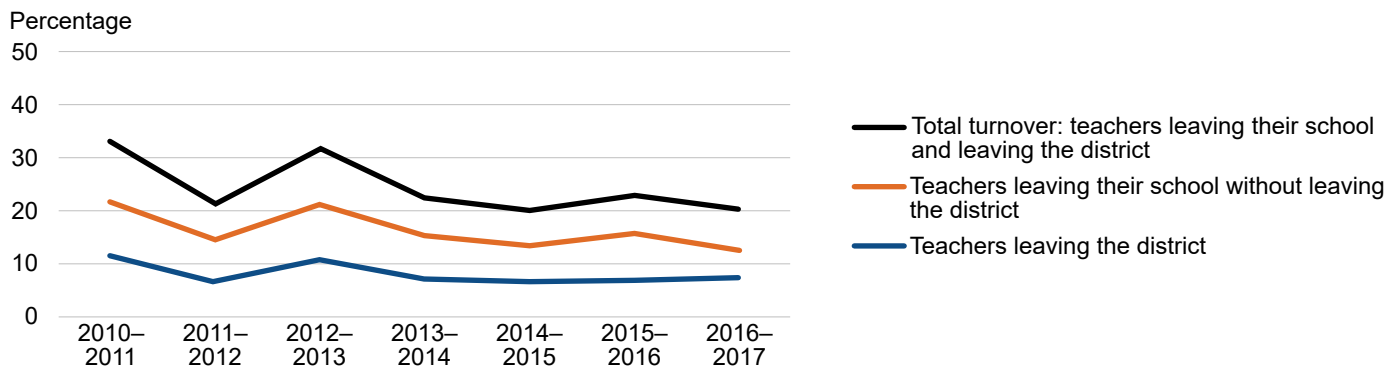


Understanding teacher turnover: Insights from the School District of Philadelphia

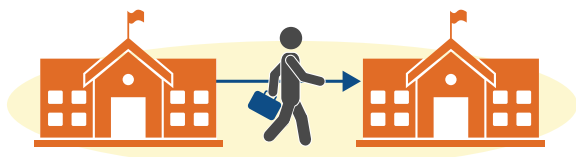


From school years 2010–2011 to 2016–2017, in the School District of Philadelphia (SDP), an average of about **25 percent of teachers left their schools every year**, and **8 percent left the district each year**.



Source: Authors' analysis of data from the School District of Philadelphia

Five years after beginning teaching in a school in the district...



77% of teachers had left their school



45% of teachers had left the district.

These findings are consistent with a research study examining turnover in 16 urban districts, which found that 70 percent of new teachers left their school and 55 percent left their district within five years.¹

Why does this matter?

Teacher turnover is a widespread issue. High turnover rates may be **costly to the district**,^{2,3} **disrupt operations**, and **lower student achievement**.^{4,5} Turnover can also **exacerbate inequities between schools**.⁶





Factors that have the strongest relationship with teacher turnover

Factors related to higher teacher turnover

- Frequent absence
- Teaching in middle school
- Previously changing schools

Factors related to lower teacher turnover

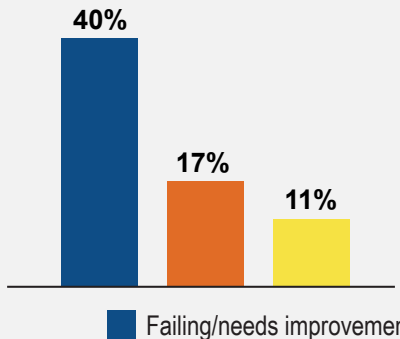
- Higher evaluation ratings (see chart below)
- Teaching in schools with more positive responses to a school climate survey*

*School climate mattered more for teachers receiving **high evaluation ratings** than for those receiving lower ratings.

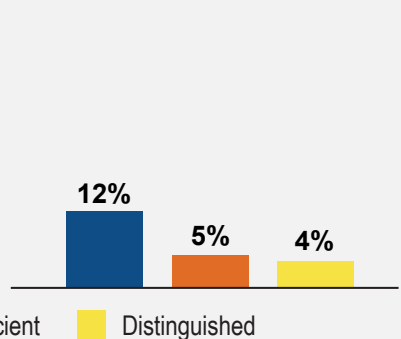
The study also found that **Black teachers were more likely than other teachers to leave their school**, after accounting for other teacher and school characteristics.

Teachers rated as failing or as needing improvement left their schools at a rate nearly three times higher than teachers rated distinguished.

Percentage leaving their school



Percentage leaving the district



Source: Authors' analysis of data from the School District of Philadelphia, 2014-2015 to 2016-2017.

What is Philadelphia doing to address turnover?

- For new teachers, the district offers **targeted professional development**, an **induction program**, and additional supports during their first year in the district.
- For experienced teachers, the district provides **professional development opportunities** customized to meet the needs of teachers and schools.
- The district plans to expand its work with principals to **improve school climate** and **school-level retention**.



Endnotes

¹ Papay, J. P., Bacher-Hicks, A., Page, L.C., & Marinell, W.H. (2017). The challenge of teacher retention in urban schools: Evidence of variation from a cross-site analysis. *Educational Researcher*, 46 (8), 434-448. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1161119>.

² Milanowski, A.T., & Odden, A.R. (2007). *A new approach to the cost of teacher turnover* (School Finance Redesign Project Working Paper 13). Seattle, WA: Center on Reinventing Public Education. Retrieved January 2, 2020, from <https://www.crpe.org/publications/new-approach-cost-teacher-turnover>.

³ Sasko, C. (2017, March 16). Philly school district plans to hire 1,000 teachers. *Philadelphia Magazine*. Retrieved December 12, 2017, from <http://www.phillymag.com/news/2017/03/16/philly-school-district-hire-teachers/>.

⁴ Henry, G., & Redding, C. (2018). The consequences of leaving school early: The effects of within-year and end-of-year teacher turnover. *Education Finance and Policy*, (September), 1–52.

⁵ Ronfeldt, M., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2013). How teacher turnover harms student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 50(1), 4–36. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ995828>.

⁶ Steinberg, M., Neild, R., Canuette, W. K., Park, S., Schulman, E., & Wright, M. (2018). *Teacher mobility in the School District of Philadelphia, 2009–10 through 2015–16*. Philadelphia, PA: The Philadelphia Education Research Consortium.



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