

Roberts: Arizona ranks as worst state to be a teacher

Laurie Roberts, The Republic | azcentral.com, Sept. 27, 2017

Quick, what is the worst state in which to be a teacher?

If you said Arizona, give yourself a gold star.

[WalletHub this week released its annual rankings](#) for the best – and worst – states in which to spend a career in the classroom. The financial services website compared the 50 states and Washington D.C., analyzing 21 key indicators, ranging from income growth potential to class size to safety.

The best states in which to be a teacher: New York, New Jersey, Illinois, Connecticut, Pennsylvania.

The worst: Florida, Mississippi, South Carolina, Hawaii and finally, down there in our usual spot at the bottom of the barrel, Arizona.

We ranked as one of the states with the highest turnover, the highest student-teacher ratios and the lowest spending per student.

And we ranked as dead last in the number of people expected to be competing for teacher jobs by 2024. Gee, I wonder why.

Lest you think things are looking up, two years ago Arizona ranked 49th overall. Now, we're 51st.

This is, of course, no surprise in Arizona, where a record number of teachers are either fleeing the profession or moving to states that actually value public education.

The school year has just started but [already 526 teachers have quit](#), according to the Arizona School Personnel Administrators Association. Of those, 147 teachers abandoned their classrooms, just walked away and never came back.

The group surveyed 135 school districts and charter schools and found that we are still short 1,328 teachers this year. Another 2,491 classrooms are filled by people who don't meet standard teaching requirements.

And even they likely won't be hanging around for long.

According to a [recent study by the Morrison Institute](#), 42 percent of Arizona teachers hired in 2013 quit by 2016. Among charter school teachers, 50 percent.

Teachers say the equation is simple.

Take a heavy workload divide it by low pay, factor in a lack of respect and support – from our elected leaders but also from parents and administrators -- and well, you do the math.

Maybe you don't think Arizona's teachers deserve better. But surely our children do.

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Ranking Source: <https://wallethub.com/edu/best-and-worst-states-for-teachers/7159/#main-findings>