

Analysis finds teachers leaving jobs at accelerating rate

By Marc Levy And Brooke Schultz, [Associated Press](#) Harrisburg, Pa.

Teachers are leaving their jobs at an accelerating rate in Pennsylvania, amid fears of a nationwide exodus of burned-out teachers and a collapse in enrollment in recruitment programs that is making teachers increasingly difficult to replace.

A new analysis by Penn State's Center for Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis shows that the rate of teacher attrition in Pennsylvania grew faster in the 2022-23 school year and hit its highest point in a decade of tracking.

That reflects a pattern that is starting to emerge in other states and as schools across the country struggle to find teachers.

Ed Fuller, the Penn State education professor who conducted the analysis, said he has seen data from 12 states with similar increases this school year.

Over the past two years, schools saw relatively modest changes in attrition even as teachers reported more dissatisfaction with the job amid the travails of the COVID-19 pandemic, growing workloads, shrinking autonomy and increasingly hostile school environments.

But now, labor markets are tight and it's much easier for teachers to find jobs near where they live, Mr. Fuller said.

His analysis shows that Pennsylvania saw a 1.5-percentagepoint increase in teacher attrition this year, the largest increase in the past decade.

The attrition rate was 7.7% in 2022-23, up from 6.2% in 2021-22 and 5.4% in 2020-21. That comes to nearly 9,600 leaving their jobs in 2022-23, nearly doubling the number of newly certified teachers in Pennsylvania in 2022.

The previous high was 7.5% in 2014.

The figures include terminations, resignations and retirements. The study did not track whether a teacher left for a teaching job in another state or took a nonteaching job in the education profession — for instance, as an administrator.



Amid lackluster enrollments in colleges and programs that train teachers, the drop-off in teacher certifications is particularly steep in Pennsylvania, tumbling from 15,000 in 2011 to under 6,000 in 2021.

Mr. Fuller's analysis found a number of long-term trends that he said are similar across states: teachers showing the highest rate of leaving the profession are Black and Hispanic.

Teachers in Pennsylvania are leaving their jobs at an accelerating rate, according to an analysis that shows teacher attrition doubled in the 2022-23 school year, hitting its highest point in a decade of tracking.

In those cases, men left at a higher rate than women.

Attrition rates were also higher at charter and cyber-charter schools and poorer public schools. Those schools tend to suffer higher turnover, pay less and hire newer teachers, including many teachers of color.

In addition, middle school teachers left at a higher rate than teachers at other levels, Mr. Fuller found.

By county, Philadelphia had, by far, the highest attrition rate, at 16.4%. That is due primarily to high attrition rates of charter schools in the city, Mr. Fuller said.

In addition to the time and effort required to find a replacement, research has shown that teacher turnover has a negative effect on student outcomes, school climate and teacher quality, Mr. Fuller said.

A less experienced teacher is usually hired as a replacement, he said.

At the moment, state lawmakers and Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro are looking at ways to address the teacher shortage, including stipends for student teachers and tax credits for newly certified teachers.