

# Alaska's cost of teacher turnover

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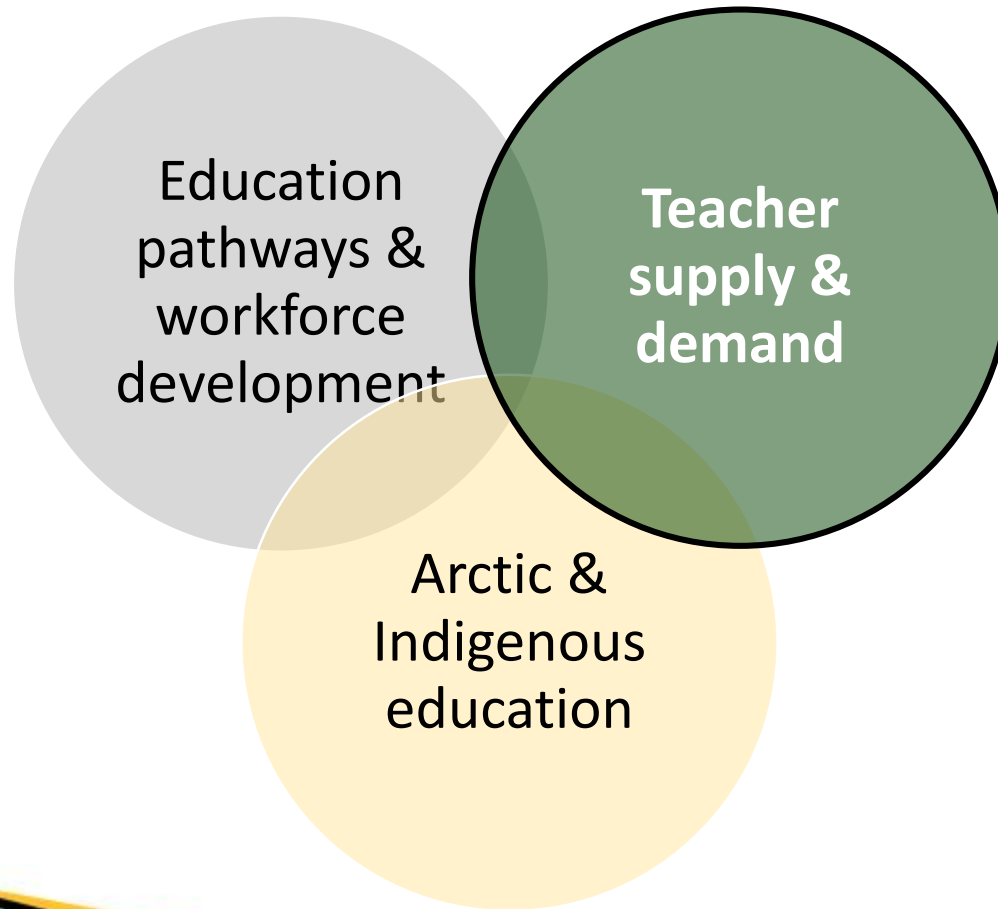
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# Center for Alaska Education Policy Research



## **Who we are**

Education policy research unit and clearinghouse for education-related research at ISER.

## **What we do**

Conduct and disseminate education research, emphasizing topics relevant to Alaskans. We support and produce research that is:

- Rigorous
- Collaborative
- Meaningful
- Non-partisan
- Accessible

# An overview of teacher turnover in Alaska



# What is teacher turnover?

## Retirement

- Teacher ends teaching professional career, usually at certain age or years of service

## Attrition

- Teacher leaves profession entirely, premature to retirement

## Migration

- Teacher leaves current job for teaching position in new district

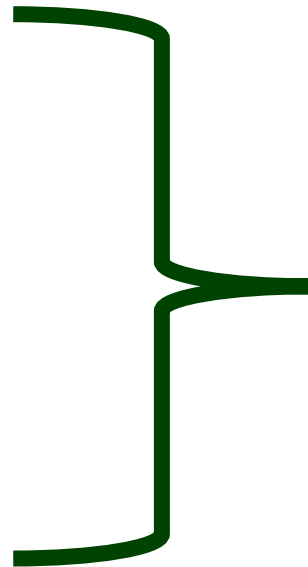
## Transfer

- Practicing teacher moves to new subject area

# Why is teacher turnover a concern?

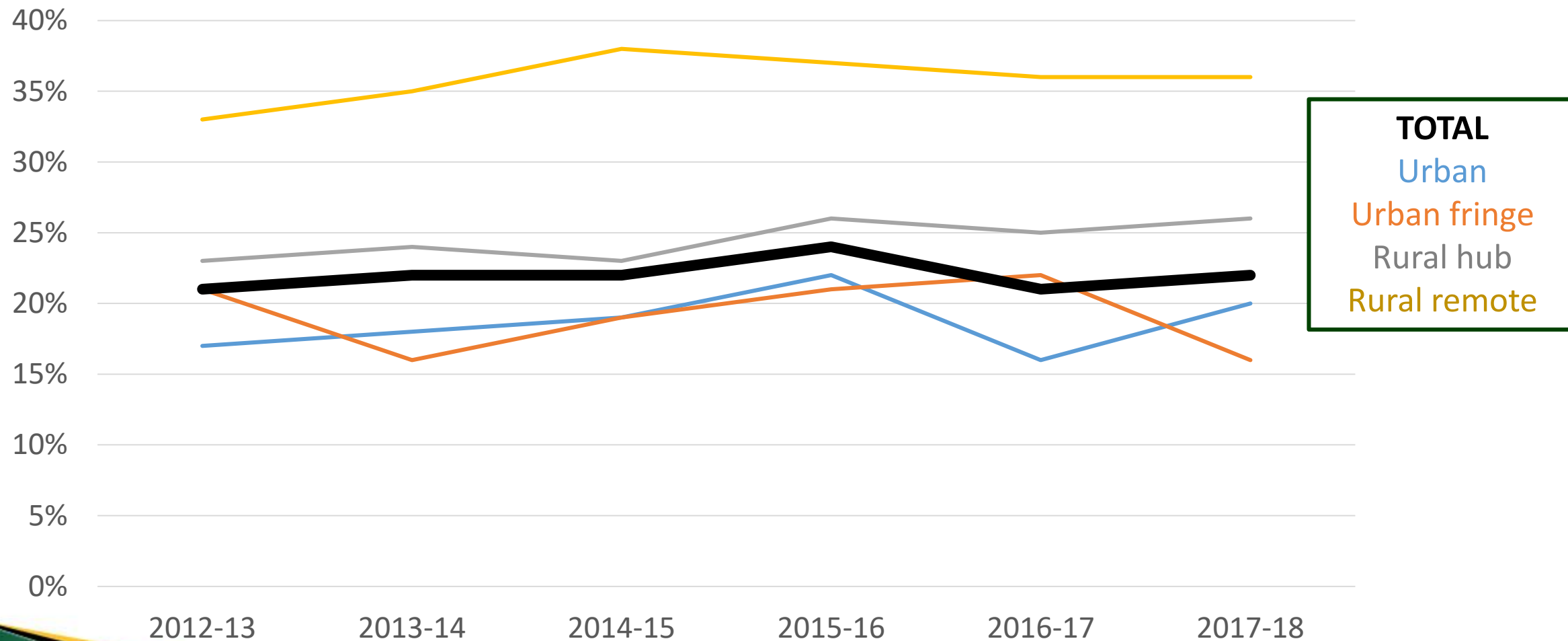
It's not *all* bad, but too much turnover...

- Erodes school climate
- Impacts teacher professional development
- Limits instructional quality



Decreased student  
learning &  
achievement

# How much annual turnover do we have in Alaska?



Adapted from Vazquez Cano, M., & Amor, B. H. (2019). Educator Retention and Turnover under the Midnight Sun: Examining Trends and Relationships in Teacher, Principal, and Superintendent Movement in Alaska. *Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest*.

# How does Alaska's turnover compare to other states?

**2017 national average**


**16%**

**2017 Alaska average**

**21%**

**12<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation**

# Why are Alaska's turnover numbers higher?

- Competitiveness
    - Alaska's fiscal challenges
    - Strong economy in the lower 48
  - Low supply
    - Decrease in teacher production nationwide
    - Good economy pulls teachers into other sectors
    - Loss of Alaska's largest initial licensure program\*
  - High demand
- 



# The cost of teacher turnover in Alaska



# What are the costs of teacher turnover?

## Separation

- Administrative tasks
- Technology & physical plant

## Recruitment

- Job fairs (including travel)
- Advertising

## Hiring

- Applications, interviews, background checks
- HR processing

## Orientation & training

- New teacher orientation & mentoring
- Professional development

## Preparation

- Coursework, field placement
- Certification

## Teacher productivity

- Student learning

# How did we calculate per-teacher costs?

## What we did

- “Ingredients” method
- Interviews with 37 superintendents (or designees)
- Code turnover tasks
- Estimate time
- Classify staff into common names/roles
- Estimate wage
  - AASB, NEA-Alaska, ALARI
- Estimate fixed costs
- Calculate total cost
- Weight total cost

## Parameters

- District as unit of analysis
  - Excludes school & state-level costs
- Exclude:
  - Lost productivity
  - Preparation
  - Extreme & infrequent circumstances

# District-level teacher turnover expenditures

Conservative estimate

	Separation	Recruitment	Hiring	Orientation & training	Performance productivity	Preparation
Cost	\$2,449	\$1,910*	\$4,902	\$11,170		
Percent of total cost	12%	9%	24%	55%		
Estimate includes	Administrative, maintenance, & security tasks	Job fairs, advertising	Screening applicants, interviews, administrative processes	Professional development, onboarding, & new teacher support		
Our total calculated cost: <b>\$20,431</b> per teacher						

\*Excludes wages – material costs only

# Other costs that we did not include

	School-level costs	District-level costs	State costs	Teacher costs	Community costs
<b>Separation</b>	Impact on schedules & school climate	Terminations, teachers leaving mid-year, contracted services, benefits			
<b>Recruitment</b>		Wages & benefits	Alaska Teacher Placement system		
<b>Hiring</b>	Teachers & principals serve in hiring process	Benefits	Licensing		Elders & parents serve on hiring committees
<b>Orientation &amp; training</b>	Senior teachers & principals mentor new hires	Benefits	Alaska Statewide Mentoring Program		Elders & parents support onboarding
<b>Performance productivity</b>	Student achievement	Student achievement	Student achievement, workforce preparation		Student achievement, workforce preparation
<b>Preparation</b>			\$55,912/4-year degree	\$25,822/4-year degree	

# Opportunities



# What's associated with teacher turnover?

## Working conditions

- Physical environment
- School leadership
- Workload
- Compensation

## School characteristics

- Income
- Student demographics
- Performance

## Teacher characteristics

- Effectiveness
- Subjects
- Gender

## Particular to Alaska

- School-community relationships
- Community characteristics
- Place of preparation
- Cultural differences

# Takeaways

## Implications

- The cost of TT is considerable
- Not all TT is bad, nor are all turnover costs
- **Retention pays off**
- Reducing costs in one area may create additional costs elsewhere

## Recommendations

- Explore and address conditions impacting TT
- Increase Alaska-prepared teacher supply
- Improve teacher supports
  - Mentoring
  - Working conditions
- Engage communities in schools



# Thank you, questions, and discussion

## **Presenter**

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