

The Blueprint for Alaska's

Educator Workforce

Rebuilding Stability Through HB 231

Jennifer Schmitz

Alaska Educator Retention and Recruitment Center, Director



ALASKA COUNCIL



OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

The Reality: Alaska's Educator Workforce is Fractured

345+

Unfilled first day teaching vacancies disrupting classrooms.

573

Teachers currently relying on visas to keep schools open.

285

Emergency certificates issued to cover critical shortages.

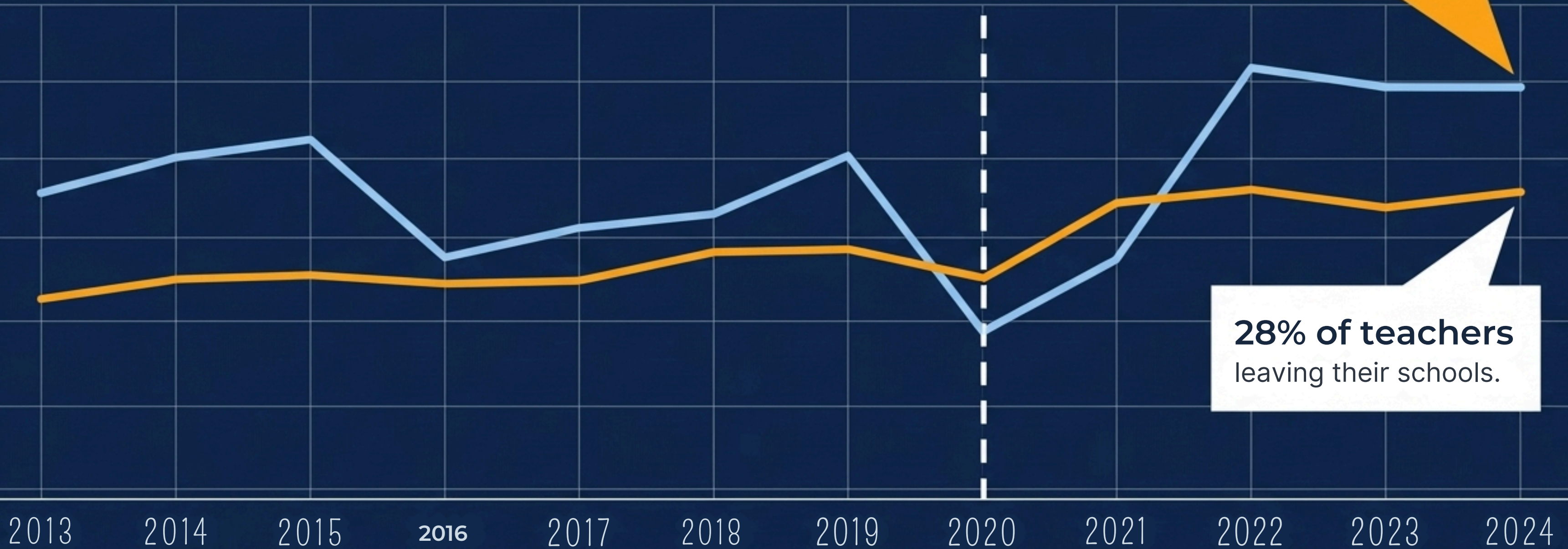
We are experiencing the worst educator shortage in Alaska's history. This is no longer a localized issue and it is requiring a systemic policy response.

Understanding Educator Retention Trends



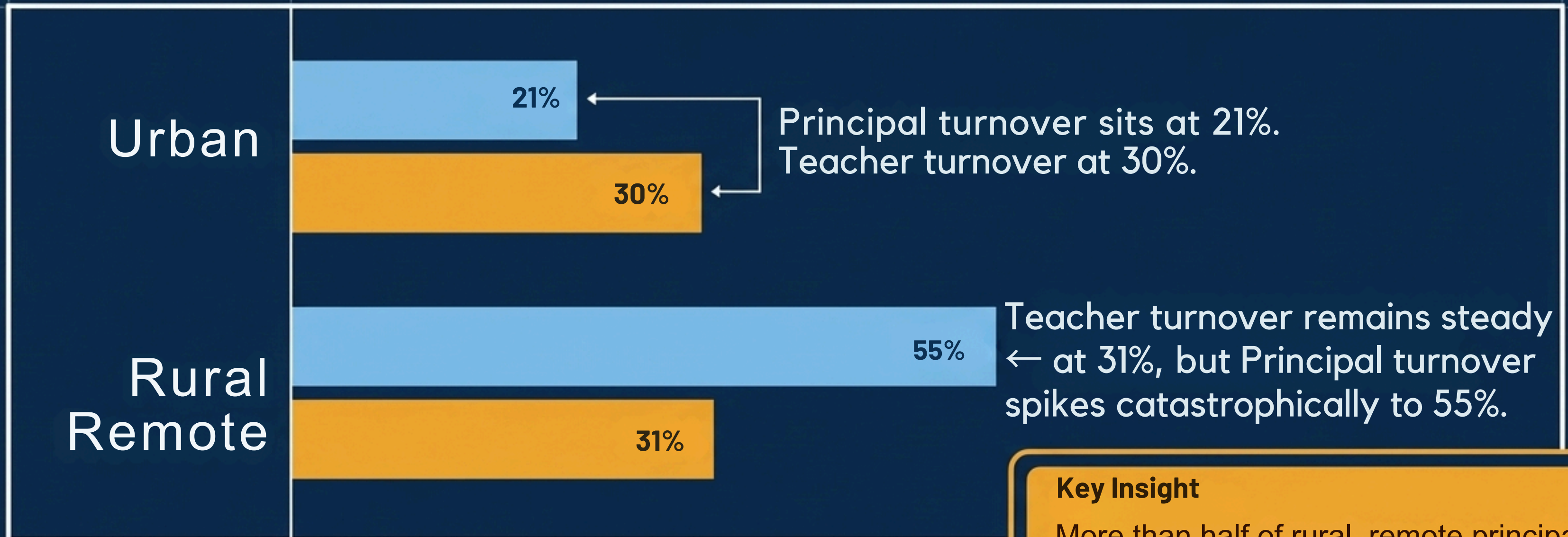
35% of principals leaving their schools.

28% of teachers leaving their schools.



The percentage of educators leaving their specific schools has steadily accelerated since 2020, leading to school and district instability.

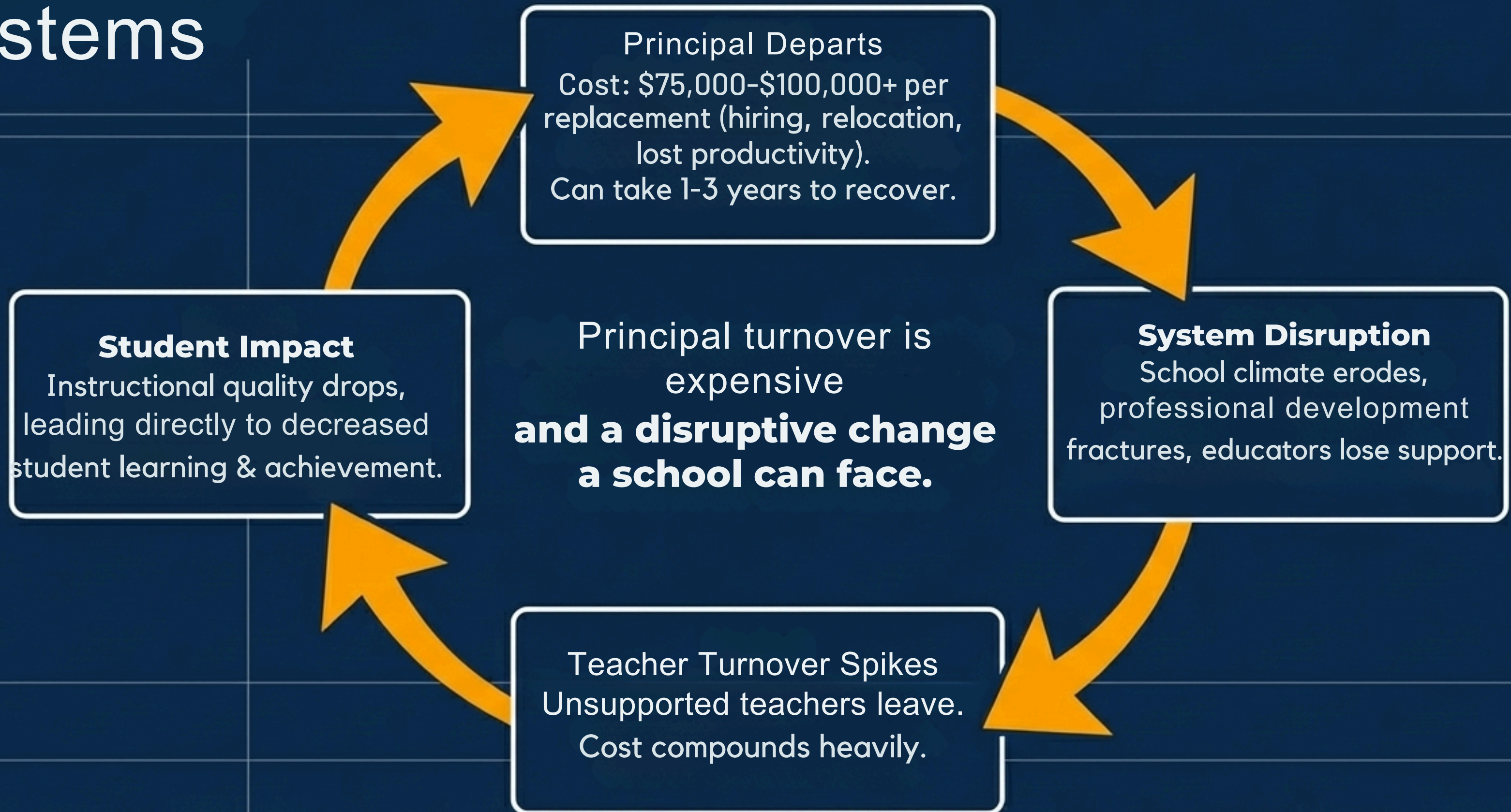
Statewide Educator Retention Challenges (2024)



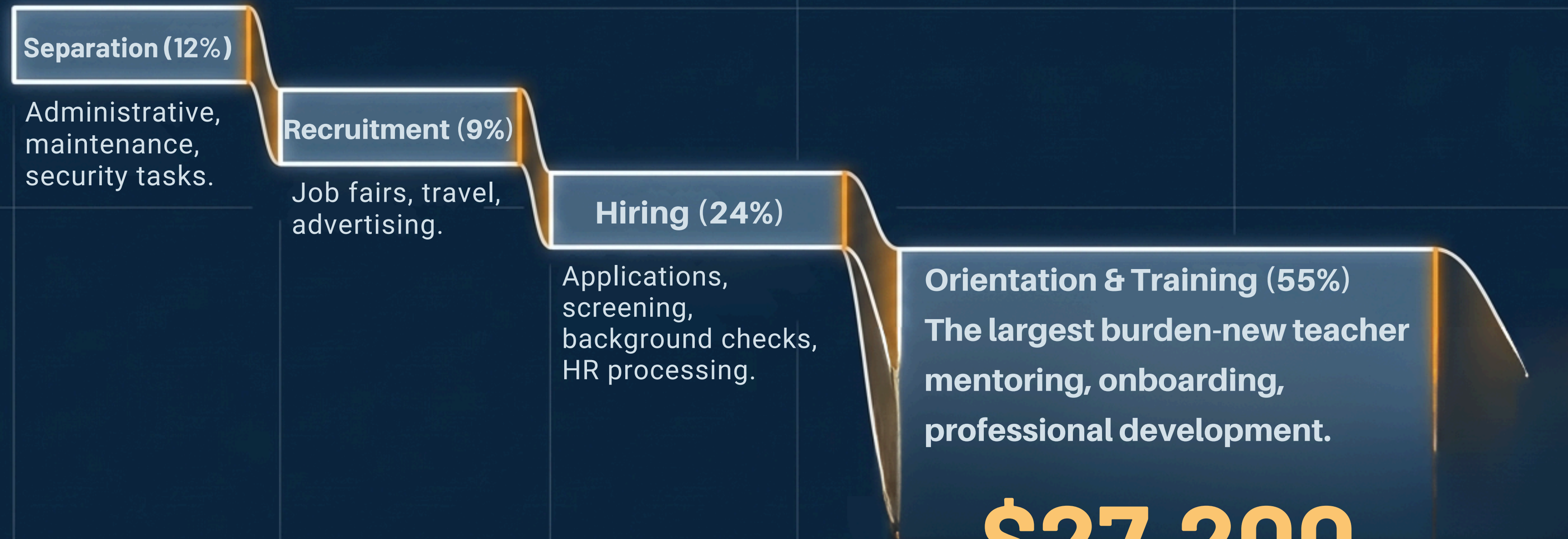
Key Insight

More than half of rural, remote principals left their schools in 2024—creating a leadership gap that disproportionately affects our most isolated students.

Impacts of Leadership Turnover Across Systems



The Hidden Financial Drain of Replacing One Teacher

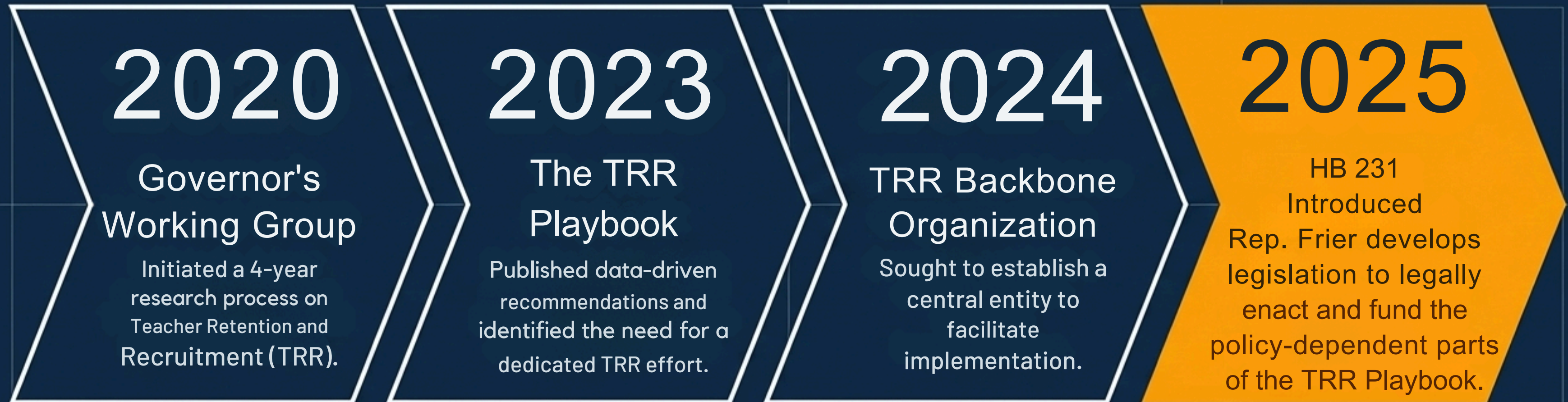


~\$27,200

ISER 2017 Study Adjusted to 2026 dollars.

Every single teacher we replace bleeds \$27,200 out of our educational system.

HB 231: The Culmination of a 6-Year Strategy



This is not a knee-jerk reaction. HB 231 is the legislative implementation of the state's vetted strategic plan.

TRR Action Plan Recommendations Addressed in HB 231



Enhancing Recruitment Efforts

Recruitment Audit & Solutions

Restructure AT&P and Provide
Additional Recruitment Services

Support Additional Pathways

Creating Paraprofessional Pathways

Grow Your Own & Alternative
Certification Programs

Resources for Additional Pathways

Streamlining Certification

Modernize Certification System

Reciprocity for all States

AK Studies & Multicultural Coursework
Flexibility

Restructuring Retirement Options

Restructuring TRS & PERS

Financial Education

Strengthening Working Conditions

Create System's Alignment

Measure Working Conditions

Financial Opportunities

Developing Leadership

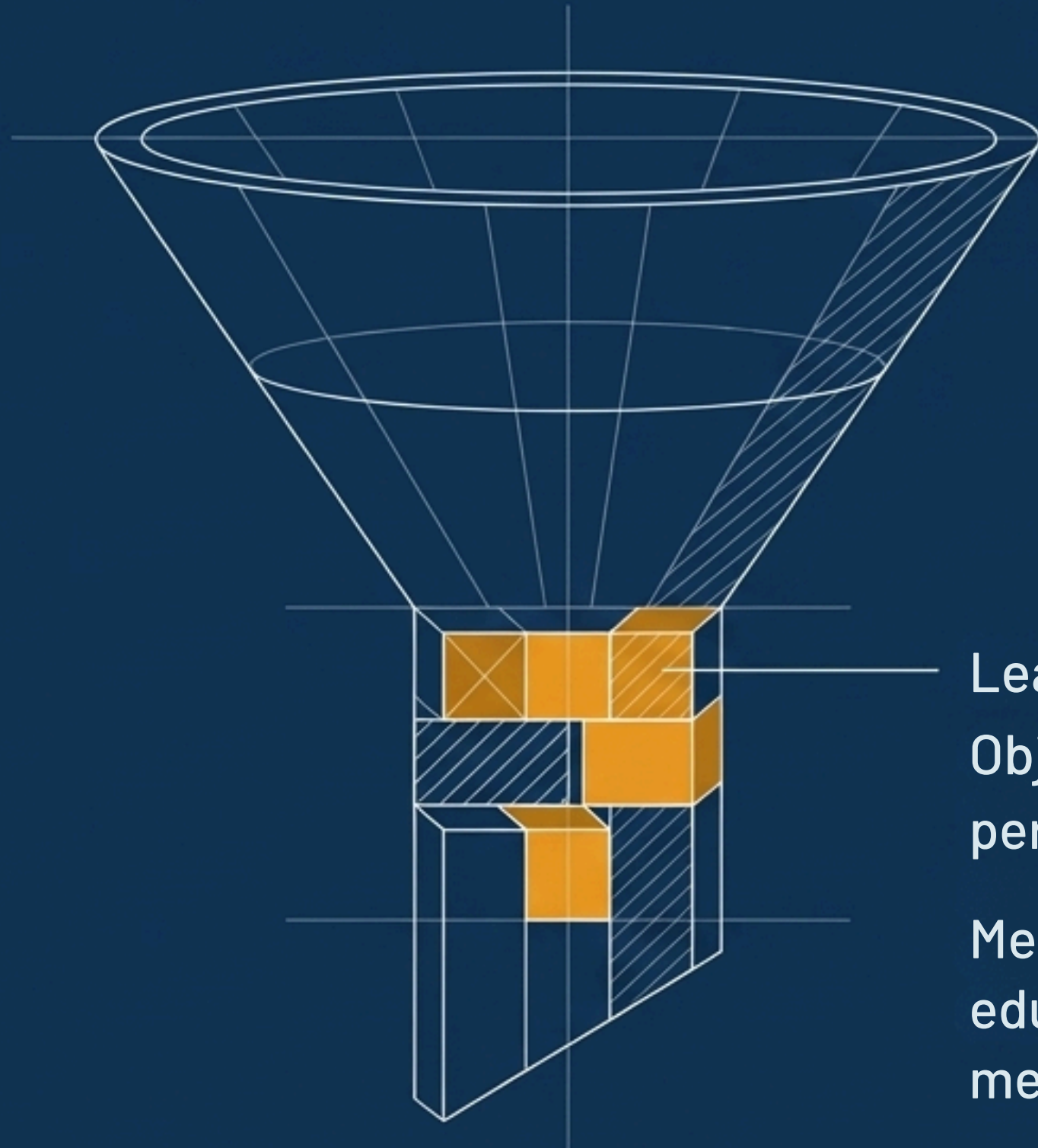
Organizational Health Systems

Administrator Mentoring

Teacher Feedback on Principals

Gold highlights indicate recommendations addressed in HB 231.

The Educator Shortage: A Multifaceted Challenge



Pipeline Expansion

Objective: Widen the pool of qualified candidates.

Mechanisms: International certification reciprocity, retirement (PERS) flexibility for returning educators.

Leak Prevention

Objective: Stop the \$27,200 bleed per teacher.

Mechanisms: Retention bonuses, educator housing, structured leadership mentoring, financial education.

Focusing only on recruitment is like pouring water into a shattered glass.

HB 231 fixes the glass while expanding the tap.

The 3 Pillars of Legislative Action (HB 231)

Eight targeted interventions. One cohesive ecosystem.



Pillar 1: Financial Health & Direct Incentives

Retention Bonuses

What: Provide \$5K-\$15K bonuses for educators/paraprofessionals completing the year.

Why: Directly encourages educators to stay in hard-to-staff districts.

Impact: Reduced turnover, classroom stability.

Retirement Flexibility

What: Allow PERS employees to transition into teaching without losing benefits.

Why: Removes punitive barriers for returning expertise.

Impact: Stronger, faster candidate pipeline.

Financial Planning Support

What: Provide structured financial and retirement education.

Why: Helps educators feel confident committing long-term.

Impact: Improved retention through workforce stability.

Pillar 2: Environment & Working Conditions

Educator Housing

What: Funding for safe, affordable housing.

Why: Addresses the single biggest barrier to rural recruitment.

Impact: Greater equity across districts, more rural hires.

Infrastructure & Connectivity

What: Improve broadband/ internet access for schools.

Why: Ensures educators and students have the modern tools required for instruction.

Impact: Better teaching conditions, improved access for students.

Exit Interviews & Data

What: Systematically collect data on why educators leave.

Why: Replaces guesswork with targeted, data-driven improvements.

Impact: Smarter district-level decisions.

Pillar 3: Leadership Support & Pipeline Expansion

Leadership Mentoring

What: Provide structured mentoring for principals and school leaders.

Why: Research explicitly shows that supported leaders improve teacher retention.

Impact: Directly interrupts the \$100k vicious cycle of turnover. Better climate, stronger schools.

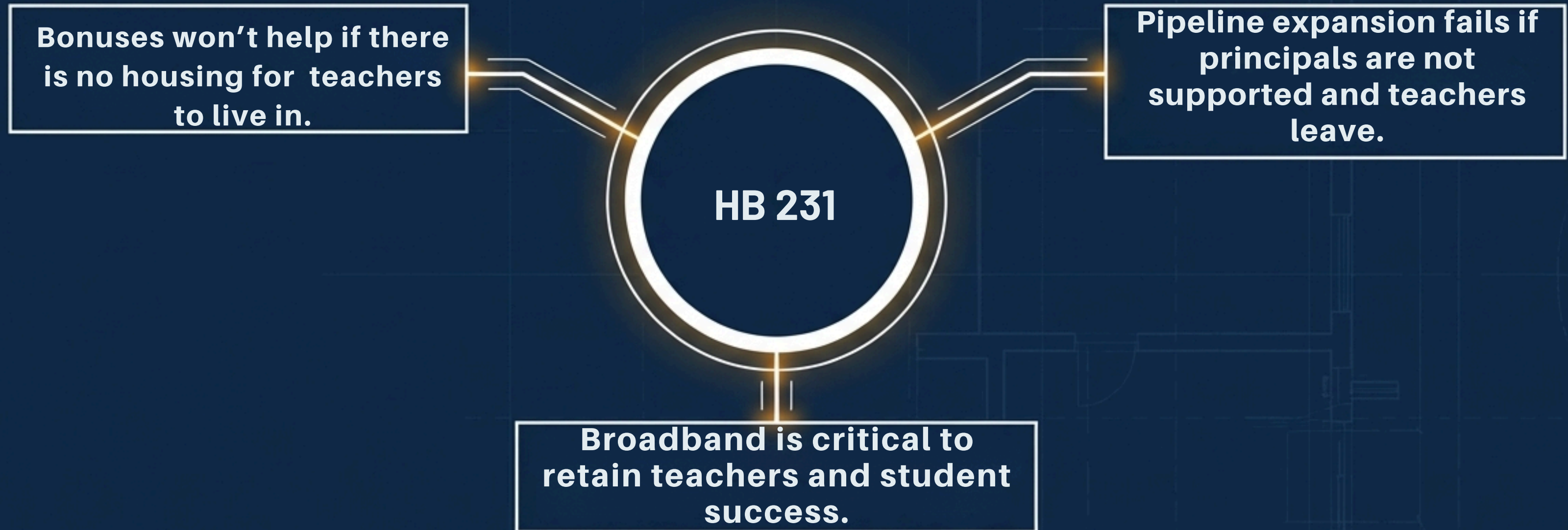
International Certification Reciprocity

What: Recognize international training and provide clear certification pathways.

Why: Expands the workforce equitably without forcing experienced educators to start over.

Impact: Faster hiring, larger talent pool.

From Playbook to Policy: An Interconnected Ecosystem



HB 231 is not a menu of options; it is a structural blueprint. Addressing recruitment without addressing working conditions, housing, and leadership mentoring will only result in continued, expensive turnover.

The Outcome of Implementation

We want what all Alaskans want for our children:

➤ Filled classrooms

➤ Quality educators

➤ Supported students

➤ Thriving communities

➤ Stronger schools

➤ A sustainable educator workforce

Support HB 231. This proposed policy is the direct implementation of Alaska's 6-year strategic plan.

Thank you!

Questions?

Jennifer Schmitz

jschmitz@alaskaacsa.org



ALASKA COUNCIL



OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS