

Alaska's cost of teacher turnover

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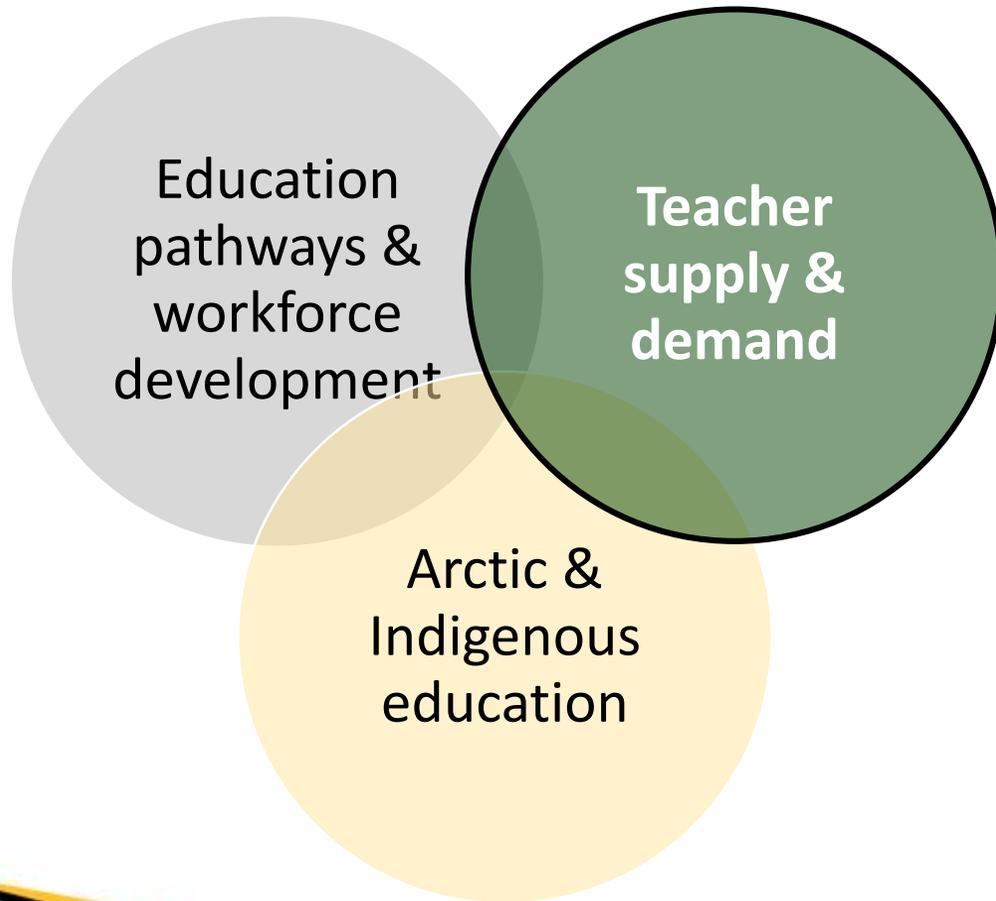
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Center for Alaska Education Policy Research



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

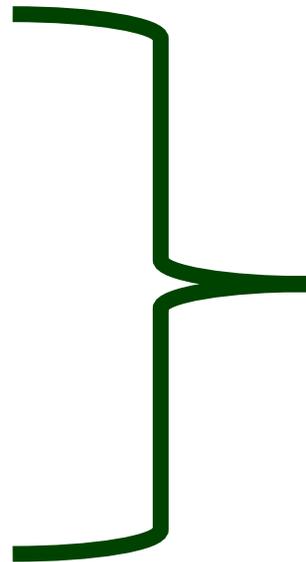
Transfer

- Practicing teacher moves to new subject area

Why is teacher turnover a concern?

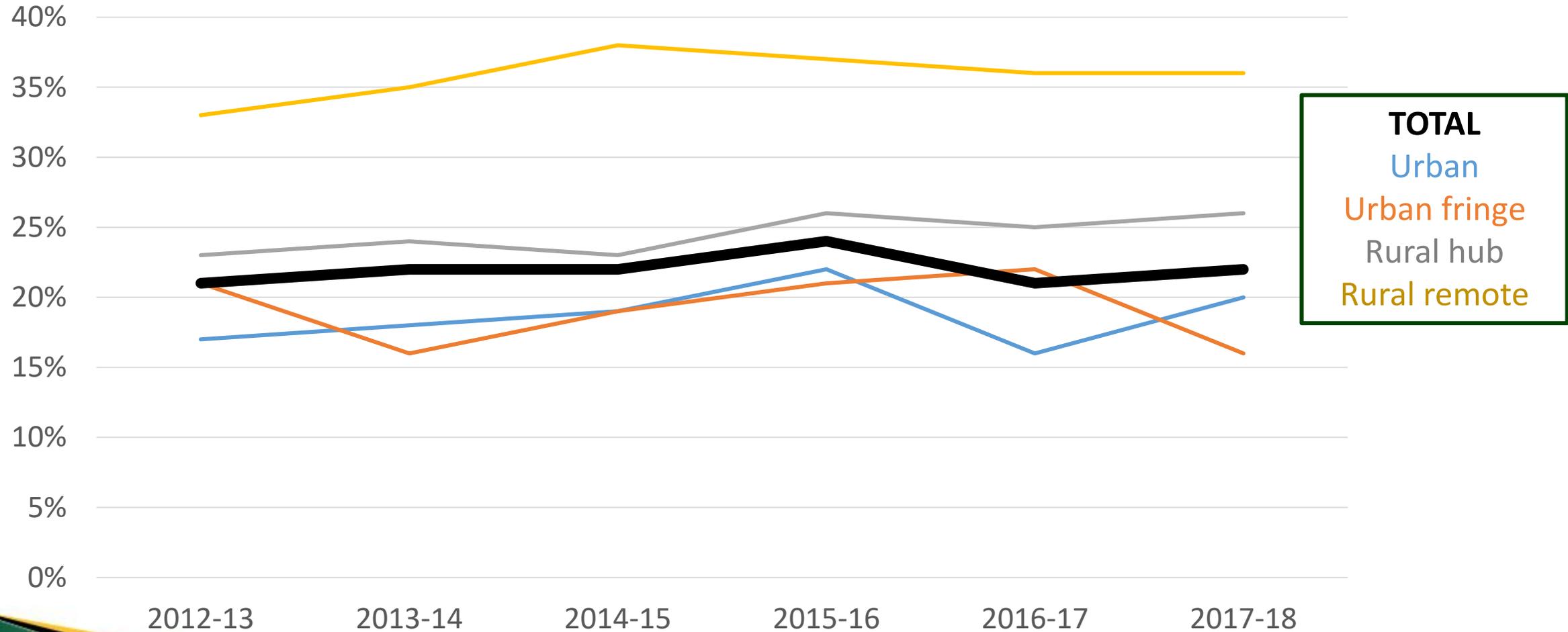
It's not *all* bad, but too much turnover...

- 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%

12th 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
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: \$20,431 per teacher				

Performance productivity	Preparation

*Excludes wages – material costs only

Other costs that we did not include

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