

Adequacy Study 2024

Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Prepared for the
House and Senate
Committees
on Education



June 4, 2024



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Introduction

For the past several adequacy studies, the Bureau of Legislative Research (BLR) has been asked to examine teacher recruitment and retention issues, in addition to the statutorily required analysis of teacher salaries, which will be discussed in a separate report. This report will provide information on issues affecting schools' abilities to attract and retain qualified teachers, state efforts to attract teachers to particular districts and disciplines, research-based best practices, and relevant survey results.

Arkansas Teachers

This section provides information on Arkansas teacher demographics, educational background, and licensure information. The first table shows historical data on teacher education and licensure in Arkansas from the past three school years on various teacher measures collected by the Division of Secondary and Elementary Education (DESE).

The average percentage of teachers with bachelor's, master's, and advanced degrees each increased over the last three years. The definitions and types of workforce data collected on teachers have changed over the last three years, as shown below. Some data measures like average attrition, however, were eliminated, but a new measure, retention, is now used. The percent attrition measured the percentage of teachers who were in the school/district in the previous year who did not return in the current school year.¹ Retention measures the percentage of teachers still teaching in the current year.

The average percentage of teachers who are completely certified increased by about two percentage points from 2021 to 2023, as did the average percentage of teachers with emergency/provisional credentials. The average years of teacher experience also increased from 10.5 in 2021 to 11.8 in 2023. In 2023, schools, on average, had 92% of teachers with at least one year of experience and 3% of nationally board-certified (NBCT) teachers. Schools' average retention rate was 74% and the average overall workplace stability index (WSI) percentile rank was 49%. The WSI was developed by ADE to "help inform school districts regarding considerations for recruiting, assigning, and retaining a quality educator workforce."²

The calculation for the workplace stability index changed in 2023. For the 2017-18 through 2021-22 school years, the WSI was based on inexperience, teaching out-of-field, teacher effectiveness, and attrition. Beginning in the 2022-23 school year, the variables included in the workplace stability index (WSI) now include experience, attainment, effectiveness, licensure, and retention. More details on the variables included in the current WSI are shown in Appendix A. The WSI is currently defined as a "measure of workforce quality defined in Arkansas's state plan as required under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)...All of the variables in each domain are positively related to workforce quality, meaning that as a district or school improves on a variable, one would expect to also see improvements in their WSI scores... ADE uses the WSI to identify districts and schools with potential gaps in access to effective teachers and target interventions and resources intended to close those gaps."³ According to the Arkansas Department of

¹ <https://myschoolinfo.arkansas.gov/FAQ/Personnel>

² <https://myschoolinfo.arkansas.gov/FAQ/Personnel#group-55>

³ https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Files/2022_Title_I_HPHM_Report_EEF.pdf

Education (ADE), the WSI is currently calculated the following way, “if Component Scores Percent Retention Score is null, then the value is null. Otherwise, WSI is the sum of the (Experience Score, Attainment Score, Licensure Score, and Percent Retention Score) / 4. The Percentile Rank is the Percentile of the WSI score, unless Percent Retention Score is null, then the Percentile Rank is also null.”⁴

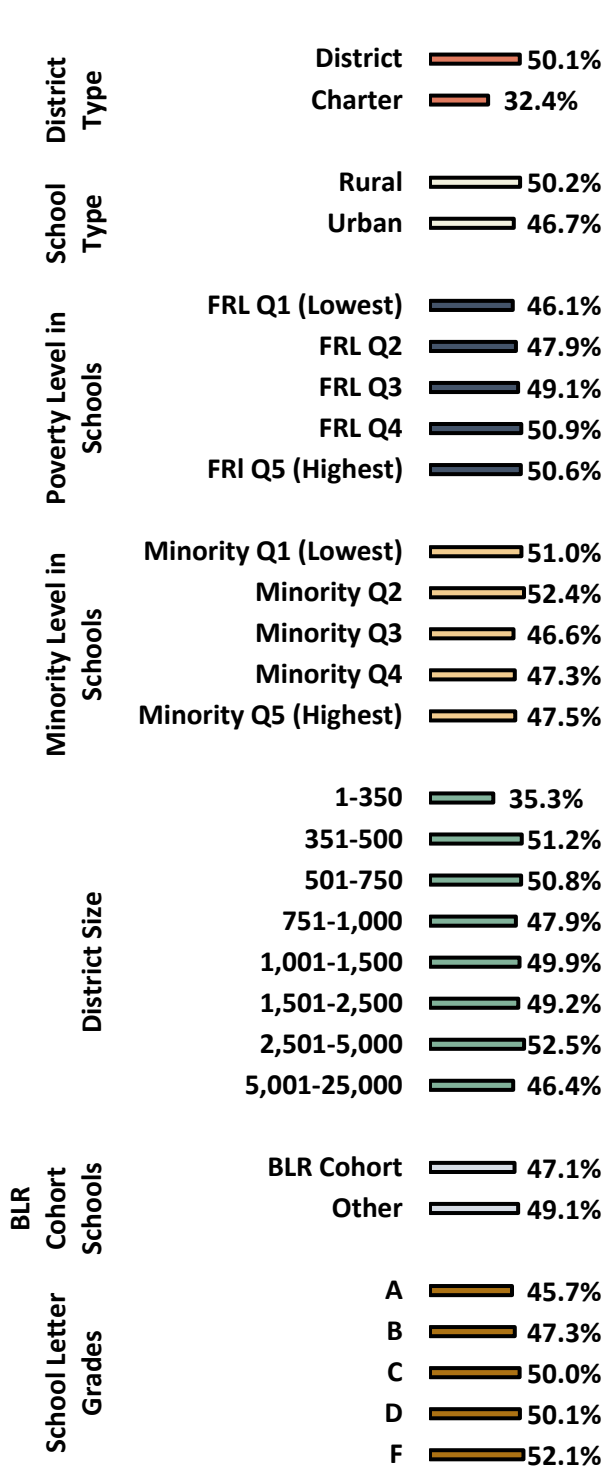
	FY21	FY22	FY23
Average Percentage of Teachers with Bachelor's Only	45%	42%	49%
Average Percentage of Teachers with Master's [WSI]	37%	36%	42%
Average Percentage of Teachers with Advanced Degrees	0.9%	0.9%	1.1%
Average Percentage of Teachers Completely Certified	92%	88%	94%
Average Percentage of Teachers with Emergency/Provisional Credentials	0.9	2.4%	3%
Average Years of Teacher Experience [WSI]	10.5	10.0	11.8
Average Percentage of Inexperienced Teachers ⁵	35.8%	N/A	
Average Percentage of Teachers Teaching Out-of-Field	2.4%		
Average Percentage Attrition	21.2%		
Average Percentage of Teachers with 1+ years of experience [WSI]	N/A		92%
Average Percentage of Nationally Board-Certified Teachers [WSI]			3%
Average Percentage of Teachers Without Act 1240 Exceptions [WSI]			97%
Average Percentage of Teachers Without Any Exceptions [WSI]			88%
Average Percentage of Retention [WSI]			74%
Average Overall Workforce Stability Index (WSI) Percentile Rank			49%
Data Source: DESE. MySchoolInfo – School Statewide Reports (2021 - 2023) and 2024 Workforce Stability Index (WSI) High Poverty/High-Minority Report for Title I Schools			
Note: [WSI] indicates a measure within the current Workforce Stability Index			

The following graphs show much of the teacher workforce data shown above by different categories of schools and districts.

⁴ <https://myschoolinfo.arkansas.gov/FAQ/Personnel>

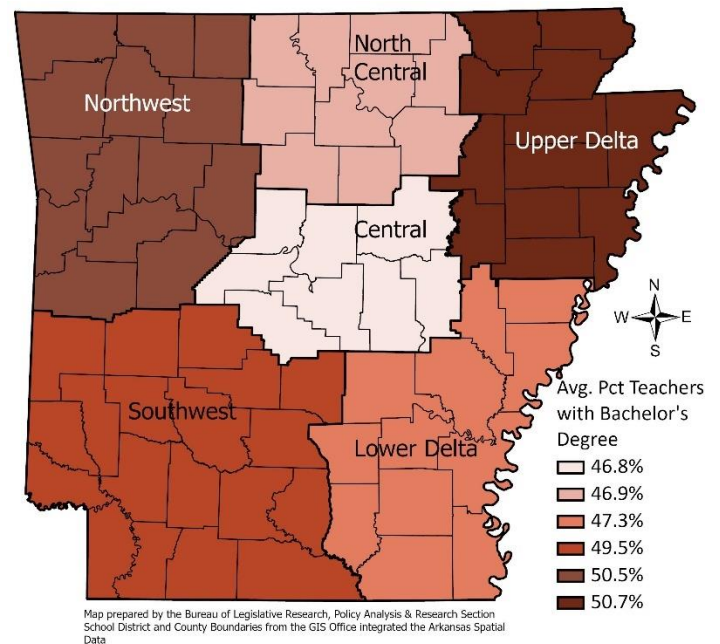
⁵ "Inexperienced" teachers are defined as teachers in their first three years of teaching. See Arkansas Department of Education "Rules Governing Educator Support and Development," Rule 4.18 (Dec. 2017) (defining "novice teacher").

Average Percentage of Teachers with a Bachelor's Degree Only – FY23 (Arkansas)

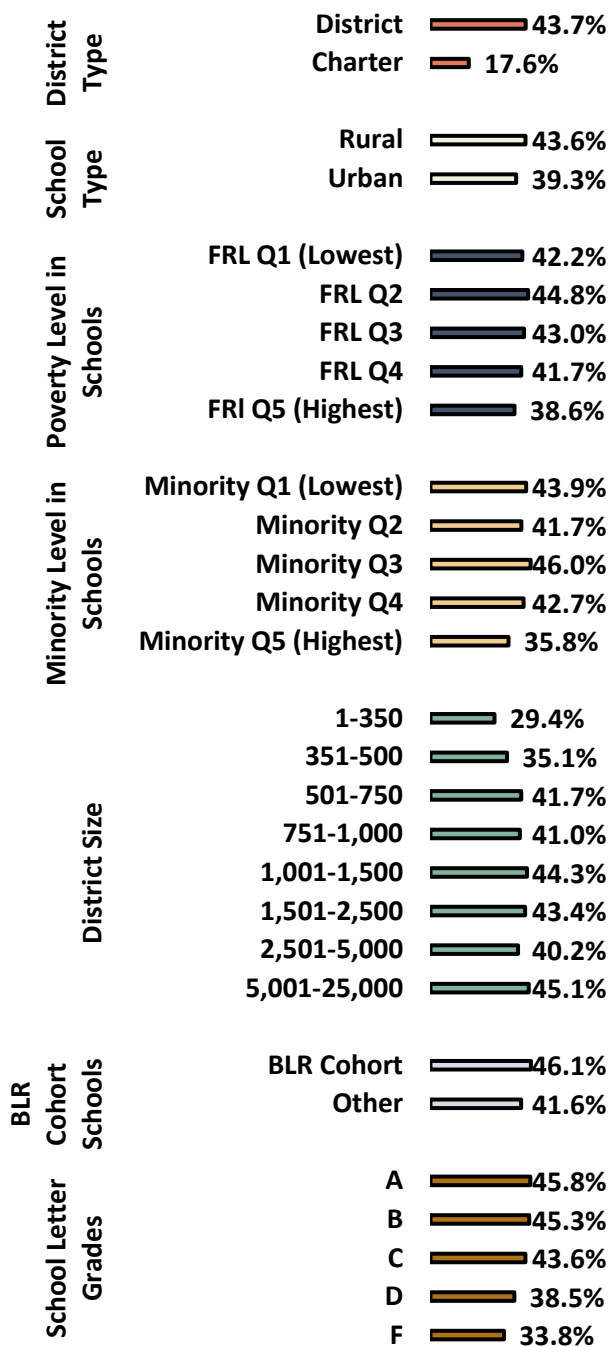


When looking at the average percentage of teachers with a bachelor's degree only at the school level statewide, schools in districts had more teachers with a bachelor's degree than schools in charter systems. This average percentage generally increased with higher rates of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch students and were lowest in schools in the smallest districts. Additionally, the same average percentage increased with lower school letter grades.

The following map shows how the average percentage of teachers with bachelor's degrees varied among regions across the state. Schools in the central region had the lowest average (46.8%) and schools in the upper delta region had the highest average (50.7%).

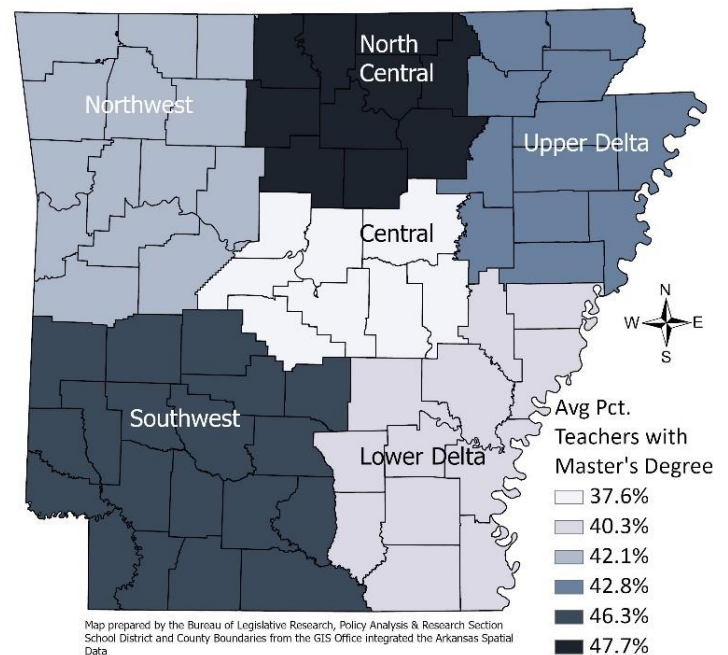


Average Percentage of Teachers with a Master's Degree – FY23 (Arkansas)

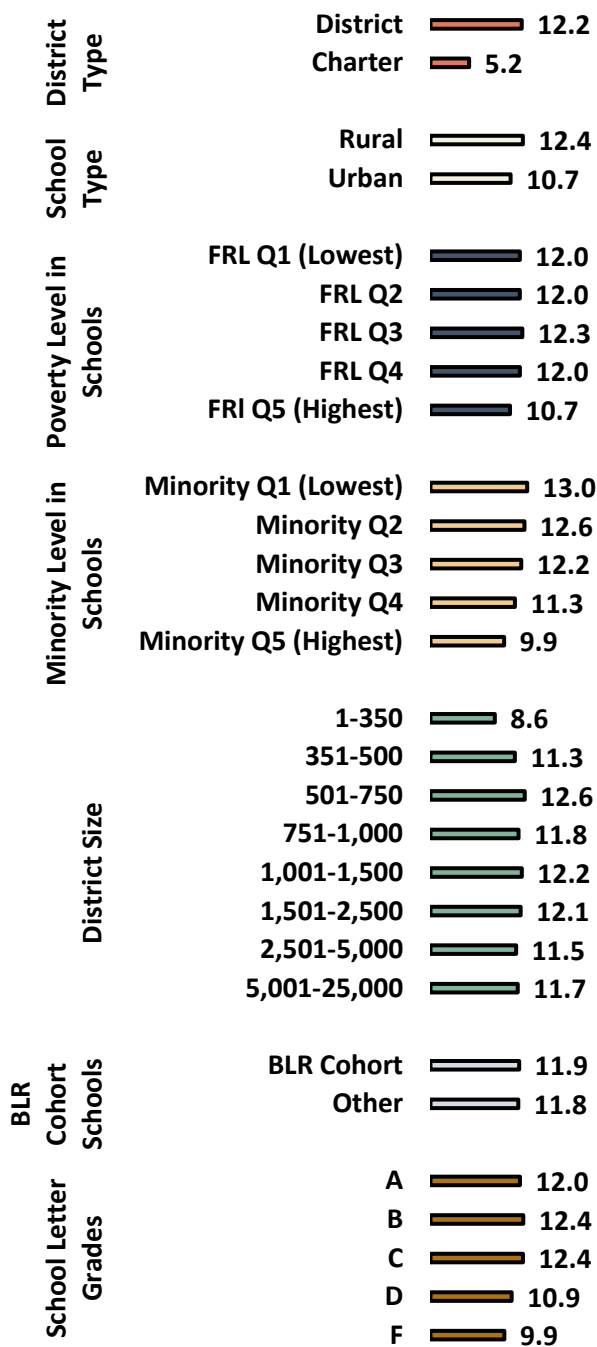


When looking at the average percentage of teachers with a master's degree at the school level statewide, the patterns were often reversed from those when looking at teachers with bachelor's degrees. Schools in districts had twice as many teachers with a master's degree than schools in charter systems had. This average percentage generally decreased with higher rates of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch students and were lowest in schools with the highest concentration of minority students. This average percentage also generally increased with larger districts and decreased with lower school letter grades. The average percentage was also higher in BLR cohort schools.

The following map shows how the average percentage of teachers with master's degrees varied among regions across the state. Schools in the central region had the lowest average with 37.6% and schools in the north central region had the highest average at 47.7%

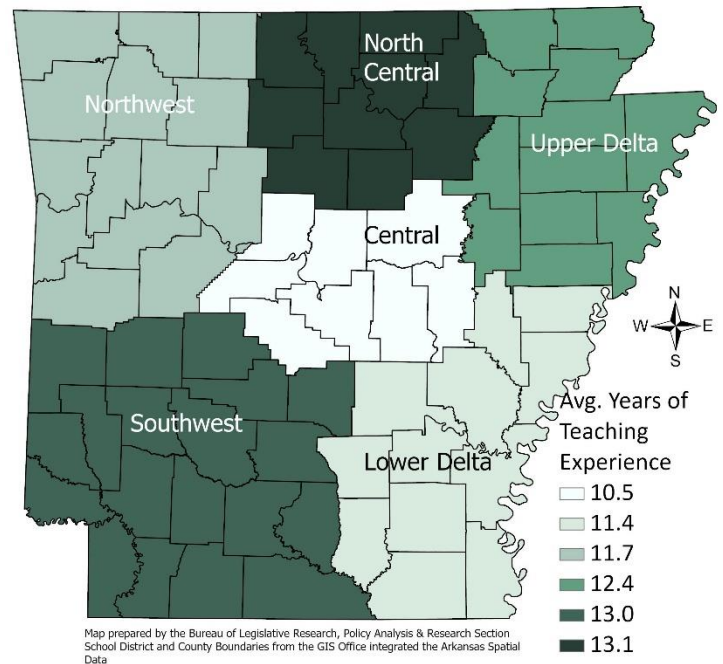


Average Years of Teaching Experience – FY23 (Arkansas)

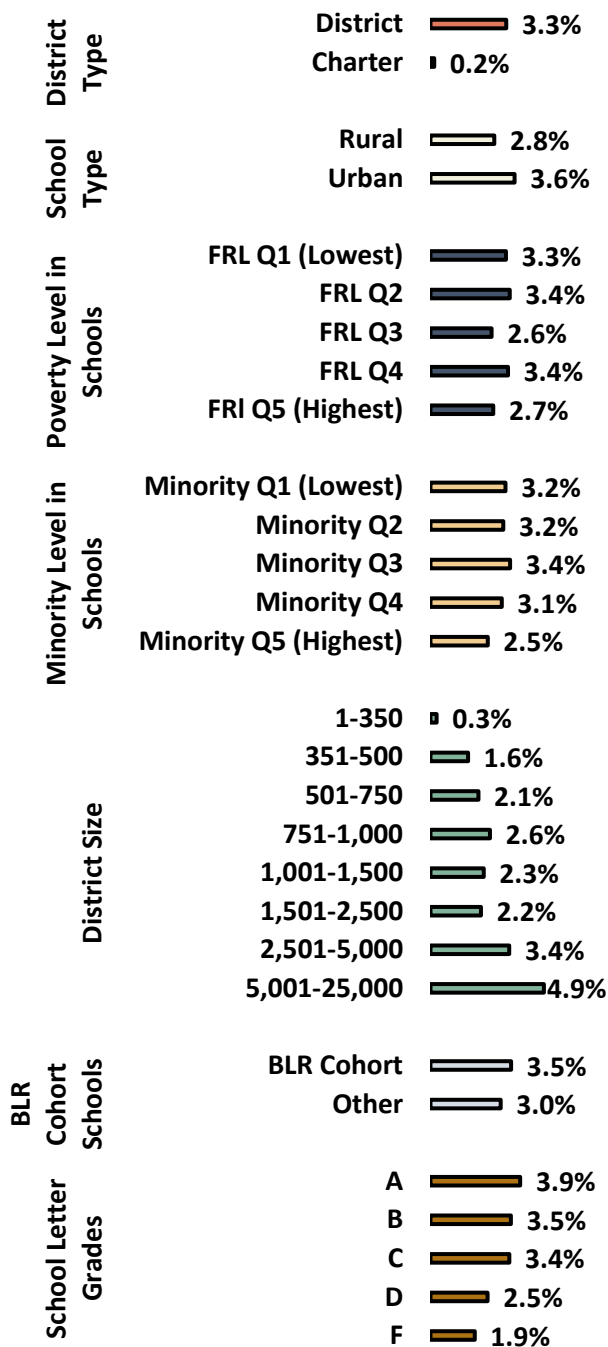


When looking at the average years of teaching experience at the school level statewide, teachers in districts had twice as many years of teaching experience as teachers in charter systems had. This average generally decreased with higher concentrations of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch students and with the concentration of minority students. This same average was also lowest among the smallest districts and generally decreased with lower school letter grades.

The following map shows how the average years of teaching experience varied among regions across the state. Schools in the central region had the lowest average with 10.5 years of experience and schools in the north central region had the highest average with 13.1 years.

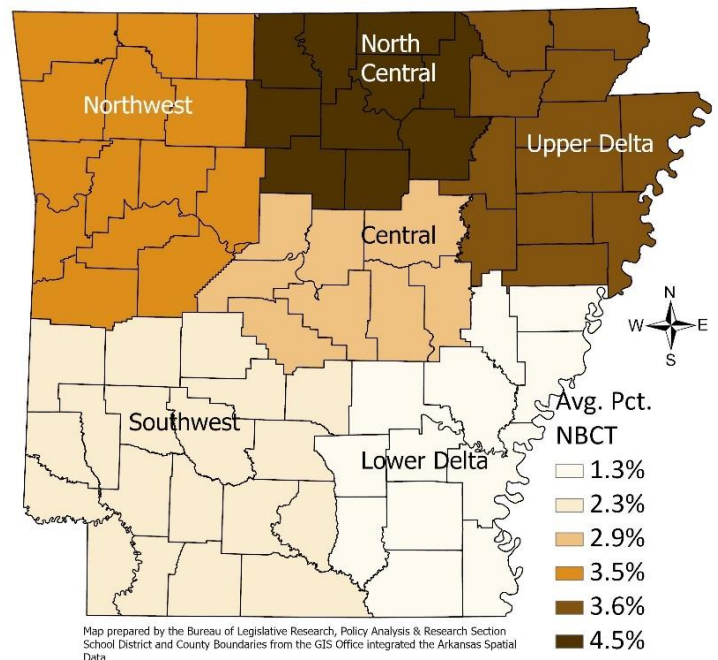


Average Percentage of Nationally Board-Certified Teachers – FY23 (Arkansas)

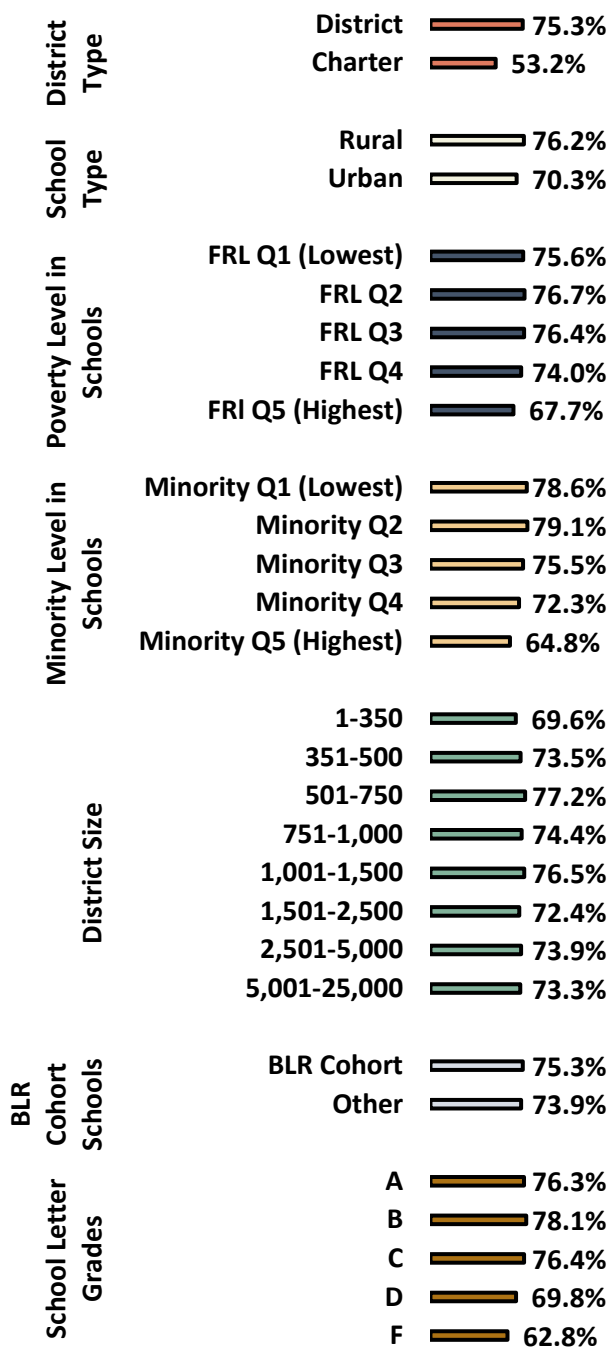


When looking at the average percentage of nationally board-certified teachers at the school level statewide, that percentage was more than three times as high in districts as compared to charters. This percentage was also higher in urban schools than in rural schools. That average percentage also generally decreased with higher concentrations of minority students and was lowest in schools with D and F letter grades. It also increased with district size.

The following map shows how that average percentage of Nationally Board-Certified Teachers varied among regions across the state. Schools in the lower delta region had the lowest average percentage of NBCTs with 1.3% and schools in the north central region had the highest with 4.5%.

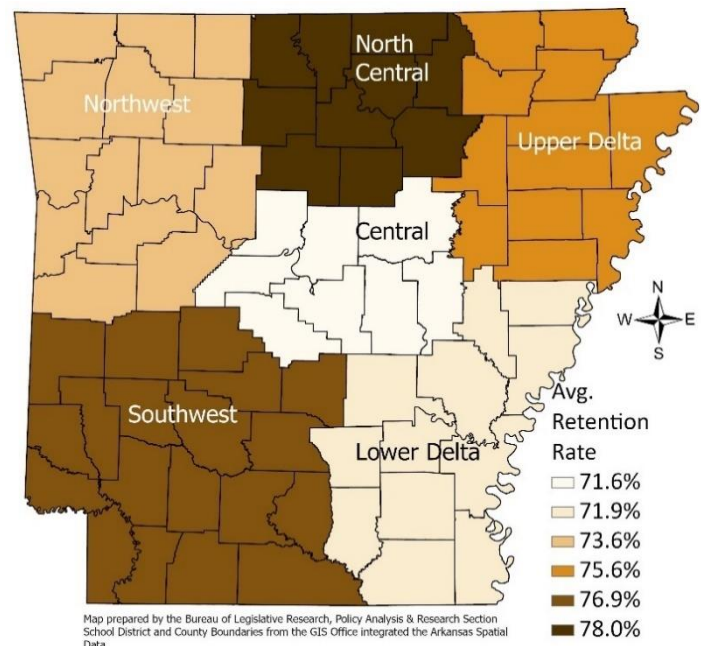


Average Retention Rate – FY23 (Arkansas)

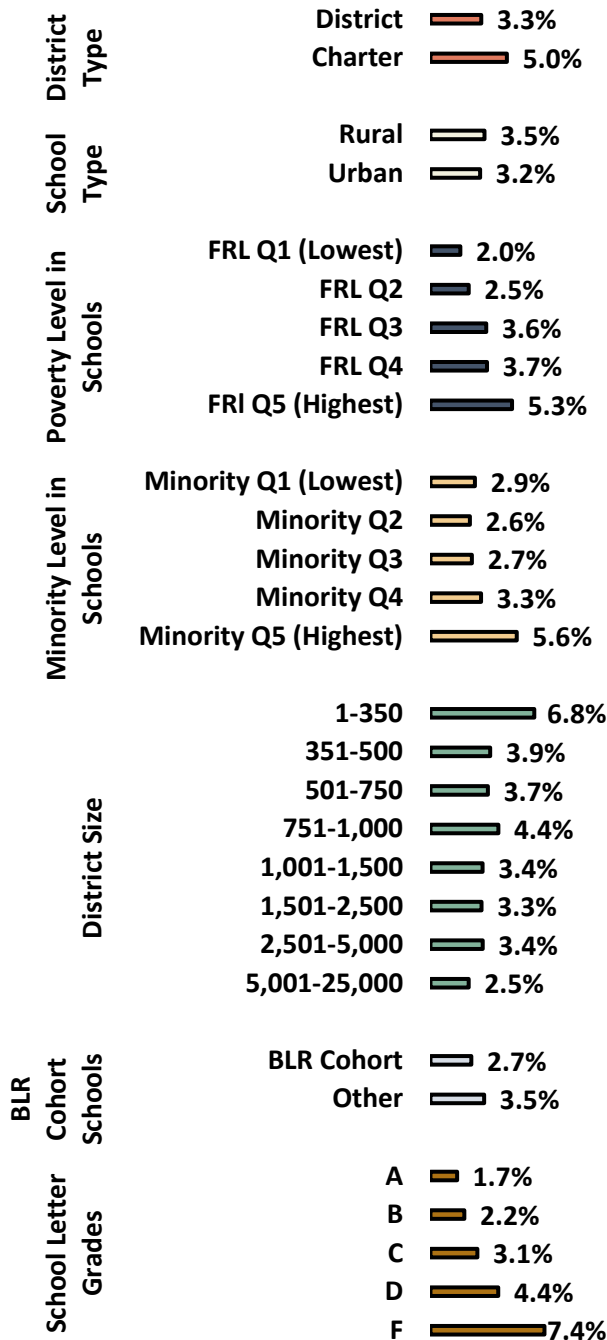


When looking at the average retention rate at the school level statewide, the average was higher among schools in districts as compared to schools in charter systems. This percentage was also higher in rural schools than it was in urban schools. It generally decreased with higher concentrations of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches and with higher concentrations of minority students. The average retention rate also was lowest among schools in the smallest districts and in “F” schools. It was also highest among BLR cohort schools.

The following map shows how that average retention rate varied among regions across the state. Schools in the central region had the lowest retention rate at 71.6% and schools in the north central region had the highest with 78%.

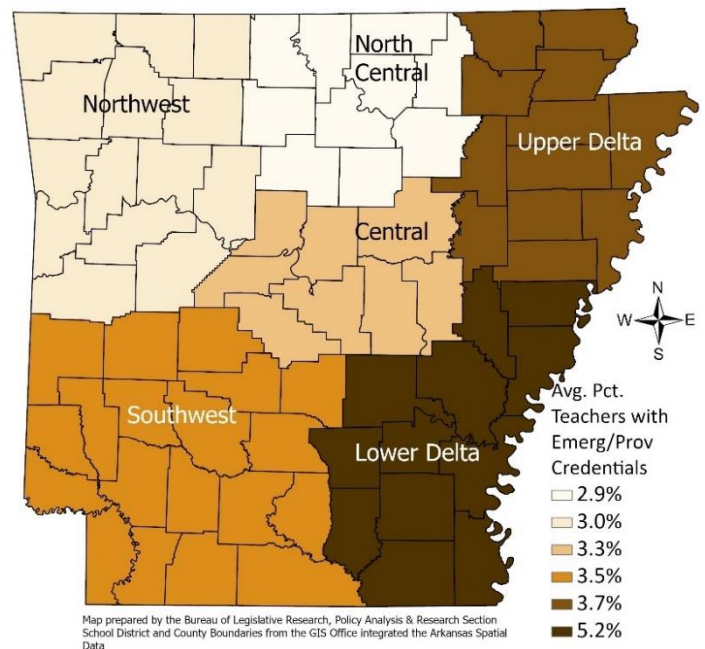


Average Percentage of Teachers with Emergency/Provisional Credentials – FY23 (Arkansas)



When looking at the average percentage of teachers with emergency/provisional credentials at the school level statewide, that average percentage was higher among schools in charter systems as compared to schools in districts. That average percentage generally increased with higher concentrations of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches and with concentrations of minority students. It also decreased among schools in larger districts and with higher school letter grades.

The following map shows how the average percentage of emergency/provisional credentials varied among regions across the state. Schools in the north central region had the lowest average percentage of teachers with emergency or provisional credentials (2.9%) and schools in the lower delta region had the highest (5.2%).



The table below shows the list of core academic subject teacher shortage areas for the last three school years. Per Arkansas Code⁶, teachers in shortage areas may be entitled to financial incentives. These incentives will be discussed in a later section. The standards used to determine shortages for the 2023 school year were different than in 2022, as shown in the subsequent table.

Core Academic Subject Area Teacher Shortage List		
2021	2022	2023
Art (K-12)	Art (K-12)	Art (K-12)
Business (4-12)	Chemistry (7-12)	Computer Science (4-12)
Biology (7-12)	French (K-12)	Foreign Language (K-12)*
Chemistry (7-12)	Library/Media (K-12)	Music (K-12)
French (K-12)	Mathematics (7-12)	Secondary Mathematics (7-12)
Mathematics (7-12)	Physics (7-12)	Secondary Science (7-12)
Physics (7-12)	Special Education (K-12)	Secondary Social Studies (7-12)
Special Education (K-12)		Special Education (K-12)

Data Source: DESE⁷

*Foreign language shortage area is not limited to French.

Standards used to determine shortage areas:	
2022	2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Numbers of teachers preparing for AR educator licenses b. Numbers of teachers receiving AR licenses for the first time c. Numbers of long-term substitute teachers in classrooms, in AR public schools d. Numbers of ALP⁸ waivers granted to teachers teaching of their area of licensure e. Potential decreases in the teacher workforce due to attrition and retirement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Teaching positions filled by individuals who do not hold a license to teach in the subject area b. Subject area specific retirement numbers c. High-Need fields as determined by the U.S. Department of Education

Sources: DESE Core Academic Subject Area Teacher Shortage Lists for the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years

The following map shows the geographical teacher shortage districts for the 2023 school year using data from the Division of Higher Education.⁹ These schools were “developed based on the amount of uncertified teachers filling true vacancies in Arkansas school districts. ‘Uncertified teacher’ is defined as a teacher who meets one of the following criteria: employed under a 1240 wavier; employed under an Emergency Teaching Permit (ETP); a longterm substitute filling a true vacancy for a full year.” KIPP Delta Public Schools was considered a first priority district, but they are not included on this map since they are an open-enrollment

⁶ Arkansas Code Annotated §§6-81-1601 through 6-81-1606

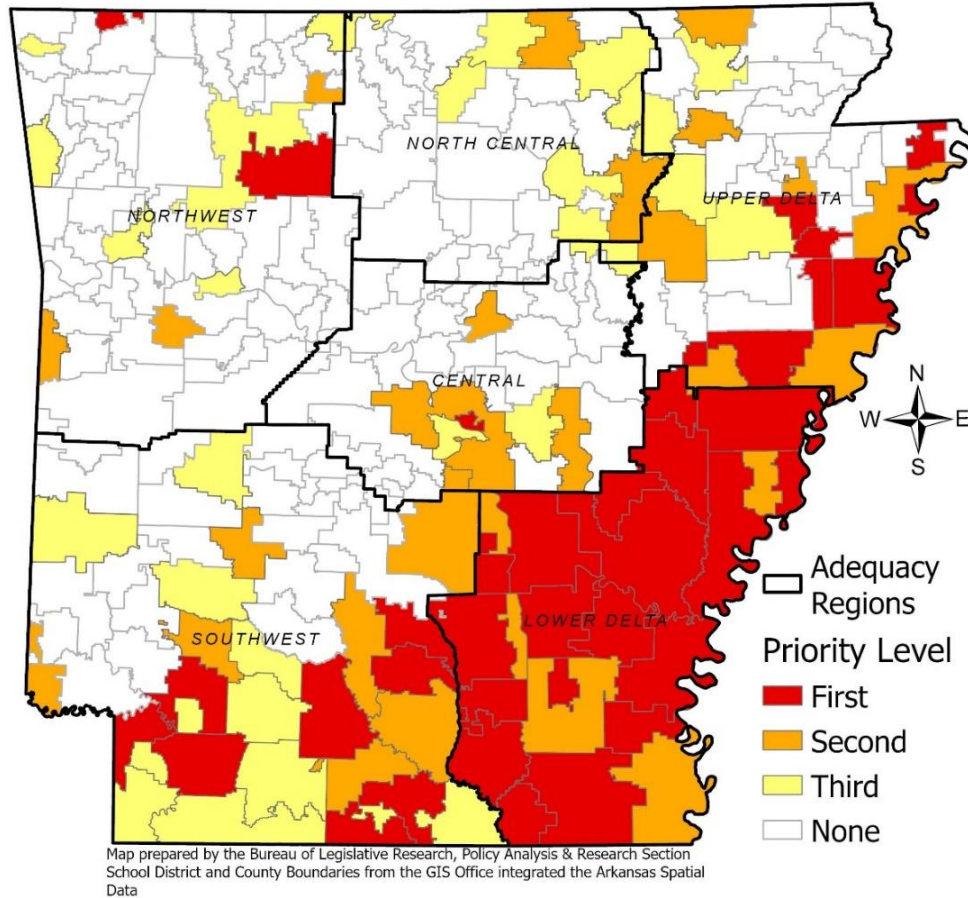
⁷ “Core Academic Subject Area Teacher Shortage List for the 2022-2023 School Year”. https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Files/2022-2023_Core_Academic_Subject_Area_Teacher_Shortage_List_EEF.pdf

⁸ Additional Licensure Plan (ALP) “indicates the reason a teacher is assigned to a course that he/she is not licensed to teach.” Retrieved from: <https://myschoolinfo.arkansas.gov/FAQ/Personnel>

⁹ Note: This map does not include the Arkansas School for the Blind or the Arkansas School for the Deaf. Retrieved from: <https://sams.adhe.edu/File/22-23%20Geographical%20Teacher%20Shortage%20Area%20List%2008.23.22.pdf>

public charter school. For teachers applying to the State Teacher Education Program (STEP), priority will be given according to the tier. The STEP program will be discussed later in this report.

Geographic Teacher Shortage Area Districts – FY23



The table to the right shows information for Arkansas students compared to Arkansas teachers. Statewide, 87% of teachers are white compared to 59% of students. White teachers are overrepresented in comparison to white students whereas black/African American and Hispanic/Latino teachers are underrepresented in comparison to students from each group, respectively. Additionally, DESE noted that in 2021 (the most recently available data), 21% of enrollment in educator preparation programs were non-white and 18% of completers were non-white. DESE defines completers as “a person who has met all

	2023	
	Students	Teachers
American Indian	0.6%	0.5%
Asian	1.8%	0.5%
Black/ African American	19.2%	10.0%
Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	1.0%	0.1%
Hispanic/ Latino	14.2%	1.9%
Two or More Races	4.3%	0.3%
White	58.9%	86.7%
Total	476,106	36,175

Data Source: DESE. MySchoolInfo – School Statewide Reports (2023)

the requirements of a state-approved teacher preparation program.”¹⁰

Research¹¹ shows that having teachers of color boosts the academic performance of all students, especially students of color who can also experience social-emotional and nonacademic benefits from having teachers of color (e.g. fewer unexcused absences and lower likelihoods of chronic absenteeism and suspension). Other teachers of color are likely to benefit as well as they may experience feelings of isolation, frustration, and fatigue when there are few other teachers of color in their schools.^{12,13}

Arkansas’s Recruitment and Retention Efforts

There are multiple statutory requirements regarding teacher recruitment and retention in public school districts.

Within DESE, the Office for the Purpose of Teacher Recruitment was established to ensure “that the children of our state are taught by highly qualified professionals”.¹⁴ Additionally, schools participating in education renewal zones must include in their strategic school-level improvement plans, as relevant to this topic, strategies to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers by “providing opportunities and support for teacher professional growth; and providing opportunities for collaboration”.¹⁵

School districts and open-enrollment charter schools are also required to prepare and post to their website by August 1st of each year a three-year Teacher and Administrator Recruitment and Retention Plan. The plan must set goals for the following:

- “The recruitment and retention of teachers and administrators of minority races and ethnicities who increase diversity among the district staff and, at a minimum, reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the district's students; and
- Increasing the number of students who pursue careers in education with an emphasis on students of minority races and ethnicities.”¹⁶

Districts are also required to annually review the recruitment and retention plan and the progress at which the district is reaching the above-mentioned goals.

This section will review the pathways and licensure programs as well as financial incentives and loan forgiveness programs provided in Arkansas. These do not include any new or modified programs or incentives available after the 2022-23 school year.

Pathways and Licensure Programs

Multiple traditional and alternative routes are available to first-time educator licensure recipients. “A traditional route to first-time licensure requires program coursework and supervised clinical experiences to

¹⁰ DESE. “2022 Educator Preparation Provider Quality Report (EPPQR). Retrieved from: <https://eis.ade.arkansas.gov/eppr/docs/State/StatewideReportSeptember2022.pdf>

¹¹ Carver-Thomas, Desiree. “Diversifying the Teaching Profession: How to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color.” (April 2018). Learning Policy Institute.

¹² *Ibid*

¹³ Oakes, J., et. al. (2020). “Improving Education the New Mexico Way.” Learning Policy Institute.

¹⁴ Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-310

¹⁵ Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-2504

¹⁶ Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-1901, et seq

be completed before the candidate is allowed to serve as teacher of record. Traditional routes are embedded in a degree (primarily bachelors) and are offered through Institutions of Higher Education (IHE).¹⁷ There are 21 approved traditional preparation providers in Arkansas as of 2023.¹⁸

“Alternative routes to first-time licensure are designed for individuals who have already earned a bachelor’s degree and proven proficiency in the content area in which they are seeking licensure. These programs allow candidates the opportunity to teach under a provisional license while learning the pedagogical skills necessary to be an effective educator.”¹⁹ These alternative routes include those available through an IHE and those outside of an IHE. “Alternative route programs offered through IHEs (IHE-based) lead to graduate hours or a graduate degree.” There are 12 institutions of higher education offering alternative routes to licensure in Arkansas.²⁰ Alternative routes offered by a provider operating outside of an IHE may “lead to licensure but not graduate credit or a graduate degree.”²¹ There are eight non-IHE alternative pathways available in Arkansas.²² More details on the non-IHE alternative pathways available in Arkansas are shown below.

Non-IHE Alternative Route	Licensure Areas/Types	Program Description
Arkansas Professional Educator Pathway (ArPEP)*	First-time licensure area with the exception of Special Education K-12, Adult Education, and Guidance and School Counseling.	Two years; two weeks of face-to-face training each summer; Monthly training commitments through each year; Must secure position as teacher of record in AR school for the duration of program.
Arkansas Teacher Corps (ATC)		Seven-week intensive summer training including teaching summer school; 3 Year commitment to teach in select regions in AR
American Board (ABCTE)	All middle level 4-8 areas, Biology 7-12, Chemistry 7-12, Physics 7-12, English 7-12, Social Studies 7-12, Math 7-12.	100% Online; 7-10 months
Highly Qualified Professor (HQP)*	Any first-time licensure area.	Required professional development; Demonstrate pedagogical competence through either completion of pedagogy professional development courses, or passing a current Principles of Learning and Teaching exam.
iTeach	Any first-time licensure area with the exception of Special Education K-12, Elementary Education K-6, Adult Education, and Guidance and School Counseling.	100% online; Seven online courses; 1-2 years; Candidate must secure position as a teacher of record in an AR school

¹⁷ DESE. “2022 Educator Preparation Provider Quality Report (EPPQR). Retrieved from: <https://eis.ade.arkansas.gov/eppr/docs/State/StatewideReportSeptember2022.pdf>

¹⁸ <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/educator-effectiveness/pathways-to-licensure>

¹⁹ DESE. “2022 Educator Preparation Provider Quality Report (EPPQR). Retrieved from: <https://eis.ade.arkansas.gov/eppr/docs/State/StatewideReportSeptember2022.pdf>

²⁰ <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/educator-effectiveness/pathways-to-licensure>

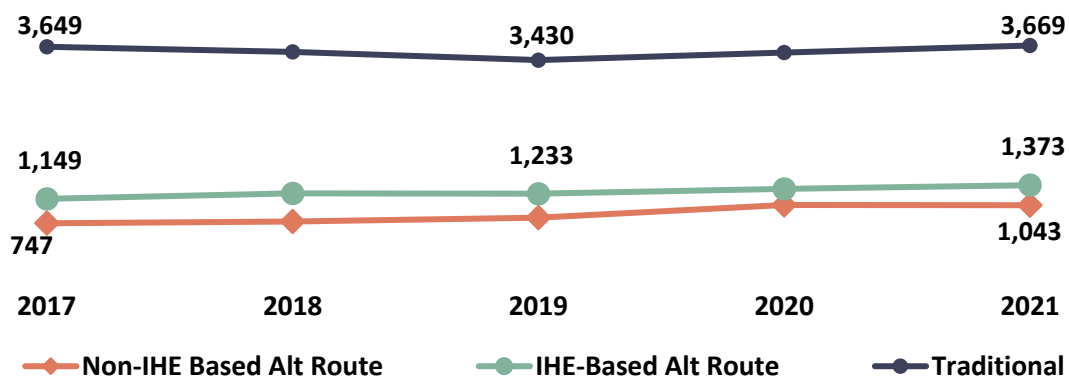
²¹ *Ibid*

²² <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/educator-effectiveness/pathways-to-licensure>

Provisional Professional Teaching License (PPTL)*	Any first-time licensure area with the exception of Elementary Education K-6, Special Education K-12, Adult Education, and Guidance and School Counseling	Specific district support provided to novice teachers; Complete 12 hours of training in pedagogy each year of licensure and state PD requirements
Teach for America	Any first-time licensure area with the exception of Special Education K-12, Adult Education, and Guidance and School Counseling.	Five-week summer institute at Delta State University and two-year commitment to teach in area of the state identified as high minority and high poverty.
Master’s Degree leading to first-time licensure**	DESE approved program of study leading to Arkansas Licensure in all first-time licensure areas with the exception of Guidance and School Counseling.	Often referred to MAT, MTLL, or Med; 30 or more hours of graduate level coursework;
<p>*Indicates program administered by DESE **Indicates program administered by various higher education institutions Source: DESE²³</p>		

Since 2017, enrollment in educator preparation programs has increased 10%. “However, this growth is largely due to the increase in alternative route enrollment, as traditional enrollment numbers have remained consistent. While the traditional routes have the largest total enrollment, alternative route enrollment has increased by 27% between 2017 and 2021.”²⁴

Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Enrollment by Preparation Route



Data Source: DESE²⁵

DESE defines completers as “a person who has met all the requirements of a state-approved teacher preparation program.”²⁶ Across all preparation routes, the number of educator preparation program completers has decreased 1% since 2017. This loss is primarily in traditional programs, whereas completers in

²³ “Pathways to Licensures: Alternate Routes.” Retrieved from: <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/educator-effectiveness/pathways-to-licensure>

²⁴ DESE. “2022 Educator Preparation Provider Quality Report (EPPQR). Retrieved from: <https://eis.ade.arkansas.gov/eppr/docs/State/StatewideReportSeptember2022.pdf>

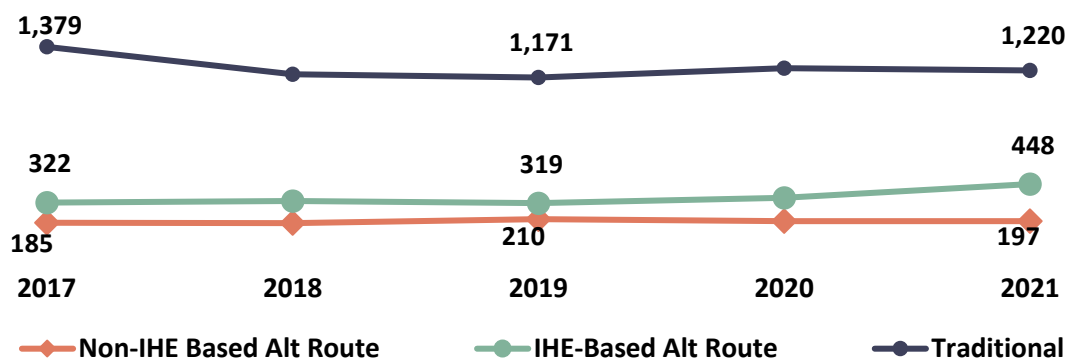
²⁵ *Ibid*

²⁶ *Ibid*

alternative programs increased 27% during that time. However, more students are enrolled in and completing traditional educator preparation programs.

According to DESE, “traditional EPPs are responsible for producing the largest percentage of diverse enrollees and completers, but not by a large percentage, especially when looking at total enrollment. Where traditional EPPs accounted for 60% of total EPP enrollment, they only accounted for 53% of diverse enrollment. Similarly, with completers, traditional programs accounted for 65% of total completers, but only 59% of diverse completers.”²⁷

Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Completers by Preparation Route



Data Source: DESE²⁸

In the Bureau of Legislative Research’s (BLR) 2023 adequacy teacher surveys, the survey found that 83% of 5,103 teachers surveyed received their certification in Arkansas, and 59% of those were through a traditional certification route.²⁹

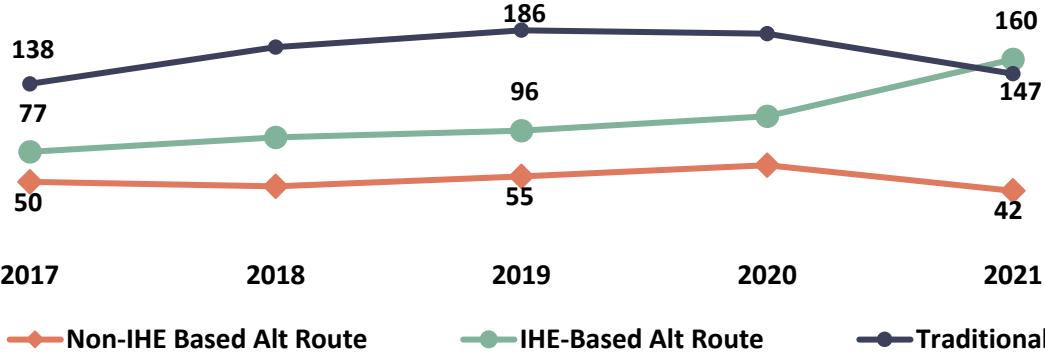
DESE also looked at EPP completers in subject shortage areas. Subject shortage areas are defined as areas that had been on the Arkansas Core Academic Subject Area Shortage List for the previous five years. Candidates can complete in more than one subject area. Overall, the percentage of completers in subject shortage areas increased by 32%.

²⁷ *Ibid*

²⁸ DESE. “2022 Educator Preparation Provider Quality Report (EPPQR). Retrieved from: <https://eis.ade.arkansas.gov/eppr/docs/State/StatewideReportSeptember2022.pdf>

²⁹ BLR Adequacy Teacher Survey Question 7

Education Preparation Program Completers in Subject Shortage Areas



Data Source: DESE³⁰

In 2022, the percent of EPP completers working in Arkansas public schools increased from 60% in 2018 to 65% in 2022. Of these completers, 61% were from traditional route programs. DESE found more than 50% of all 2021 completers worked in four co-op regions in 2022. Schools within the Pulaski County Schools co-op employed the largest percentage of completers in 2022 (15%). Additionally, the percentage of completers from each kind of preparation program varied across the state. Of all the 2021 EPP completers, those who completed a traditional route made up 25% of the completers working in schools in the Southeast co-op region compared to 80% of completers working in schools in the Arch Ford co-op region. According to DESE, “three co-op regions, Arkansas River, Great Rivers, and Southeast, have 50% or more districts within their service region that employ 10% or more uncertified teachers, some districts in these regions employing over 50% uncertified teachers.”³¹

DESE surveyed completers who were novice teachers in Arkansas public schools in 2022 and who had completed an Arkansas educator preparation program. They found “there was little variation in the average score for respondents completing different routes to licensure. Survey results indicate that EPP completers agree they were prepared to meet each Domain of the Teacher Excellence and Support System.”^{32 33}

They also found that EPP completers felt least prepared to meet the domain related to classroom environment that “describes conditions and qualities of environments that are conducive to learning and support student success.” Overall, EPP completers also “indicated they were prepared for all assessments between moderately and very well.” However, traditional EPP completers “indicated they were better prepared for all assessments than alternative completers.”³⁴ DESE also surveyed supervisors of these completers and found that “on average supervisors feel completers are prepared between minimally and moderately well to meet the TESS Domains. Interestingly, the Domain that novice EPP completers felt they were most prepared for, Domain 3-Instruction, was the Domain that EPP completer supervisors felt they

³⁰ DESE. “2022 Educator Preparation Provider Quality Report (EPPQR). Retrieved from: <https://eis.ade.arkansas.gov/eppr/docs/State/StatewideReportSeptember2022.pdf>

³¹ *Ibid*

³² Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) is the system used to evaluate teachers in AR public schools.

³³ DESE. “2022 Educator Preparation Provider Quality Report (EPPQR). Retrieved from: <https://eis.ade.arkansas.gov/eppr/docs/State/StatewideReportSeptember2022.pdf>

³⁴ *Ibid*

were least prepared for...Supervisors felt EPP completers were most prepared for Domain 4-Professional Responsibilities.”³⁵

ADE, in partnership with Arkansas institutions of higher education, launched the Arkansas Grow Your Own Model in Fall of 2022. In this program, an individual starts by earning a certified teaching assistant (CTA) credential. This is done either the pre-educator program of study or following high school graduation with college coursework. “After earning a high school diploma, CTAs meet all requirements for a paraprofessional, plus have completed 9 hours of college coursework they can use toward a degree in education. Candidates can work in a school while enrolled in an associate or bachelor's degree program designed to feed into an approved Arkansas educator preparation program (EPP). Once enrolled in an EPP, the CTA’s student facing job responsibilities show stronger alignment with the grade level or content of the licensure being sought. Once all pre-requisites for internship are met, the candidate is prepared to enter a yearlong residency. Candidates can complete a yearlong residency as teacher of record under an Aspiring Teacher Permit if they have passed all necessary licensure assessments and a partnership is in place with the candidate's Arkansas approved EPP and employing district to ensure multiple levels of support.”³⁶

Financial or Monetary Programs

DESE provides multiple forms of financial aid for teachers that are shown in the table below, along with the amounts awarded in FY22 and FY23.³⁷ This table does not include any federal financial incentives or loan forgiveness programs.

³⁵ *Ibid*

³⁶ Email from Karli Saracini at the Arkansas Department of Education dated May 29, 2024.

³⁷ For the loan forgiveness programs, FY22 is the most recently available data.

Salary or Financial Incentives

Program Name	Who Is It For?	What is Provided?	Amount Awarded (FY23)
High-Priority District Recruitment and Retention	Provides teacher bonuses to newly hired teachers working in a high-priority district	Bonus amounts of \$3,000 - \$5,000 depending on years of experience. Amount can be prorated depending on available funds	\$2,096,010
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards	Teachers who become Nationally Board-Certified Teachers	\$2,500 annual bonus for teachers in a low-poverty school for five years; \$5,000 annual bonus for teachers in high-poverty school for five years. Max of 10 years	\$13,732,255
Test Fee Reimbursements	Teachers employed in Arkansas public schools or charter schools who have earned a standard license in a critical shortage or geographical shortage area or in computer science	Licensure test fee reimbursements for various Praxis tests and the Foundations of Reading (\$130 - \$399)	N/A

Loan Forgiveness Programs

Program Name	Who Is It For?	What is Provided?	Amount Awarded (FY22)*
State Teacher Education Program (STEP)	Current educators teaching in a subject or geographical shortage area in an Arkansas public school	Up to \$4,000 per year paid directly to lender	\$1,138,335
Teacher Opportunity Program (TOP)	Current Arkansas teachers and administrators who wish to continue their education	Up to \$3,000 per year reimbursed to applicant	\$1,577,051

Source: DESE³⁸, ADHE³⁹

*FY22 was the most available year of data for the loan forgiveness programs.

Adequacy Survey Results

In BLR's 2023 adequacy principal survey, principals were asked about how helpful different forms of financial incentives, loan forgiveness programs, and alternative pathways to licensure were in recruiting and retaining teachers. There were 807 principals who responded to the survey, or 77.1% of all principals. More details about the principal adequacy survey can be found in the Adequacy Study Principal Survey Responses report.

When asked about the options in regard to recruiting teachers, the Arkansas Professional Pathway to Educator Licensure (APPEL) was rated the most helpful, with 53% of principals rating it very helpful or essential.⁴⁰ When responses for "somewhat helpful" were included, that percentage increased to 89%. The next most helpful options identified were the State Teacher Education Program (69%) and the National Board

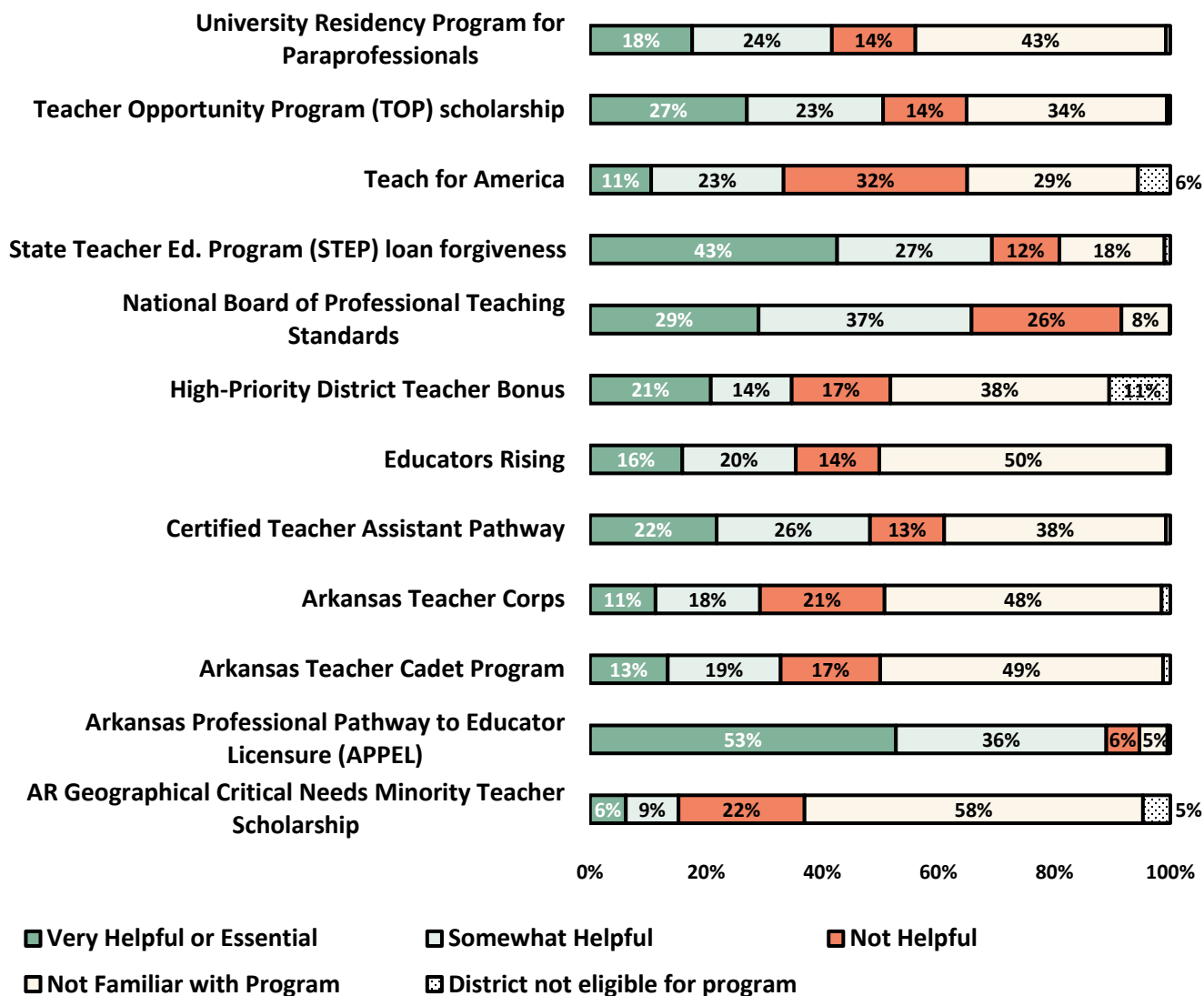
³⁸ https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Files/Financial_Aid_for_Teachers-At_a_Glance_Feb_2024_EEF.pdf

³⁹ [https://adhe.edu/File/Copy%20of%20Act1520Report21_22%20\(3\).pdf](https://adhe.edu/File/Copy%20of%20Act1520Report21_22%20(3).pdf)

⁴⁰ 2024 BLR Adequacy Principal Survey Question 20

of Professional Teaching Standards (66%). The option with the largest number of principals rating it not helpful was Teach for America, with 32%. However, with the exception of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards and the Arkansas Professional Pathway to Educator Licensure, between 18% and 58% of principals reported being not familiar with each of these programs.

Please **RATE** the following programs in terms of their helpfulness in **RECRUITING** high quality teachers to your school.



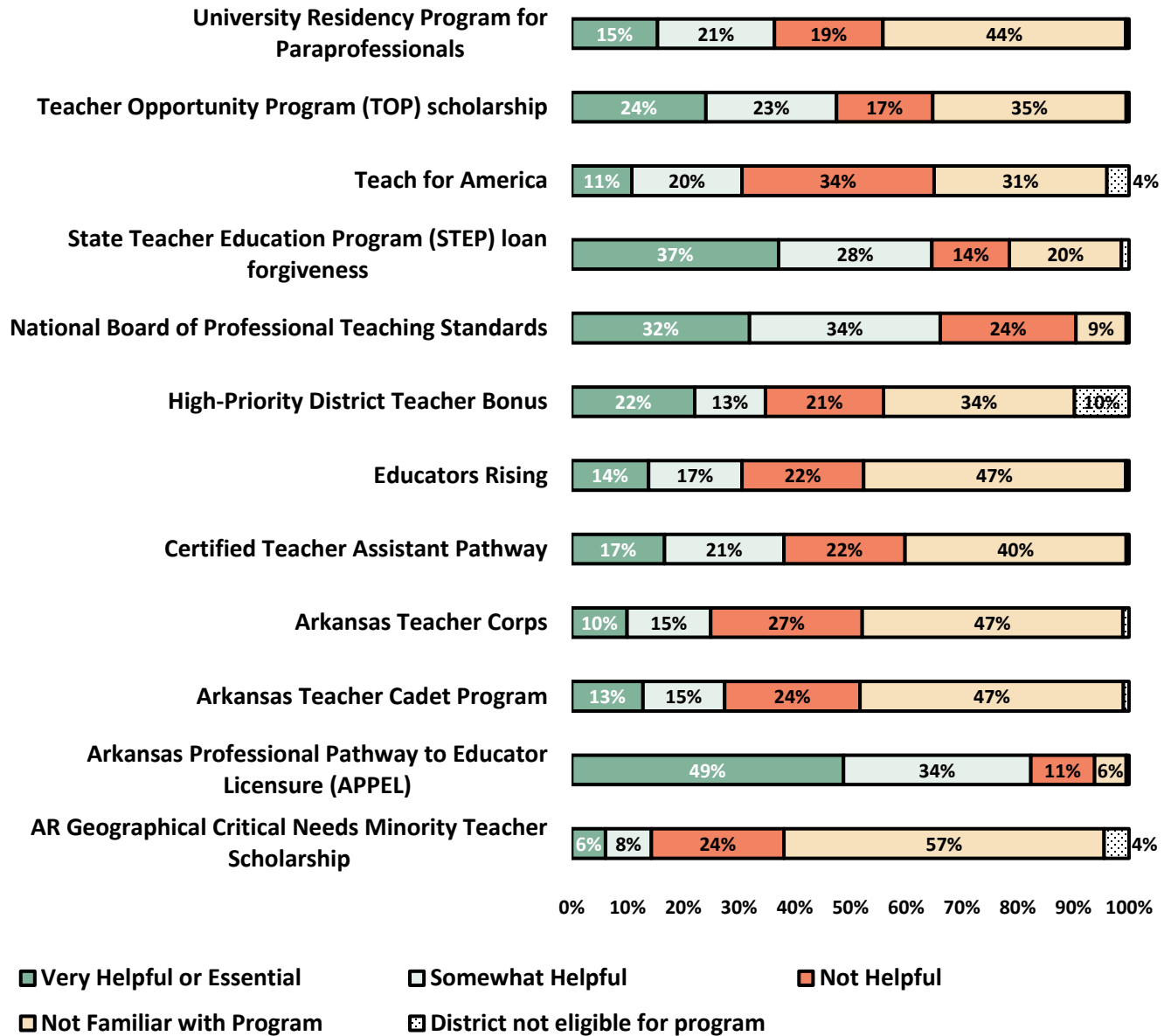
Source: 2024 BLR Adequacy Principal Survey Question 20

When asked about the options in regard to retaining teachers, the Arkansas Professional Pathway to Educator Licensure (APPEL) was also rated the most helpful, with 49% of principals rating it very helpful or essential.⁴¹ When responses for “somewhat helpful” are included, that percentage increased to 82%. The next most helpful options again were the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (66%) and State Teacher Education Program (65%). The option with the largest number of principals rating it not helpful was

⁴¹ 2024 BLR Adequacy Principal Survey Question 22

also Teach for America, with 34%. However, with the exception of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards and the Arkansas Professional Pathway to Educator Licensure, between 20% and 57% of principals reported being not familiar with each of these programs.

Please **RATE** the following programs in terms of their helpfulness in **RETAINING** high quality teachers to your school.



Source: BLR Adequacy Principal Survey Question 22

Teacher Recruitment and Retention Research

Best Practices Research

The following section reviews national research on best practices addressing teacher recruitment and retention.

Research into the relationship between teacher preparation and teacher turnover suggests that educators with little to no pedagogical preparation are two to three times more likely to leave the profession than those with more comprehensive preparation (including student teaching, formal feedback on their teaching, and multiple courses in student learning). However, some attrition of underprepared teachers could be due to these teachers often being hired in schools with the most difficult-to-fill vacancies, and with the most challenging teacher conditions.⁴² An important element of that preparation is clinical training or student teaching. Research on cross-state mobility of the teacher workforce suggests that there are some state-specific barriers, like state licensure requirements and lack of pension portability, that can discourage teachers from staying in the teaching profession when they move to a different state.⁴³ Licensure requirements can include “duplicative testing, coursework requirements, fees, slow administrative processes and requirements, and unclear licensure standards”.⁴⁴ Teacher residencies, Grow Your Own programs, and teacher license reciprocity are shown to be effective programs.⁴⁵ Residencies and Grow Your Own Programs are also found to be effective at addressing preparation issues and recruiting and retaining teachers of color.⁴⁶

Teacher residencies “offer an accelerated path to teacher certification through district and university partnerships that ensure high-quality pedagogical training and clinical practice in year-long programs that are typically targeted to post-baccalaureate candidates.” Residents typically receive funding for tuition and living expenses as well as a stipend and salary “while they apprentice with a master teacher in a high-need classroom for an entire school year and take related courses that will earn them a credential and often a master’s degree”.⁴⁷ Teachers then commit to teaching in hard-to-staff positions in sponsoring districts for set amounts of time (e.g. three to four years) after their residency year while they receive additional mentoring.⁴⁸

Grow Your Own programs typically refer to a broad array of programs that recruit teacher candidates from nontraditional populations (e.g. high school students or paraprofessionals) who are more likely to reflect local demographics and are more likely to continue to teach in their communities.⁴⁹ In these programs, participants receive support like financial aid, coaching, assistance navigating credential requirements,

⁴² Espinoza, Daniel, et. al. “Taking the Long View: State Efforts to Solve Teacher Shortages by Strengthening the Profession.” (August 2018).

⁴³ *Ibid*

⁴⁴ *Ibid*

⁴⁵ *Ibid*

⁴⁶ Carver-Thomas, Desiree. “Diversifying the Teaching Profession: How to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color.” (April 2018). Learning Policy Institute.

⁴⁷ Espinoza, Daniel, et. al. “Taking the Long View: State Efforts to Solve Teacher Shortages by Strengthening the Profession.” (August 2018).

⁴⁸ *Ibid*

⁴⁹ *Ibid*

counseling, and programmatic support as they complete their bachelor’s degrees and earn their teaching credentials.⁵⁰

The cost of teacher preparation and subsequent lower salaries as teachers is one significant obstacle to entering the teaching profession. Research shows that service scholarships and loan forgiveness programs can be effective methods of attracting teachers into the profession, including teachers of color.⁵¹ In a 2023 study⁵² of student loan debt among teachers, the Learning Policy Institute⁵³ found that more than 60% of full-time public-school teachers had taken out student loans to pay for their education. They also found that many teachers were still repaying their student loans and nearly one third still owe their entire balance. They recommended the following:

- Expand loan forgiveness and service scholarship programs to reduce student loan–related financial strains and to strengthen recruitment and retention
- Expand the affordability and availability of high-retention preparation pathways
- Increase teachers’ salaries to bolster their capacity to repay their student loans
- Bolster teachers’ net compensation through tax credits and housing subsidies
- Incentivize and underwrite the costs of earning high-need, advanced credentials⁵⁴

Teacher salaries is another factor contributing to teacher shortages and teacher attrition nationally. One study noted that, “the lack of competitive compensation is one factor that frequently contributes to teacher shortages, by impacting the quality and quantity of people training to become teachers as well as attrition within the existing teacher workforce. Even after adjusting for the shorter work year in teaching, beginning teachers nationally earn about 20% less than individuals with college degrees in other fields—a wage gap that widens to 30% by mid-career.”⁵⁵ Teacher pay in Arkansas will be explored in more detail in the Teacher Salary Adequacy Report.

Research also shows that stronger training and mentoring for new teachers also supports teacher retention. The first few years of every teacher’s career require a leap from preparation to practice. Key elements of high-quality and effective induction include having a mentor from the same field, common planning time with same-subject teachers, regularly scheduled collaboration time with other teachers, and an external network of teachers.⁵⁶

A personalized professional development program also supports teacher retention.⁵⁷ Working conditions refer to various aspects of teachers’ work environments. Principal support is often cited as one of the most important factors in teachers’ decisions to stay in a school or in the profession. Research shows that a principal’s ability to create positive working conditions and collaborative learning environments plays a

⁵⁰ *Ibid*

⁵¹ Carver-Thomas, Desiree. “Diversifying the Teacher Workforce.” (April 2018). Learning Policy Institute.

⁵² García, E., Wei, W., Patrick, S. K., Leung-Gagné, M., & DiNapoli, M. A., Jr. (2023). In debt: Student loan burdens among teachers. Learning Policy Institute.

⁵³ Nonpartisan non-profit organization that “conducts and communicates independent, high-quality research to improve education policy and practice.” Retrieved from: <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/about>

⁵⁴ *Ibid*

⁵⁵ *Ibid*

⁵⁶ *Ibid*

⁵⁷ Shuls, V. James and Flores, M. Joshua. “Improving Teacher Retention through Support and Development.” (2020). *Journal of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies* 4(1)

critical role in attracting and retaining qualified teachers.⁵⁸ In a 2020 qualitative study of Missouri schools, researchers found that teacher retention can be bolstered by schools and their leaders by developing “a culture of trust, openness, and academic freedom.”⁵⁹ It noted other research that found that “the majority of teachers want input on what happens in their classroom and at the school level, but are often left out of key decisions. This is especially true in regards to issues such as student tracking, curriculum standards, discipline policies, and professional development opportunities.”⁶⁰

National Survey Results

The 2021 National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS) from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)⁶¹ asked teachers multiple questions about their teaching experiences and changes from the previous school year. The survey found that among public school teachers who were teaching during the 2021 school year, 8% moved to a different school and 8% left the teaching profession in the subsequent 2022 school year. For teachers that voluntarily moved schools, 20% noted their most important reason was because of location or they had moved. Another 10% of teachers moving voluntarily indicated they wanted to teach at the chosen school and 9% moved for a higher salary.

For the teachers that were no longer teaching in 2022, 66% of public-school teachers indicated the ability to balance personal life and work was better in their current position than in teaching. For 60% of the former teachers, they indicated autonomy or control of their own work was better than in teaching and 58% indicated that manageability of their workload and professional prestige was better outside of teaching.

The following table shows how Arkansas compares on a variety of teacher measures with the national data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) for the 2021 school year (the most recently available data). Arkansas’s average years of teaching, teaching at their current school, required contract hours, total hours spent on all teaching and other school-related activities exceeded the national average.

2020-21 School Year	US	AR	Highest		Lowest	
Average Years of Teaching	14.5	14.5	16.9	RI	11.1	DC
Average Years at Current School	8.2	7.7	10.8	NY	4.3	DC
Highest Degree - Bachelor's Degree Only	38.2%	42.9%	68.6%	OK	4.5%	NY
Highest Degree - Master's Degree	51.2%	48.3%	83.8%	NY	28.3%	TX
Required Contract Hours	38.4	39.4	40.5	TX	34.9	RI
Of contracted hours, total hours spent delivering instruction to students ⁶²	25.2	26.3	27.7	AL	22.6	OR
Total hours spent on all teaching and other school-related activities ⁶³	52	52.7	54.7	TX	48.2	RI

⁵⁸ Espinoza, Daniel, et. al. “Taking the Long View: State Efforts to Solve Teacher Shortages by Strengthening the Profession.” (August 2018).

⁵⁹ Shuls, V. James and Flores, M. Joshua. “Improving Teacher Retention through Support and Development.” (2020). *Journal of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies* 4(1)

⁶⁰ *Ibid*

⁶¹ Taie, S., and Lewis, L. (2023). *Teacher Attrition and Mobility. Results From the 2021–22 Teacher Follow-up Survey to the National Teacher and Principal Survey* (NCES 2024-039). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved [date] from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2024039>

⁶² Excludes time spent on planning, lunch, break/recess, arrival/dismissal of students, and otherwise not delivering instruction.

⁶³ Includes hours spent during the school day, before and after school, and on weekends.

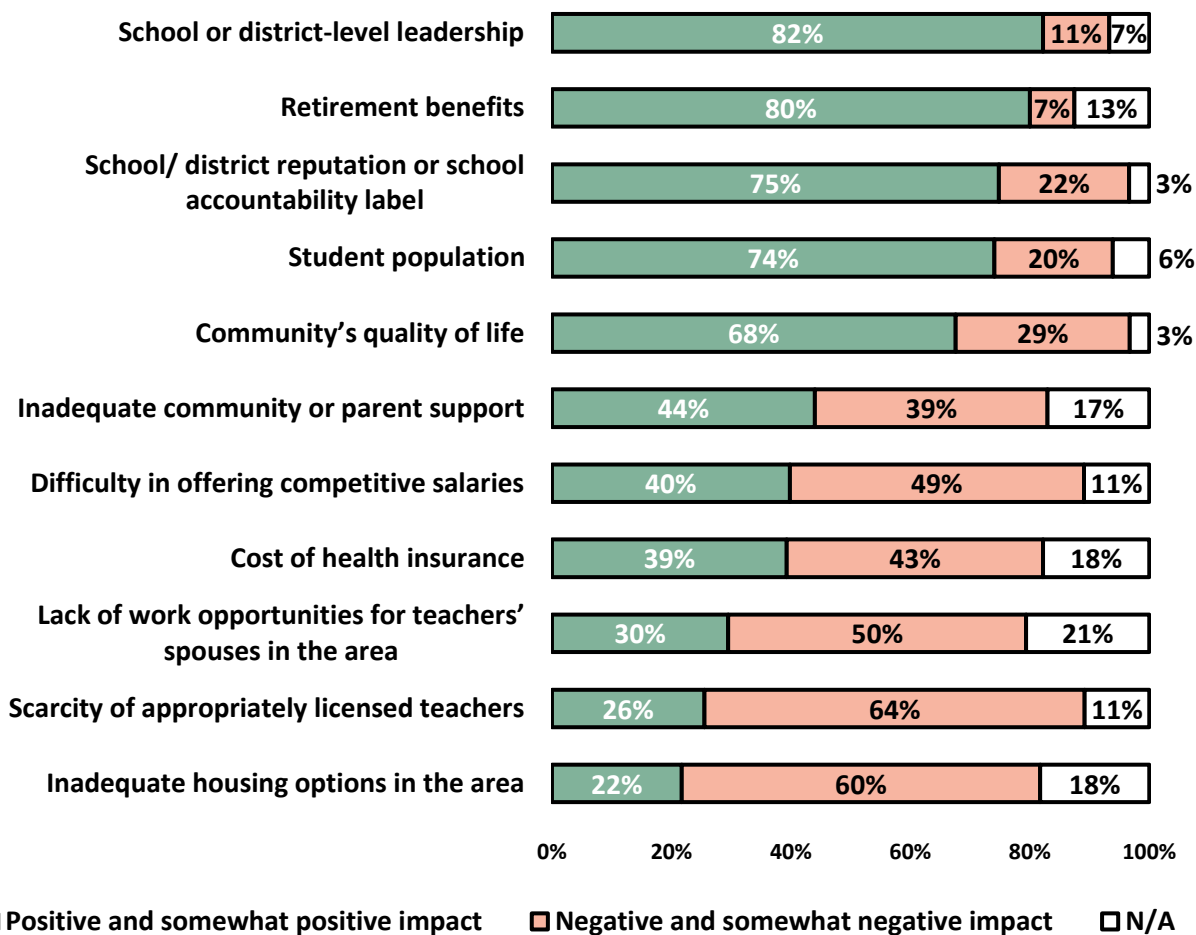
Calculated Difference Between Contracted Hours and Total Hours Spend on Teaching and School-Related Activities	13.6	13.3	15.6	MD	12.2	MT
Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). (2021). National Teacher and Principal Survey.						

Adequacy Survey Results

In BLR’s 2023 adequacy survey, principals were asked about the impact of multiple options on recruiting and retaining teachers.

The option that had the most positive impact on recruiting teachers was school or district-level leadership, with 82% of principals.⁶⁴ That was followed closely by retirement benefits with 80% of principals. The option with the most negative impact was the scarcity of appropriately licensed teachers with 64% of principals. This was followed by inadequate housing options in the area with 60% of principals. Some principals also left comments about other recruiting methods. The top methods given in comments included job or career fairs, the Master’s of Art Teaching program, word of mouth, residency/university relationships, and school culture.

How do the following items impact your ability to **RECRUIT TEACHERS** to your school?

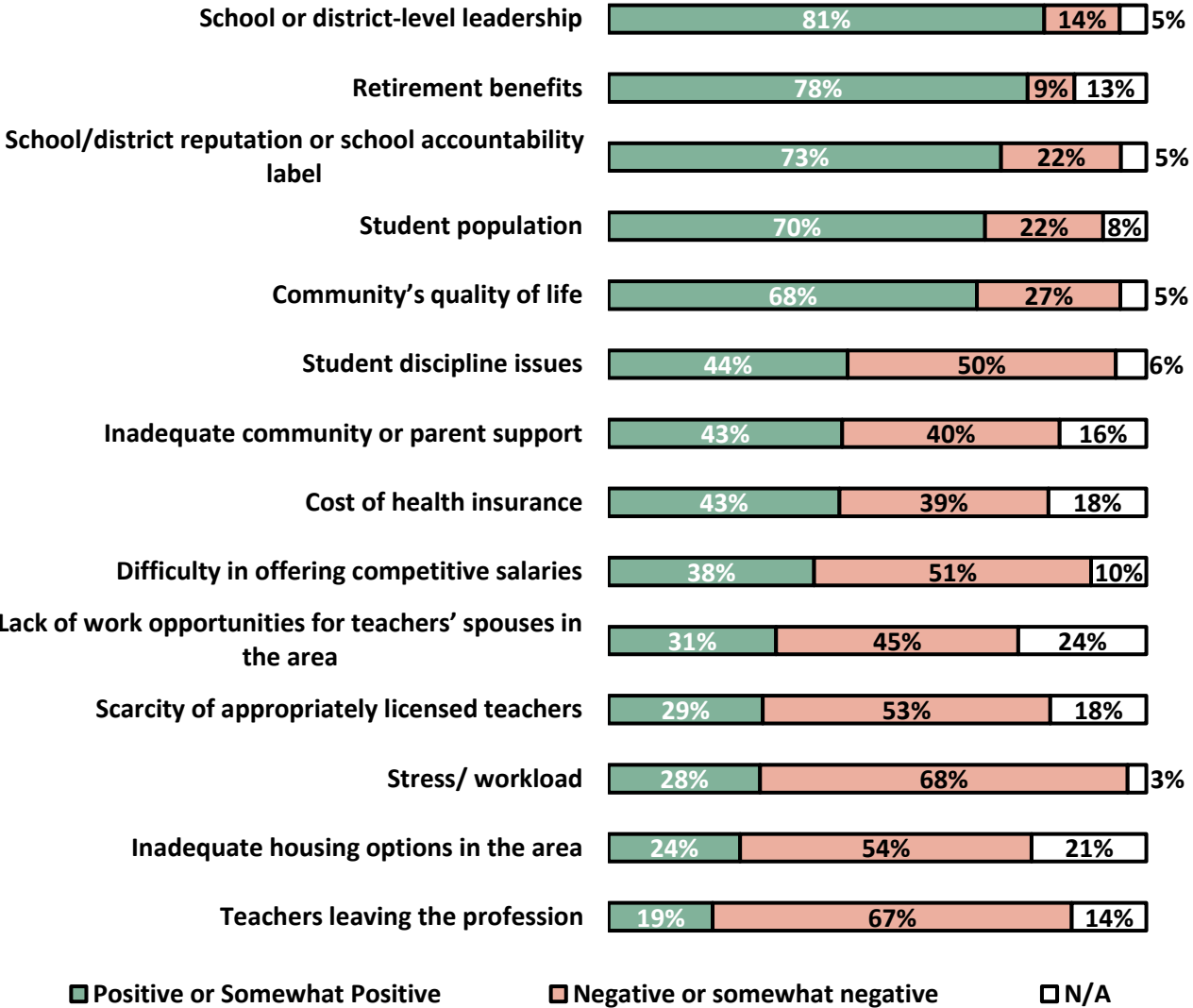


Source: 2024 BLR Adequacy Principal Survey Question 18

⁶⁴ 2024 BLR Adequacy Principal Survey Question 18

The option that had the most positive impact on retaining teachers was school or district-level leadership, with 81% of principals.⁶⁵ That was followed closely by retirement benefits with 78% of principals. The option with the most negative impact was stress/workload with 68% of principals. This was followed by teachers leaving the profession with 67% of principals. Some principals also left comments about other helpful methods of retaining teachers. The most commonly referenced in comments included those related to school culture (e.g. treating teachers professionally, creating supportive and positive environments for teachers, teacher mentorship programs, and teacher leadership opportunities).

How do the following items impact your ability to **RETAIN TEACHERS** at your school?



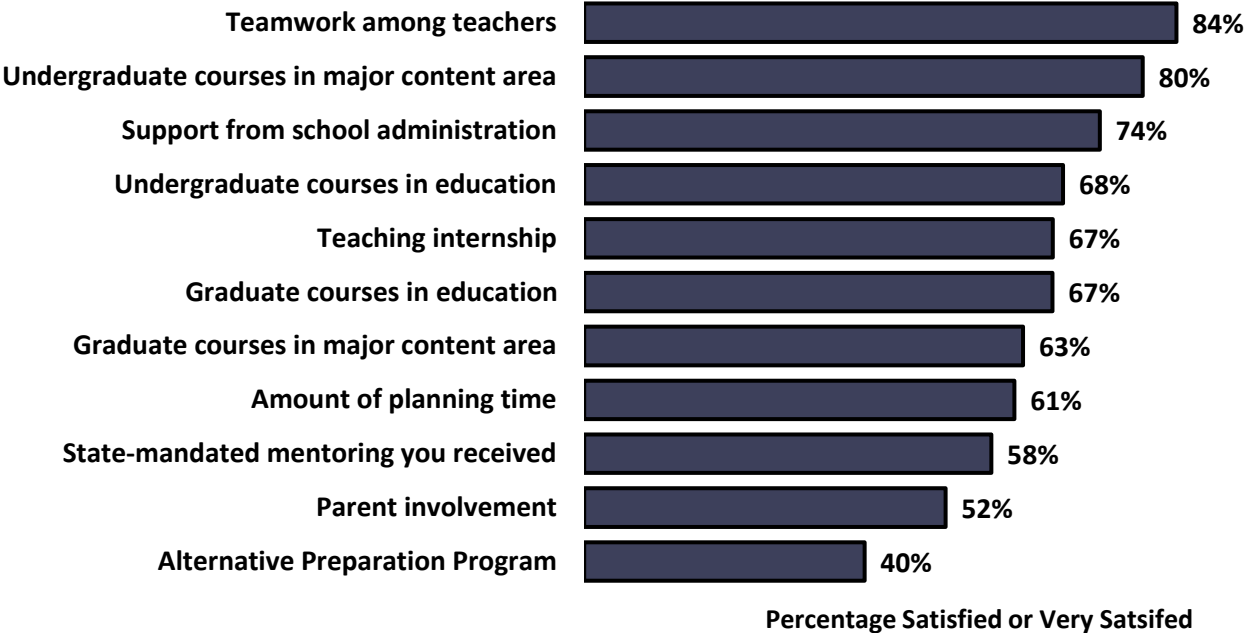
Source: 2024 BLR Adequacy Principal Survey Question 19

In BLR’s 2023 surveys, teachers and principals were asked multiple questions about topics related to teacher recruitment and retention. This section reviews those results. More details about each of those surveys can be found in the principal and teacher survey summary reports.

⁶⁵ 2024 BLR Adequacy Principal Survey Question 19

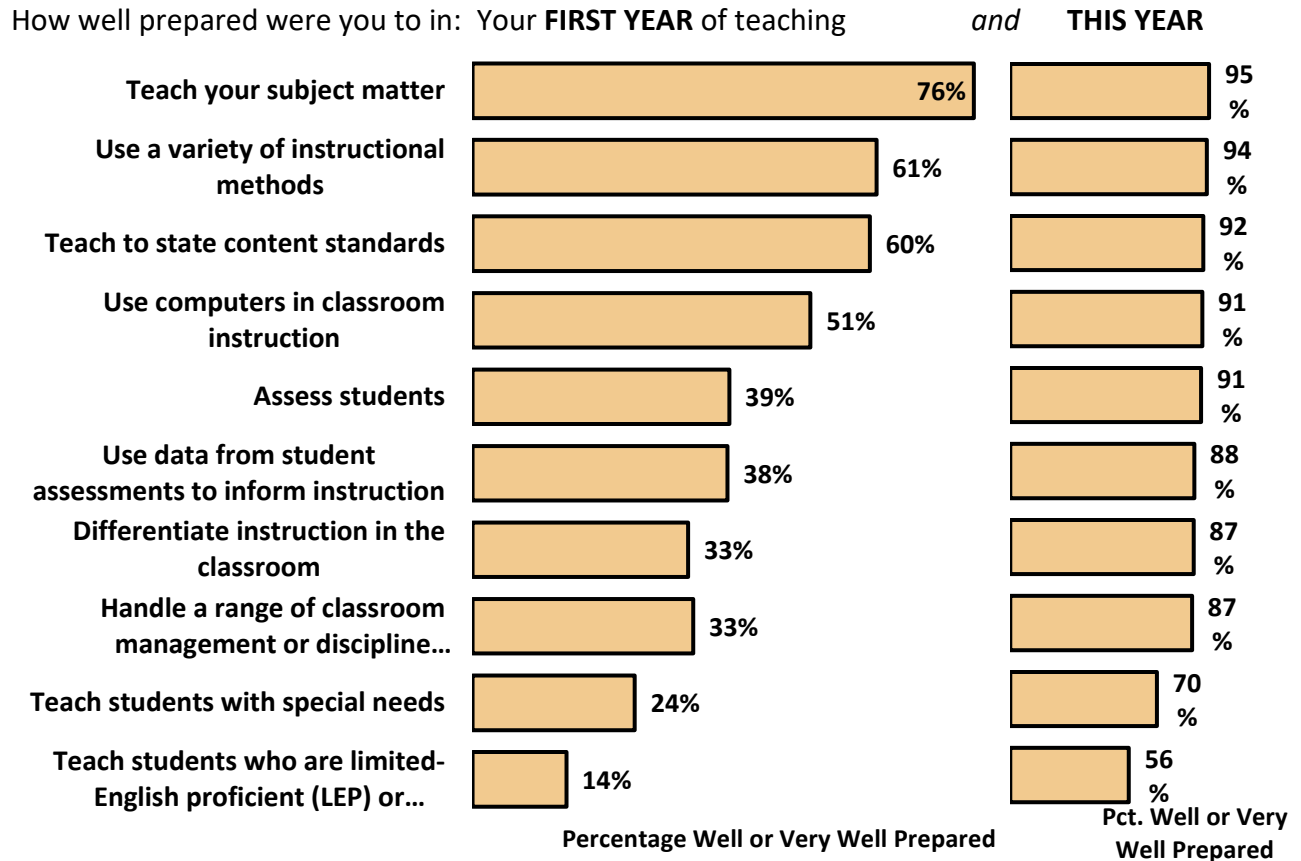
When asked about level of satisfaction with the following components of their teacher preparation and current position, teamwork among other teachers was ranked the highest, with 84% rated being satisfied or very satisfied. That was followed closely by undergraduate courses in a major content area, and support from their school administration.

Please indicate your satisfaction with the following components of your teacher preparation and current position.



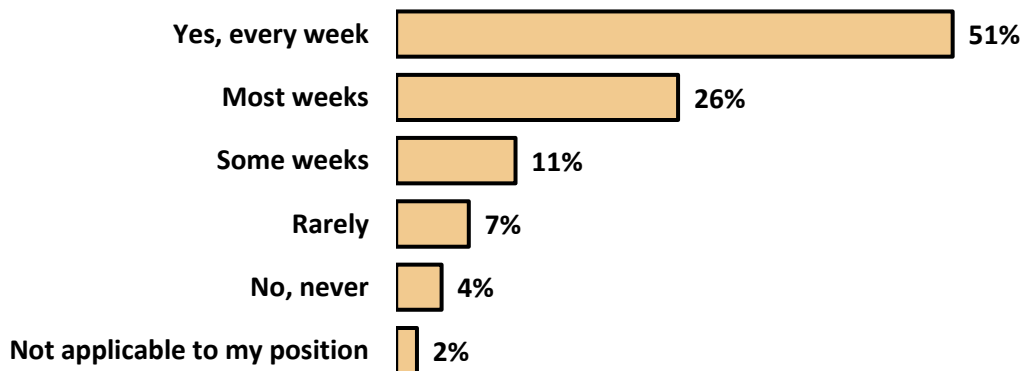
Source: 2024 BLR Adequacy Teacher Survey Question 8

Teachers were also asked about how well prepared they were to do the following items in their first year of teaching and in the current year of teaching. In their first year of teaching, teachers were most prepared to teach their subject matter, with 76% of teachers responding they were well or very well prepared to do that. That increased to 95% well or very well prepared in the current year. For the remaining items, the percentage of teachers responding they were well or very well prepared in their first year increased from 32 to 54 percentage points.



Source: 2024 BLR Adequacy Teacher Survey Questions 9 and 10

Teachers were asked if they receive at least 200 minutes per week to schedule conferences and plan instruction. Approximately half of the responding teachers said yes, every week and another quarter of teachers said they do most weeks.



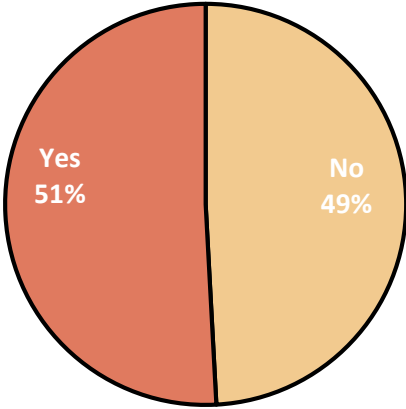
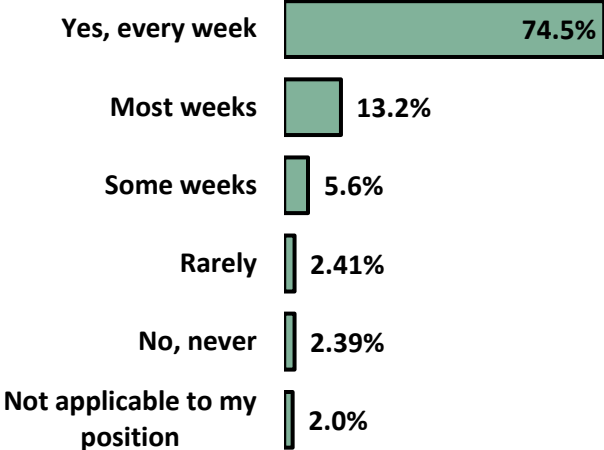
Source: 2024 BLR Adequacy Teacher Survey Question 12

Teachers were also asked if their planning time was provided in increments of at least 40 minutes during the instructional day and nearly three-quarters responded yes, every week. Additionally, teachers were asked if the planning time they receive during the instructional day is sufficient – 51% responded yes and the remaining 49% responded no.

When asked what the average number of students they taught at any one time in a single class in the most recent full week of teaching at their current school, that average number was 21.3.⁶⁶

Is your planning time provided in increments of at least 40 minutes during the instructional day?

The planning time I receive during the instructional day is sufficient.

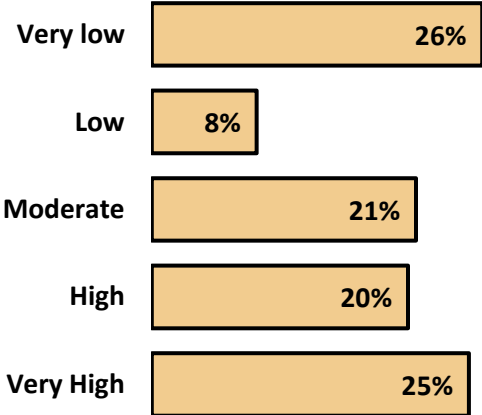
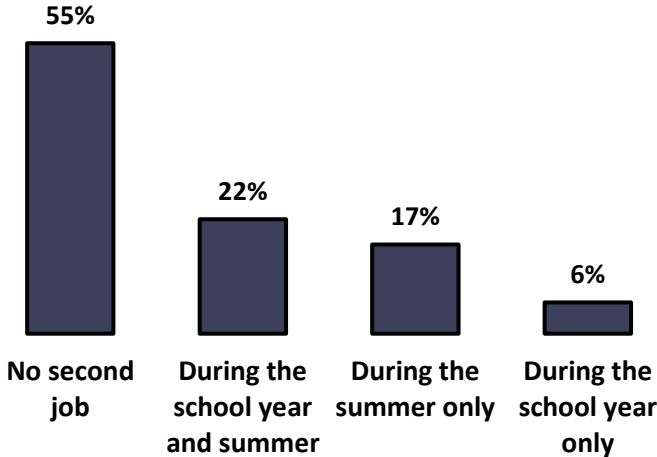


Source: 2024 BLR Adequacy Teacher Survey Questions 13-14

Teachers were also asked multiple questions about their income and student loans. On average, respondents were paid an overall average base salary of \$49,269 for FY23 and 55% reported not having a second job. When asked about having a second job, 22% reported they had one during the school year and summer and 17% responded only during the summer. Additionally, 71% of teachers responded that they took out student loans, and of those teachers, 64% still owed on these loans. Of those teachers still owing on their loans, 26% indicated a very low level of stress, while another 25% indicated a very high level of stress.⁶⁷

Please indicate whether you work a second job to supplement your teaching income.

Please indicate your level of stress regarding your student loan debt. Would you say your level of stress is?



Source: 2024 BLR Adequacy Teacher Survey Questions 22-24

⁶⁶ BLR Adequacy Teacher Survey Question 15
⁶⁷ BLR Adequacy Teacher Survey Question 22-24

Teachers were also asked to agree or disagree with the following statements about a range of topics related to teaching. Nearly 90% of responding teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they made a conscious effort to coordinate the content of their course with that of other teachers and 85% agreed/strongly agreed that most of their colleagues share their beliefs and values about what the central mission of the school should be as well as being generally satisfied with being a teacher at their school. Half of the responding teachers disagreed that they worry about the security of their job because of the performance of their students or school on state and/or local tests and 50% also disagreed that they receive a great deal of support from parents for the work they do.

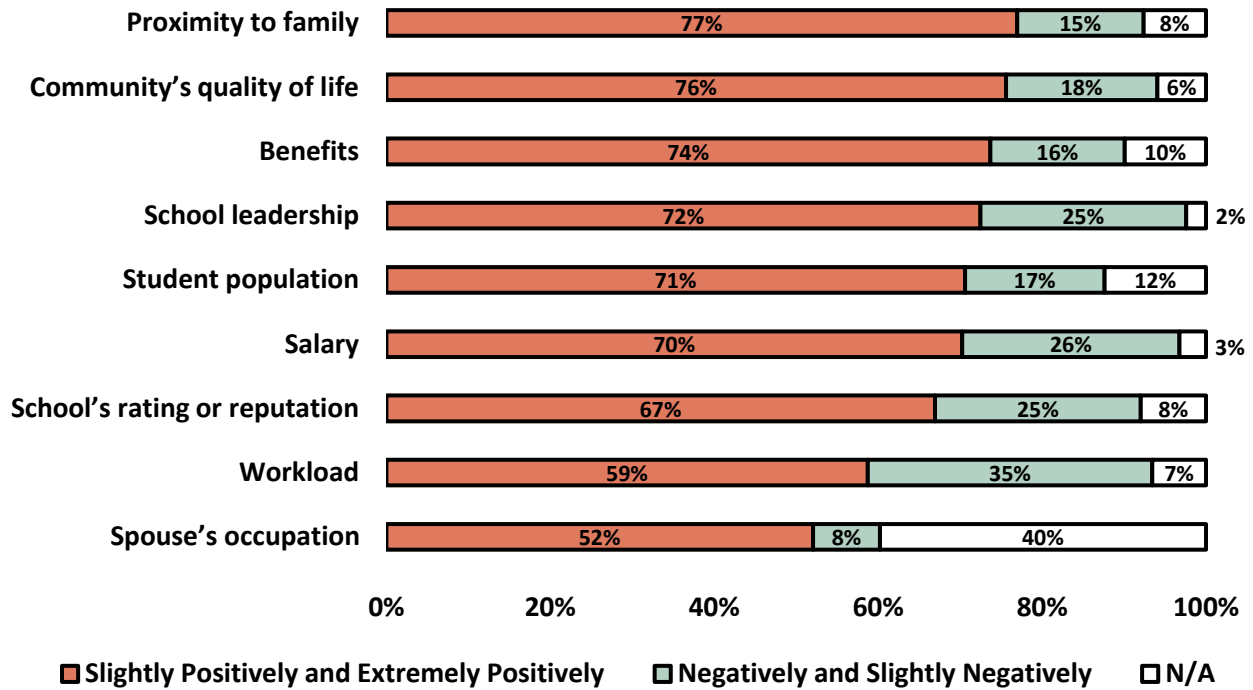
	Somewhat or Strongly Agree	Somewhat or Strongly Disagree	N/A
I worry about the security of my job because of the performance of my students or my school on state and/or local tests.	45%	50%	5%
I receive a great deal of support from parents for the work I do.	49%	50%	1%
Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced by teachers in this school, even for students who are not in their classes.	50%	49%	0%
I am satisfied with my teaching salary.	55%	44%	0%
The level of student misbehavior in this school (such as noise, horseplay or fighting in the halls, cafeteria, or student lounge) interferes with my teaching.	57%	41%	2%
State or district content standards have had a positive influence on my satisfaction with teaching.	58%	36%	5%
The amount of student tardiness and class cutting in this school interferes with my teaching.	58%	38%	4%
Routine duties and paperwork interfere with my job of teaching.	64%	34%	2%
I am given the support I need to teach students with special needs.	67%	31%	2%
In this school, staff members are recognized for a job well done.	67%	32%	0%
My principal enforces school rules for student conduct and backs me up when I need it.	70%	29%	1%
The school administration’s behavior toward the staff is supportive and encouraging.	76%	23%	1%
The principal knows what kind of school he or she wants and has communicated it to the staff.	79%	20%	1%
There is a great deal of cooperative effort among the staff members.	82%	18%	0%
Necessary materials such as textbooks, supplies, and copy machines are available as needed by the staff.	83%	16%	0%
I am generally satisfied with being a teacher at this school.	85%	15%	0%
Most of my colleagues share my beliefs and values about what the central mission of the school should be.	85%	14%	2%
I make a conscious effort to coordinate the content of my courses with that of other teachers.	86%	10%	5%

Source: 2024 BLR Adequacy Teacher Survey Question 19

Teachers were asked to rank how much the following factors impact their decision to teach at their current job. Just over three-quarters of responding teachers responded that proximity to family either slightly

positively or extremely positively impacted that decision, followed closely by the community’s quality of life, and benefits.

How do the following items impact your decision to teach at your current school?

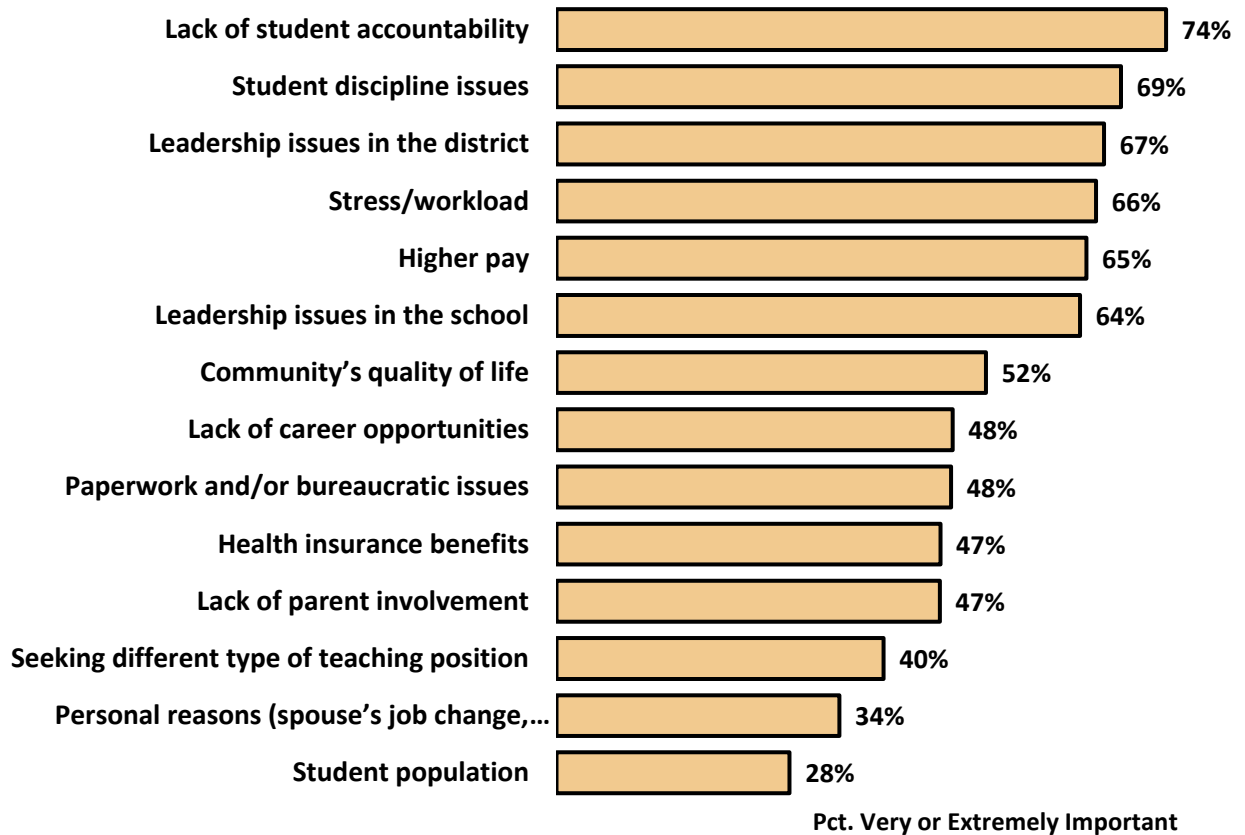


Source: 2024 BLR Adequacy Teacher Survey Question 18

On the survey, teachers were asked if they were considering transferring schools or districts. If they were considering transferring, they were asked to rate the following items in their importance as to why they were considering transferring. The most common reason was lack of student accountability with 74% rating that very or extremely important. That was followed by student discipline issues (69%), leadership issues in the district (67%), and stress/workload (66%).⁶⁸

⁶⁸ 2024 BLR Adequacy Teacher Survey Questions 26-27

Please **RATE** the importance of the following options as to why you are currently considering **transferring to another school or school district**.



Source: 2024 BLR Adequacy Teacher Survey Question 27

Note: This is from the 1,547 teachers surveyed that reported considering transferring.

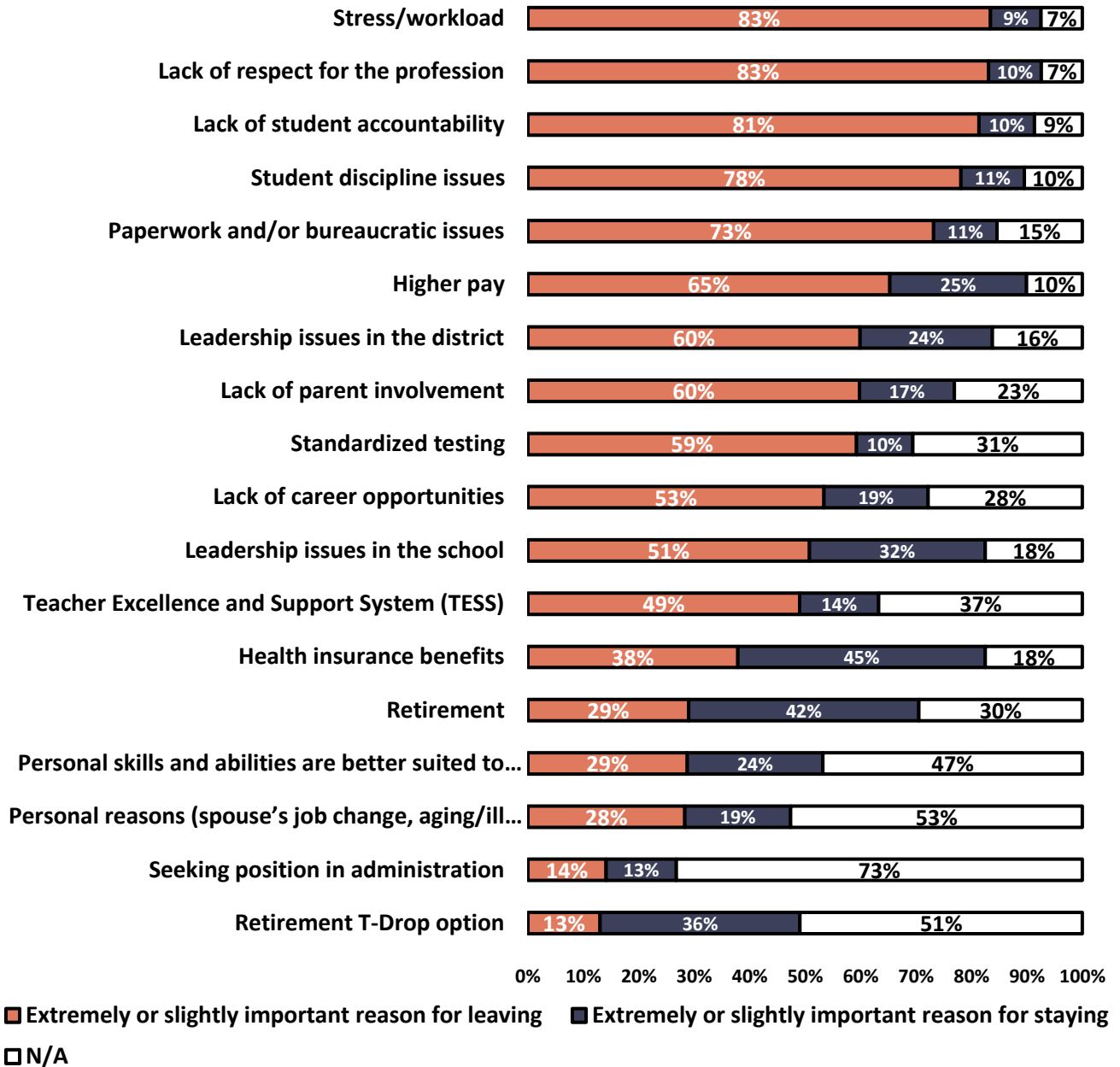
Teachers were also asked if they work in a high poverty or remote rural community and 31% responded they did not. Those teachers were then asked what conditions, if any, would they be willing to relocate to teach at a school in a high-poverty or remote rural community. Of those teachers, 24% responded a higher salary and 20% responded there were no conditions for which they would be willing to relocate to that type of community.⁶⁹

When teachers were asked if they were currently considering leaving the teaching profession, 33% said yes. Those 1,688 teachers were then asked to rate the importance of the following options on that consideration. The most important considerations for leaving were stress/workload and lack of respect for the profession, each with 83% of teachers considering leaving the teaching profession responding that it was a slightly or extremely important reason for leaving. The most important consideration for staying were health insurance benefits, with 45% responding it was a slightly or extremely important reason for staying.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ 2024 BLR Adequacy Teacher Survey Questions 28-29

⁷⁰ 2024 BLR Adequacy Teacher Survey Questions 30-31

Please **RATE** how the following options influence your current considerations for leaving the teaching profession?



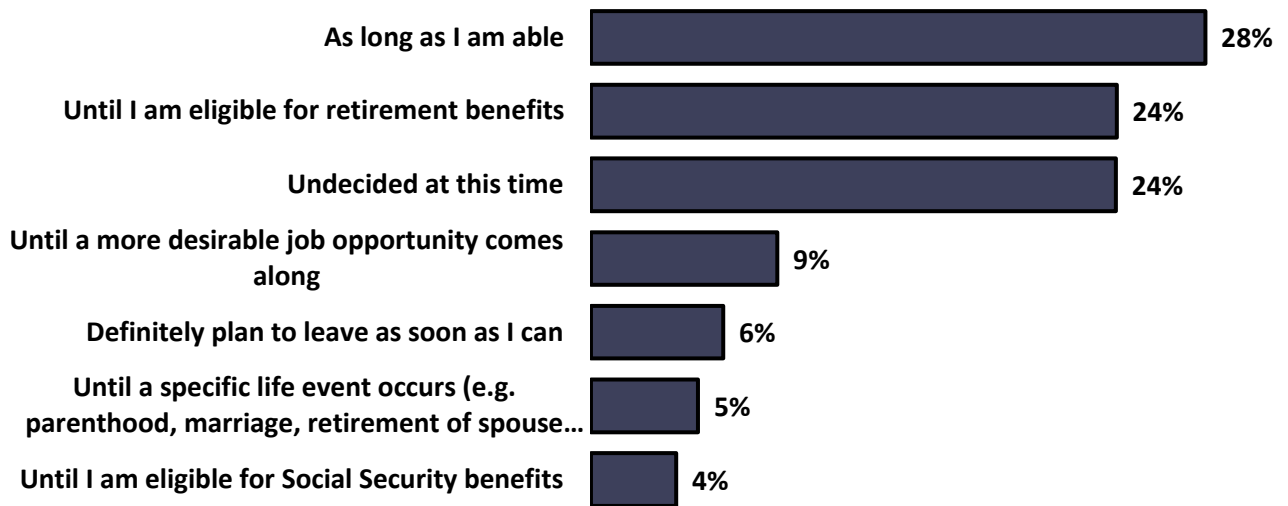
Source: 2024 BLR Adequacy Teacher Survey Question 31

Note: This is only from the 1,688 teachers surveyed that reported considering leaving the teaching profession.

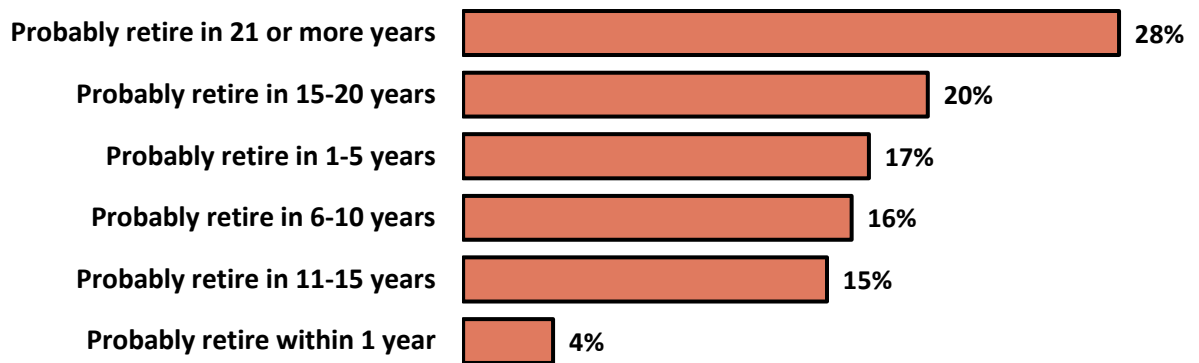
When asked about how long they planned to stay in teaching, 28% of teachers responded as long as they were able, 24% responded until they were eligible for retirement benefits, and another 24% responded they were undecided. They were also asked how close to retirement they were and 28% responded in 21+ years and 20% responded 15-20 years.⁷¹

⁷¹ 2024 BLR Adequacy Teacher Survey Questions 32-33

Which statement best describes how long you plan to remain in teaching?



How close are you to retirement?



Source: 2024 BLR Adequacy Teacher Survey Questions 32-33

APPENDIX A: WORKPLACE STABILITY INDEX

Workplace Stability Index: Domains and Variables	
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher average years of experience <u>Percentage of teachers with three or more years of experience</u>
Attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of teachers with master’s degree or higher Percentage of NBCTs
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Percentage of teachers with a rating of progressing or high on the Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) or</u> <u>Percentage of teachers effective or higher on TESS</u>
Licensure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Percentage of courses with a teacher licensed to teach that course or subject</u>
Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of teachers who were retained in a given year.

Source: DESE⁷².

⁷² 2024 Workforce Stability Index (WSI) High-Poverty/High-Minority Report for Title I Schools. Retrieved from: https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Files/2024_Title_I_HPHM_Report_EEF.pdf