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ABSTRACT

This report presents suggestions for retaining beginning teachers. Research indicates that after 5 years, nearly half of new teachers leave teaching in the state where they first taught. Helping new teachers become veterans is an important step in addressing teacher shortages. New teachers tend to leave because of such factors as inadequate preservice preparation; difficult workplace conditions (lack of support and guidance and placement in difficult assignments); and poor salaries and benefits. Southern Regional Education Board states are working to keep new teachers in the classroom by providing quality mentoring or induction programs and by offering financial incentives to recruit and retain new teachers (e.g., scholarships and forgivable loans). This report lists ways that states can keep beginning teachers in the classroom, including: know who is in the pipeline, provide prospective teachers with quality teaching for content and classroom management experiences in teacher preparation programs, provide work conditions that will help beginning teachers succeed, and collect information on the effectiveness of approaches and programs that support beginning teachers. (Contains 13 references.) (SM)

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Help New Teachers

Become Veteran Teachers

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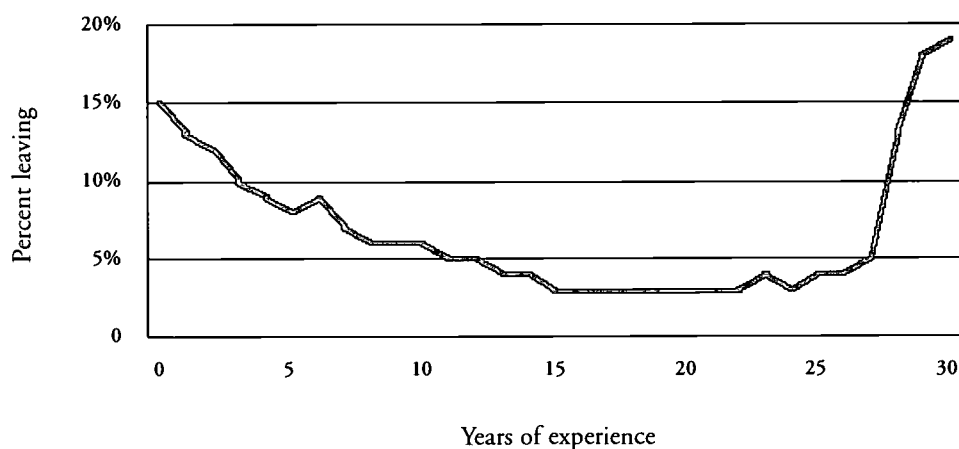
Help New Teachers Become Veteran Teachers

Helping new teachers become veteran teachers is an important step in addressing teacher shortages.

After five years, nearly half of new teachers left teaching in the state where they began teaching, according to SREB supply and demand studies. Nationally, more than 30 percent of new teachers leave the classroom by the end of their fifth year. Helping new teachers become veteran teachers is an important step in addressing teacher shortages. The graph below shows that after about the seventh year, as teachers gain experience, the rate at which they leave the classroom starts to level off. It does not rise again until teachers near retirement.

In recent years, SREB states have made efforts to recruit and retain quality teachers. Teacher recruitment efforts are important; however, the retention of beginning teachers is critical to maintaining an adequate supply of teachers. It is essential to understand the experiences and situations that cause many new teachers to abandon the profession early in their careers.

When Teachers Leave the Classroom



What makes new teachers decide to leave? ---

According to a study by the National Center for Education Statistics, 25 percent of new teachers quit the profession within their first five years of teaching in order to pursue other careers. Another 25 percent said they were leaving because they either no longer were interested in teaching or were dissatisfied with teaching. Of those who quit teaching, 40 percent said they would not teach again.

National and state research studies and reports find several key factors that can influence a beginning teacher's decision to leave:

- inadequate preparation;
- conditions in the school and classroom; and
- salaries and benefits.

Inadequate preparation of new teachers ---

National studies find that about 46 percent of newly hired teachers in public schools are first-time teachers. Most are recent graduates of state colleges and universities. In the SREB states, about one-third to one-half of those who earned bachelor's degrees were employed immediately after graduation. Many graduates of teacher education programs feel that, in spite of their formal training, they did not receive adequate preparation in areas such as classroom management or student discipline.

- A Public Agenda survey sampled K-12 public school teachers throughout the nation who had no more than five years of experience. Sixty-two percent of these new teachers said that their preparation program did a "fair" or "poor" job of preparing them to deal with the pressures and stress of teaching.
- A Florida study found that 43 percent of first-year teachers felt that they were "minimally prepared" or "not prepared" to manage their classrooms.
- Student teaching experiences before taking over classrooms are important. Studies from the National Center of Education Statistics found that 29 percent of college graduates who had no student teaching experience left the profession within five years. In comparison, only 15 percent of those who had student taught left the profession after five years.

Workplace conditions

Once teacher education graduates begin teaching in classrooms, their responsibilities can be quite overwhelming. Two important factors that influence whether beginning teachers will remain in the classroom are the amount of support and guidance they receive and the assignments they are given.

Lack of support and guidance

Beginning teachers' confidence about teaching depends greatly on the support they receive from their schools. Without adequate guidance and support from fellow teachers, school principals and administrators, many new teachers feel they are left to "sink or swim" early in their careers.

- ▣ According to national studies, 16 percent of the teachers who said they left the profession because of "dissatisfaction with teaching" listed inadequate support from administrators as the primary reason. Thirteen percent listed the primary reason as lack of respect from administrators.
- Education Week reported that beginning teachers with less than five years of experience who reported dissatisfaction with the school environment and student discipline were twice as likely to leave the classroom as were those who were not dissatisfied.
- National studies show that 67 percent of recent college graduates who started teaching and whose schools did not offer them support related to student discipline expected to remain teachers for two more years. Of teachers who did receive such assistance, 79 percent expected to stay at least that long.
- In a recent study of novice teachers in Texas, nearly 20 percent reported that they left teaching after their first year because of a lack of professional support.
- A study of teacher supply and demand in North Carolina revealed that almost two-thirds (63 percent) of teachers who quit teaching said that a lack of administrative support was a factor.

Placement in difficult assignments

Beginning teachers often are assigned to teach the most difficult students or subjects in which they lack adequate preparation. These situations frustrate the new teachers and cause many of them to leave the profession after only a few years.

- Teachers with three years of teaching experience or less are twice as likely to be assigned to schools with high percentages of minority students and students living in poverty, according to national studies.
- The National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) reports that only 14 states nationwide require student teaching experiences to include working in multicultural settings.
- A sample of teachers with less than five years' experience who were teaching in schools participating in the SREB Middle Grades Initiative revealed about one-third of English, science and mathematics teachers reported having no content preparation (a subject major in education or a subject major/minor at the undergraduate and/or graduate level) in these subjects.
- A recent study of Texas teachers found that 25 percent of new teachers hired were not fully certified in the subject area they were hired to teach.

Money not at the top of the list ---

While making teacher salaries competitive is one way to attract and retain more teachers, salary issues are not the primary cause of new teacher departures. National studies show that only 10 percent of teachers who left teaching after five years cited dissatisfaction with salary and benefits as the primary reason.

- A study of former teachers in Florida revealed that 7 percent left for better salaries and 7 percent left for better benefits. However, 28 percent left because they were “dissatisfied with the teaching profession” or because they wanted to pursue another career.
- While 70 percent of graduates of a North Carolina teacher-preparation scholarship program reported dissatisfaction with their salaries, only 6 percent of those who were dissatisfied said that they would not teach again because of their salaries.
- A Public Agenda study found that, if given a choice between two schools in otherwise identical districts, 82 percent of survey participants would prefer to teach in a school with strong support for teachers by administrators. Only 17 percent said they would choose a school with significantly higher salaries.

What are SREB states doing to keep new teachers from leaving classrooms?

Support for new teachers

Quality mentoring or induction programs are the greatest tools that states can give new teachers. Induction programs usually provide a master teacher or mentor teacher to provide professional support that beginning teachers need once they begin managing their own classrooms. Nationally, about 65 percent of teachers with less than three years of experience participate in induction programs. Studies show that teachers with less than five years of experience who have not participated in induction programs are nearly twice as likely to leave teaching. Eleven SREB states (Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia) have — or are starting — state-funded induction programs for new teachers. Districts in Maryland, Mississippi and Tennessee receive state money for mentoring or induction programs.

Mentor teachers are assigned to beginning teachers in 10 SREB states (Delaware, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia). Some states — Delaware, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Virginia and West Virginia — have established formal training for those who will serve as mentor teachers. Several SREB states are beginning to increase efforts to support teachers in their first few years in classrooms. Arkansas' Beginning Teacher Support Program will provide all new teachers with mentors and other assistance. Georgia plans to provide all beginning and newly hired teachers with trained mentors during their first two years of teaching. Florida's Mentor Teacher Pilot Program trains mentor teachers to assist inexperienced teachers. TxBESS (Texas Beginning Educator Support System), which is being implemented over a three-year period, will provide first- and second-year teachers statewide with local support teams. Each support team will consist of an experienced mentor teacher, the principal at the beginning teacher's school and representatives from teacher preparation entities.

Kentucky, Louisiana, Oklahoma and South Carolina are among a handful of states nationwide to provide beginning teachers with support teams, which provide beginning teachers with valuable feedback and support.

The Oklahoma Residency Program provides each new teacher with a three-member team that consists of a representative from a college or university, a school administrator and a mentor teacher. The team observes the beginning teacher three

Support for Be

	Is there a state mandate for an induction or mentoring program for beginning teachers?	Does the state or ment
Alabama	No	Local school dist
Arkansas* – <i>Beginning Teacher Support Program</i>	Currently being pilot-tested	Currently
Delaware – <i>New Teacher Mentoring Program</i>	Not mandated but state-supported	Local school dist
Florida*	Not mandated but state-supported	
Georgia*	Planned for 2002	Local school dist
Kentucky – <i>Teacher Internship Program</i>	Yes	
Louisiana – <i>Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program</i>	Yes	
Maryland	Not mandated but state-supported	Local school dist
Mississippi	Not mandated but state-supported	
North Carolina – <i>Beginning Teacher Induction Program</i>	Yes	
Oklahoma – <i>Residency Program</i>	Yes	
South Carolina – <i>Assisting, Developing and Evaluating Professional Teaching</i>	Yes	
Tennessee	Not mandated but state-supported	Local school dist
Texas* – <i>Beginning Educator Support System</i>	Yes	
Virginia – <i>Mentor Teacher Program for Beginning Teachers</i>	Yes	
West Virginia – <i>Beginning Mentor/Teacher Program</i>	Yes	

¹ Performance assessments for beginning teachers can include classroom observation, portfolio development, or other types of testing.

* New program to support new teachers in development stages

Sources: SREB state departments of education

Compiled by Anjanette Bolich, April 2001

inning Teachers

Does the program have an induction program?	Is there a statewide performance assessment specifically for the beginning teacher? ¹	How long can a beginning teacher be supported?
Does not use state funds	No	N/A
Is pilot-tested	Yes	1 to 2 years
Does not use state funds	No	1 year
No	No	N/A
Does not use state funds	No	N/A
Yes	Yes	1 year
Yes	Yes	1 to 2 years
Does not use state funds	No	1 year
Yes	No	N/A
Yes	Yes	Up to 3 years
Yes	Yes	1 to 2 years
Yes	Yes	1 year
Does not use state funds	No	N/A
Yes	Yes	1 to 2 years
Yes	Yes	1 year
Yes	No	1 to 2 years

times a year and provides him or her with guidance and support during the first year and, if needed, second year of teaching. Since 1980, nearly 40,000 new teachers in Oklahoma have participated in the program.

Kentucky's Teacher Internship Program mandates that every new teacher be assessed by a trained three-member team. This team — which consists of a faculty member from a teacher preparation institution, a school principal and a resource teacher — observes the intern teacher and provides him or her with feedback. The resource teacher spends at least 70 hours per year working with a teacher in the classroom and conducts professional-development activities outside of the classroom. Recent legislation in Kentucky created the Teacher's Professional Growth Fund, which will provide additional compensation for mentor teachers.

In Louisiana, each new teacher in the public school system is assigned a trained mentor. The Teacher Assessment and Assistance Program provides teachers with support and assistance for two semesters and assess their performance. Mentor teachers must complete the Louisiana Teacher Assessor and Mentor Training Program. A two-member team, which consists of the school principal and an external assessor (usually a university faculty member), observes the new teacher and provides him or her with feedback. In the second year, the new teacher is monitored and evaluated locally.

South Carolina's ADEPT (Assisting, Developing and Evaluating Professional Teaching) program requires all new teachers to participate for one year, during which they receive assistance from mentor teachers. The second year consists of formal evaluation by a three-member team. The team consists of a trained external evaluator, a peer evaluator and the school principal. Efforts are under way to strengthen training for mentor teachers.

While mentoring and induction programs help “ease” teachers into teaching students, other steps should be taken to ensure that beginning teachers have every chance for success. North Carolina mandates how districts assign first-year teachers. First-year teachers cannot be assigned to extracurricular or noninstructional activities; second- and third-year teachers in North Carolina can receive an extra three days to develop their portfolios, which are required for the state's performance-based licensure. Arkansas and Texas limit the number of consecutive days that teachers may teach grade levels or subjects for which they are not certified.

Salaries and incentives

Over the last 10 years, teachers in SREB states have accounted for nearly half the growth in the number of teachers nationwide. SREB states are creating financial incentives to recruit and retain new teachers. In Maryland, teacher education graduates who are in the top 10 percent of their classes can receive \$1,000 signing bonuses in exchange for three-year commitments to teach in Maryland schools. Recent Alabama legislation calls for a 1 percent salary increase for all new teachers; that state's salaries for beginning teachers are among the highest in the nation. In Delaware, beginning salaries for teachers will increase by up to 10 percent in the next three years. A pilot program in Arkansas designates up to \$1,500 for support and professional-development activities for novice teachers. Florida's state budget allows school districts to use funds for retention bonuses or recruitment bonuses for first-time teachers.

Student loans and scholarships

Most SREB states provide scholarships and forgivable loans to attract and retain teachers. For each year of assistance that a student receives, he or she typically must commit to teaching a certain number of years — often in a subject or geographic area in which there is a critical shortage — in order to have the loan forgiven. If this commitment is not kept, the scholarship or loan usually must be paid back in full. In Georgia, the PROMISE scholarship provides college juniors and seniors with \$3,000 for living expenses. The PROMISE II scholarship assists instructional aides and paraprofessionals in completing their bachelor's degrees in education by awarding up to \$3,000 per year for tuition and books. Louisiana has a similar program for paraprofessionals. Maryland's HOPE scholarship provides eligible students at two-year colleges with \$2,000 annually and students at four-year colleges with \$5,000 annually. Virginia's Teaching Scholarship Loan Program forgives a \$3,000 loan for a student who teaches for three semesters in one of Virginia's critical shortage fields. The Mississippi Employer-Assisted Housing Teacher Program provides up to \$6,000 in forgivable loans in exchange for commitments of at least three years of teaching in critical shortage areas. Scholarships and forgivable loans are available to those who commit to teaching in Florida, Kentucky, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Texas.

Ways for states to keep beginning teachers in the classrooms

- **Know who is in the “pipeline.”**
 - ✓ Determine how many students enter and exit teacher preparation programs at state colleges and universities. How many graduates enter classrooms? How long do they remain? Why do they leave?
- ▣ **Provide prospective teachers with quality teaching for content and classroom-management experiences in teacher preparation programs.**
 - ✓ Ensure that teacher preparation programs prepare graduates to teach *all* children.
 - ✓ Provide exposure to real-life classroom situations through student teaching experiences.
 - ✓ Establish partnerships and coordination between colleges and universities and schools to provide quality experiences for student teachers.
- ▣ **Provide work conditions that will help beginning teachers succeed.**
 - ✓ Ensure that beginning teachers cannot be assigned to teach students or subjects for whom or for which they are not prepared. States and districts should track the placement of new teachers.
 - ✓ Assess the performance of beginning teachers and share feedback with them. Observation and feedback are key parts of new teachers’ continued learning in the first few years of teaching.
 - ✓ Train mentor teachers and assessors to observe and support beginning teachers. Provide incentives to encourage veteran teachers to become mentors.
- ▣ **Collect information on the effectiveness of approaches and programs that support beginning teachers.**
 - ✓ Determine “what works” in programs to reduce the turnover of newly hired teachers.

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