

REPORT TO THE HOUSE AND SENATE COMMITTEES ON  
EDUCATION OF THE LOUISIANA LEGISLATURE



**2013-2014 Teacher Exit Survey and Attrition Report**

FROM THE BOARD OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Prepared by the Louisiana Department of Education

## INTRODUCTION

Louisiana Revised Statute 17:7 requires the Department of Education to collect information on why teachers have left the classroom and annually report the findings to the Senate and House Education Committees. Over the past several years, the Department's process for collecting teacher exit data has improved, thus creating a more complete picture of teacher exit trends.

Per state law, this report provides information on the current state of teacher attrition in Louisiana and results from the 2013-2014 teacher exit interview. In order to better understand shifts in Louisiana's teacher workforce, the Department also analyzed teacher hiring, retention, and departure data and both national and local economic trends from the past five years. The Department used:

- **Teacher exit survey (see Appendix 1):** data self-reported by districts through the *Teach Louisiana* web portal regarding reasons teachers are leaving their positions.
- **Data from the Profile of Education Personnel and Compass Information System:** data collected from districts regarding teacher retainment and performance.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The results of the exit survey and analysis of attrition data indicate that Louisiana's teacher attrition<sup>i</sup> and retirement rates<sup>ii</sup> have remained relatively steady over the past five years. The number of initial teaching licenses granted has also remained steady, with a slight increase in the past year<sup>iii</sup>. The percentage of teachers moving into administrative positions has increased.<sup>iv</sup>

Research conducted for this report also shows that shifts in teacher attrition and retirement are connected to the health of the national and local economy. As the nation's and the state's economy grow stronger, teachers are more likely to make significant career and financial decisions, including retiring or changing professions

It is also important to note that teacher shortages remain in certain content areas (math and sciences, in particular), some schools, and some districts (rural and those with high economic growth most notably) across the state. These shortages are troubling and deserve attention. Programs such as the Department's *Believe and Prepare* initiative, in which schools and districts partner with educator preparation programs to better meet workforce needs, are designed to address these staffing challenges.

Overall, this report shows that teacher attrition and retirement trends tend to mirror macroeconomic trends.

## RESULTS OF ANALYSIS

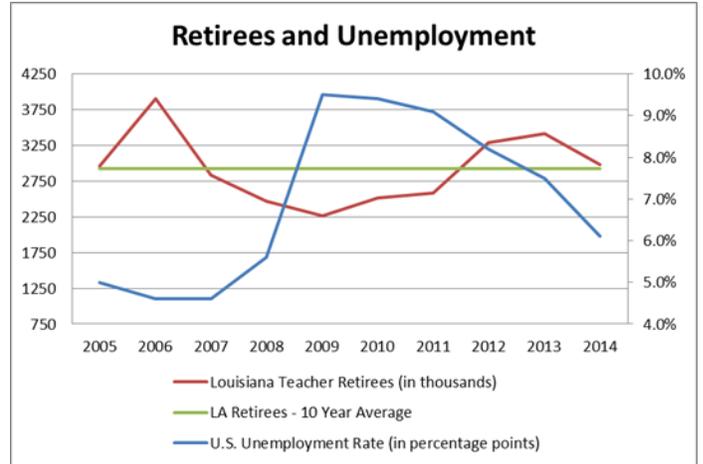
Teacher attrition rates have remained relatively steady over the past three years. From 2013 to 2014, approximately 12 percent of teachers exited the education profession in Louisiana public schools; from 2012 to 2013, 12 percent exited; and from 2011 to 2012, 11 percent exited.<sup>v</sup> While the number of retirements has been increasing since 2009, there was a slight decrease in the past year, from 3,415 in 2013 to 2,979 in 2014.<sup>vi</sup>

More individuals received initial teacher credentials last year than the previous year. In 2012-2013, 3,135 new licenses were issued, up from 2,574 in 2011-2012.

*Economic factors influence teacher attrition*

Teacher attrition trends generally follow economic trends. As the economy and job market improves, teachers are more likely to retire or pursue higher paying opportunities outside of education.

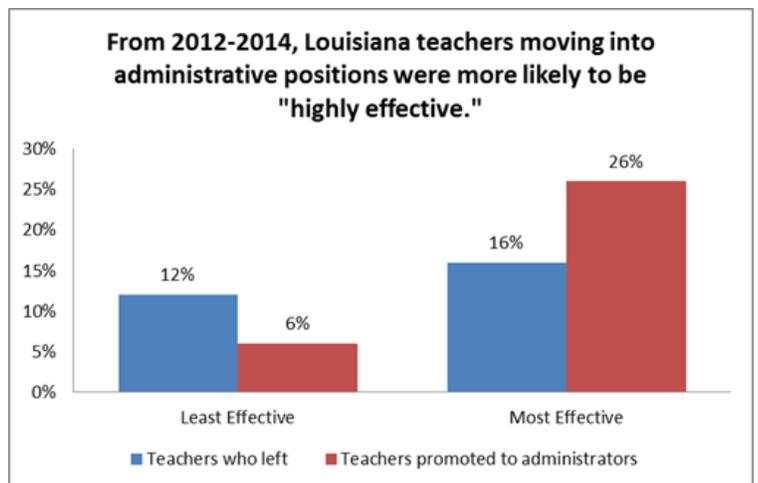
Research shows that as people experience shocks to their income or retirement funds due to economic stagnation or decline, they are more likely to defer retirement<sup>vii</sup>. This trend was evident in years following America’s 2008 economic crisis. During that and subsequent years, teacher retirement rates were lower. As the economy has begun to improve in the last five years, retirement rates have increased as teachers feel more comfortable making the financial decision to retire.



Additionally, a report by the Louisiana Retirement Development Commission<sup>viii</sup> shows that Louisiana’s retirement-age population has grown by 11 percent in the past ten years. Across the state there a greater number of teachers have reached the age of retirement.

*Some teacher attrition is positive, with Louisiana’s strongest teachers moving into school and district leadership roles*

Over the past two years, teachers leaving the classroom to move into administrative positions<sup>ix</sup> were much more likely to be among the state’s “highly effective” teachers than were those exiting education altogether (26 percent and 16 percent, respectively). Additionally, districts were unlikely to promote their least effective teachers into administrative positions; those teachers were much more likely to leave education altogether (6 percent to 12 percent respectively).<sup>x</sup> This type of teacher attrition has a positive impact on Louisiana’s schools because it means that the educational leaders are more likely to have proven track records for significantly raising student achievement in the classroom.



**CONCLUSION:**

Teacher attrition is a challenge nationally. According to a national longitudinal study by Perda<sup>xi</sup>, more than 42% of new teachers leave the profession within five years of entry, a trend that has been steadily increasing over the past two decades. Here in Louisiana, approximately a third of new teachers leave the profession each year<sup>xii</sup>.

To ensure that strong educators stay in the profession, educational leaders in our state consider not just whether they are attracting and keeping *enough* teachers, but are they attracting and keeping the teachers who are making significant progress with students.

The Department's goal is to support districts and schools as they build a workforce that encourages high performing educators to build long, rewarding careers in education. Today, more than ever, districts have a variety of tools to recognize, support, and reward their most effective teachers in order to keep them in the schools where they are needed most.

These tools include:

- District-designed compensation plans that reward teachers for high performance and encourage them to work in high need schools and subject areas.
- [Believe and Prepare](#), a pilot program launched in the spring of 2013, empowers schools and districts to design innovative, classroom- and school-based preparation experiences for aspiring educators. Believe and Prepare will be expanded in the 2015-2016 school year and beyond, in order to continue to prepare Louisiana's next generation of teachers for "day one" in the classroom, and meet districts' workforce needs.

While economic factors will continue to influence teachers' financial and career decisions, districts and teacher preparation programs are working together to better anticipate and meet workforce needs.

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<sup>i</sup> Per Profile of Educational Personnel (PEP) reporting, the total number of Louisiana teachers leaving education in the past five years is below. Note: This report calculates attrition as teachers who have left education, and reports on teachers who have moved into administrative roles separately. The previous report included both categories in the attrition rate, which is why attrition numbers and rates of years covered in the previous report will appear lower here. Additionally, the 2014-2015 numbers of teachers and administrators are based on preliminary data, which may change during the final data entry period in January 2015.

'09-'10: 5,341 (10% of workforce)

'10-'11: 5,748 (11% of workforce)

'11-'12: 5,694 (11% of workforce)

'12-'13: 6,057 (12% of workforce)

'13-'14: 6,072 (12% of workforce)

<sup>ii</sup> Per The Advocate, October 8, 2014, *La. Public School Teacher Retirements Remain Up* on the total number of teacher retirements in Louisiana for the 2013-2014 school year is 2,979, just above the ten-year average of 2,921.

<sup>iii</sup> Per Profile of Teacher Certification Management System (TCMS), the number of initial licenses granted by year.

'10-'11: 2,970

'11-'12: 2,574

'12-'13: 3,135

<sup>iv</sup> Per Profile of Educational Personnel (PEP) reporting, the number of Louisiana teachers moving into administrative roles in the past five years:

'09-'10: 276 (.5% of workforce)

'10-'11: 324 (.6% of workforce)

'11-'12: 423 (.8% of workforce)

'12-'13: 420 (.8% of workforce)

'13-'14: 394 (.8% of workforce)

<sup>v</sup> Per Profile of Educational Personnel (PEP) reporting, the total number of Louisiana teachers leaving education in the past five years is below. Note: This report calculates attrition as teachers who have left education, and reports on teachers who have moved into administrative roles separately. The previous report included both categories in the attrition rate, which is why attrition numbers and rates of years covered in the previous report will appear lower here. Additionally, the 2014-2015 numbers of teachers and administrators are based on preliminary data, which may change during the final data entry period in January 2015.

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<sup>vii</sup> Michigan Retirement Research Center, [The Interplay of Wealth, Retirement Decisions, Policy and Economic Shocks](#). University of Michigan.

<sup>viii</sup> The Louisiana Research Team, [Louisiana Retirement Development Commission](#).

<sup>ix</sup> "Administrator" refers to principal, assistant principal, superintendent, assistant superintendents, various central office roles

<sup>x</sup> Value-added or transitional student growth data scores of teachers moving into administrative roles:

Overall (n=193) - 6% Ineffective, 32% Effective: Emerging, 36% Effective: Proficient, 26% Highly Effective;

'12-'13 (n=89) - 8% Ineffective, 34% Effective: Emerging, 45% Effective: Proficient, 13% Highly Effective;

'13-'14 (n=104) - 5% Ineffective, 30% Effective: Emerging, 29% Effective: Proficient, 37% Highly Effective;

<sup>xi</sup> Perda, 2013. Transitions into and out of teaching: A longitudinal analysis of early career teacher turnover. University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

<sup>xii</sup> Per Profile Educational Personnel (PEP) reporting, the number of Louisiana teachers with less than five years of experience who have exited education:

'12-'13: 1,933 (32% of departing teachers)

'13-'14: 2,208 (36% of departing teachers)

Appendix 1:  
2013-2014 Teacher Exit Interview Results

Louisiana Revised Statute 17:7 requires the Department of Education to collect information on why teachers have left the classroom and report the findings to the Senate and House Education Committees in January of each year.

Over the past several years, the Department’s process for collecting teacher exit data has improved, thus creating a more complete picture of teacher exit trends. In the past, some districts did not submit this data because they did not consistently interview staff to determine the reason for departure. In 2013-2014, the Department improved the data collection portal, as well as instructions for reporting, resulting in data collected from 6,485 teachers in 69 districts.

Of 6,485 teachers included in districts’ reports, the majority reported that they were retiring, transferring to another Louisiana district, or leaving because of personal reasons.

Year	# of Reporting Districts	# of Teachers Included	Top Reasons for Leaving
2009-2010	53	3,100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retirement</li> <li>• Reduction in force</li> <li>• Personal reasons</li> </ul>
2010-2011	N/A		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retirement</li> <li>• Reduction in force</li> <li>• Personal reasons</li> </ul>
2011-2012	36	3,164	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retirement</li> <li>• Transferring to another Louisiana district</li> <li>• Personal reasons</li> </ul>
2012-2013	All (69)	6,083	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retirement</li> <li>• Transferring to another Louisiana district</li> <li>• Personal reasons</li> </ul>
2013-2014	All (69)	6,485	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retirement</li> <li>• Transferring to another Louisiana district</li> <li>• Personal reasons</li> </ul>

In five years of reporting, the top reasons for leaving have been consistent. In all five years, retirement was the primary reason for leaving. Reduction in force has decreasingly been reported as a reason for leaving. During the 2013-2014 school year, teachers left their positions for a variety of reasons, illustrated here:

<b>All Responses</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Retirement	1,808	28%
Employment in the education field/accepted another job in a Louisiana district or school	1507	23%
Personal reasons	916	14%
Family/personal relocation	480	7%
Homemaking/caring for a family member/maternity leave	473	7%
Employment in the education field-accepted a position in an out-of-state district or school	303	5%
Employment outside of the field of education	235	4%
Certification issue - non-standard certificate holder not re-employed because a certified teacher was hired	192	3%
Illness/disability	95	1%
Discharge due to unsuitability	86	1%
Reduction in force/layoff	76	1%
Change of assignment within the district - accepted a non-teaching position in the same district	75	1%
No response/unable to contact	57	1%
Dissatisfaction with school or district climate/discipline/classroom control	52	1%

Salary	45	1%
No response/refused interview	37	1%
Death	20	<1%
Dissatisfaction with school or district climate/duties incompatible with educational training	13	<1%
Dissatisfaction with school or district climate/poor curriculum planning	10	<1%
Lost credential	5	<1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	6,485	100%